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THE

BRITISH DRAMA.

THE

BRITISH DRAMA;

COMPREHENDING

THE BEST PLAYS

IN

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

COMEDIES.

LONDON,

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM MILLER, OLD BOND-STREET.

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PREFACE

OF

THE EDITOR.

As Tragedy sprung from the Dithyrambic Hymns, so did Comedy from the Phallic Songs, of early Greece. But the history of its infancy is not so well preserved, nor its progressive improvements so distinctly marked, as those of the sister art. This obscurity may perhaps be attributed to the greater difficulty attendant on comic writings; which rendered them slower in arriving at perfection, and, consequently, later in attracting the notice of critics, and historians. For, while the tragedian borrowed the ground-work of his plot from the chronicles of kings, or the legends of warriors, the comic poet is constrained to draw on fancy for the fable of his piece, and to inculcate his moral through the medium of fictitious characters and created incidents. Nor is this the only difference. To exhibit the operation of the Passions, is the aim of Tragedy, while Manners are the great object of Comedy. Thus, the tragic writer has only to look within himself for natural description, and to adjust the sentiments of the speakers by the emotions of his own heart: but it is the more arduous province of the comic poet to look abroad, amid the boundless diversity of human manners, for features, appropriate to the personages of his drama; to delineate numerous traits of character, not visible to vulgar eyes; to seize the evanescent forms of fashion; and to give to the "airy nothings" of whim and caprice, "a local habitation, and a name."

In the operation of these causes we see an ample reason, why the comic poets of antiquity are fewer, and of much less celebrity, than the early tragedians. Indeed, history does not enable us to mention, with certainty, any writers of this class before the time of Aristophanes, who may be considered

as the parent of Ancient Comedy. The characteristic of this species of dramatic composition, is the introduction of living persons on the stage by their proper names: and we have no specimens of this style, but a few plays from the pen of the Rhodian Dramatist, all of which are stained by the grossest extravagancies, ribaldry, personal abuse, and profaneness; poets and philosophers, generals and magistrates, priests, and even the deities themselves, were indiscriminately attacked by this unsparing satirist, and undeservedly held up to general derision. Socrates, Euripides, and Pericles, were all made to pass, in ludicrous review, before the Athenian populace. And when no actor could be found, hardy enough to personate Cleon, Aristophanes himself put on the sock, and, assuming the name and habit of that general, successfully exposed him to the shafts of public ridicule.

It was impossible, that this condition of the stage could be of any long duration. No state could long exist, where talents, virtue, government, and religion, might be derided with impunity. A law was accordingly enacted by Alcibiades, to check this dangerous licentiousness of the Athenian theatre. But, as it is not the nature of human inventions to pass, at once, from rude infancy to mature perfection, a period intervened between the early barbarism, and final improvement, of Comedy; in which it experienced a salutary change, that gradually led the way to a more finished style of composition. This state is known by the appellation of the Middle Comedy, in which the dramatist was obliged to omit the name of the person he intended to satyrise: But all the peculiarities of his person and dress might still be preserved, and these were generally so successfully copied, that it was impossible to mistake the magistrate in his robes, and the general in his uniform, especially as voice and gesture, age and gait, were called in as auxiliaries to identify the prototype, and contributed to render the picture a perfect likeness of the individual. Among the moderns, Moliere is a distinguished cultivator of this species of comedy. His *Misanthrope* is acknowledged as the portrait of the Duke de Montausier, and *Oronte* as that of the Duke de St Aignan. The first President sat for the *Tartuffe*, and Monsieur Rohart for the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Even our own stage has been disgraced by this species of comedy. Of this kind was the *Poetaster* of Ben Jonson, the *Satiro-Mastix* of Decker, the *Rehearsal* of Buckingham, and many of Foote's pieces. But, happily, this licentious style has been for many years obsolete in this country; and it is to be hoped, that we shall never witness its revival.

At last Menander arose, the parent of legitimate comedy, who, disdaining to seek applause by the description of individuals, looked abroad among the various classes of mankind for those general traits, which characterize human nature, or pervade whole societies of men. Thus, avoiding personality, which irritates without amending, and wounds without discriminating, Menander held up the mirror to his whole audience, lashed the general follies of common life, and ennobled the moral purpose of the stage. It is generally regretted, that the founder of the New Comedy, as it is called, is only known to us by the works of his admirer and imitator, Terence, whose plays are still considered as models of elegant composition, and just representations of human life.

It is on the model of the Roman Menander, that the moderns construct their comedies; amplified, indeed, and enriched by a wider scope of plot, and a greater variety of character. The improved civilization of Europe has very much enlarged the sphere of the Comic Muse. For the diffusion of wealth and knowledge through the various classes of society encourages the growth of eccentricities, and leads the Promethean spark to foibles yet unanimated. Poverty cannot indulge her whims, and gross ignorance has none to gratify. But in no respect is our pre-eminence over the ancients so remarkable, as in the variety and spirit of our female characters, which afford such an additional interest to theatrical exhibitions, and constitute so great a part of their charm. In vain do we look on the Greek and Roman stage for the sprightly coquettry of a Millamant, the solemn prudery of a lady Graveairs, for the fashion and elegance of a lady Townly, or the rustic simplicity of a Miss Hoyden. The whole range of female character, in the ancient drama, is confined to concubines and procuresses. It is obvious, from this defect, that the fair sex had not, at that time, attained their proper ascendancy in society; but at the present day, they hold that just and elevated rank, which makes them principal parties in all the complex occurrences of real life, and gives them a corresponding place in the dramatic representations of it. The multiplicity of our female characters may also be owing to the admission of female performers, which were not allowed on the Roman stage. It is impossible, that a lady's part could be acted, with any effect, by a man in petticoats; while, on the other hand, it will be readily admitted, that the inimitable comic powers of a Clive, a Farren, and a Jordan, did not merely give a temporary

zest to the character represented, but animated the pen of the dramatist to fresh attempts and new exhibitions of female foible.

In following the steps of the ancients in dramatic composition, the English have not servilely copied them in every particular, but have added and rescinded, according to the alteration in the customs of society, and in the improved canons of criticism. But the French stage has not been so judicious. Moliere has eternally loaded his scene with the impertinence of abigails and valets; not reflecting, that the familiarity, to which the Romans admitted their servants, or their freedmen, who generally superintended the education of their children, unavoidably connected them in all their domestic concerns, and accounts for their share in the Drama. But these are not the manners of France. It is on the stage alone, that the Le Fleurs and the Scapins are on such intimate terms with their masters. In common life, the same distinction is observed as with us; or, at least, that was the case in the time of Moliere. This, it must be confessed, was also the fault of some of our early comedies, but has since been laid aside, while the succesors of Moliere have continued the error of the great comic master. This, and other errors of more or less importance, sinks the French far below the English comedy.

But it is not only to the French, that we boast ourselves superior in comic writing, but to all our contemporaries. The Comic Muse flourishes most under a free government. Despotism compels uniformity of character; but in this favoured isle every whim may be indulged. No laws operate to restrain caprice; no tyrant watches to punish private folly, controul inconsistencies, or revenge fickleness. In the land of Freedom grows the legitimate food of Comedy; and comic characters, in such a country, arrive at maturity, while, in a more ungenial region, they would have been checked, if not eradicated, in their earliest infancy. If we look to the Spanish, or Portuguese, or Russian theatre, we see the dramatic genius of the country kept down by the iron rod of despotism. The follies of the nobles must not be lashed; courtiers must not be exposed; and, if you touch upon religious hypocrisy, the doors of the Inquisition are open to receive you. Such is the state of comedy in tyrannic countries; and it is with pride, that we contemplate the cause of its excellence in our own.

It was this conviction of the high character of true English comedy, which (among other reasons) induced the Editor to undertake this publication; and he has followed a plan, which, he trusts, will be generally approved. As

many of our early comedies were, like the ancients, stained with gross indecency, he has endeavoured to avoid admitting into this volume whatever might be strictly detrimental to good morals. Since the Restoration, a distinguished amendment has taken place in this particular; indeed a new species of drama has been introduced, called Sentimental Comedy, directly the reverse of the licentious style that formerly prevailed. The Editor has not, however; pushed the principle of omission so far as the censors of the Portuguese stage, who rejected a translation of the Suspicious Husband, on account of the supposed immoral tendency of the character of Ranger. Furthermore, he conceived an advantage would be derived, by a chronological arrangement, and new classification, of plays. The dramatic collections, hitherto made, have too much resembled a cabinet in confusion; where shells and fossils, metals and gems, have been jumbled together without discrimination. The Editor has endeavoured to retrieve the theatrical cabinet from this disorder, and has distributed its various productions into the three classes of Tragedy, Comedy, and Farce, forming three separate volumes. Each volume may be considered as a whole to persons, exclusively attached to one particular line of reading, while the general scholar will find, in the entire work, a complete, though select, British Drama.

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THE

BRITISH DRAMA.

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.

BY

JONSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

KITELY, *a merchant.*
CAPTAIN BOBADIL, *a blustering coward.*
KNO'WELL, *an old gentleman.*
ED. KNO'WELL, *his son.*
BRAIN-WORM, *the father's man.*
Master STEPHEN, *a country gull.*
DOWNRIGHT, *a plain squire.*
WELL-BRED, *his half brother.*
JUSTICE CLEMENT, *an old merry magistrate.*
ROGER FORMAL, *his clerk.*
Master MATTHEW, *the town gull.*
CASH, *Kitely's man.*
COB, *a water-bearer.*

WOMEN.

DAME KITELY.
MRS BRIDGET, *sister to Kitely.*
TIB, *Cob's wife.*

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A court-yard before* KNO'WELL'S *house.*

Enter KNO'WELL *and* BRAINWORM.

Kno. A GOODLY day toward! and a fresh morning! Brain-worm,
Call up young master. Bid him rise, sir.
Tell him, I have some business to employ him.
Brain. I will, sir, presently.
Kno. But hear you, sirrah!
If he be at his book, disturb him not.

Brain. Well, sir. [*Exit.*
Kno. How happy, yet, should I esteem myself,
Could I, by any practice, wean the boy
From one vain course of study he affects.
He is a scholar, if a man may trust
The liberal voice of fame in her report,
Of good account in both our universities;
Either of which have favoured him with graces.
But their indulgence must not spring in me
A fond opinion that he cannot err.
Myself was once a student; and, indeed,

Fed with the self-same humour, he is now,
Dreaming on nought but idle poetry,
That fruitless, and unprofitable art,
Good unto none, but least to the professors,
Which, then, I thought the mistress of all knowledge:
But since, time and the truth have waked my judgment,
And reason taught me better to distinguish
The vain from the useful learnings——

Enter Master STEPHEN.

Cousin Stephen!
What news with you, that you are here so early?

Step. Nothing, but e'en come to see how you do, uncle.

Kno. That's kindly done, you are welcome, coz.

Step. Ay, I know that, sir. I would not ha' come else. How doth my cousin Edward, uncle?

Kno. O, well, coz, go in and see: I doubt he be scarce stirring yet.

Step. Uncle, after I go in, can you tell me an' he have e'er a book of the sciences of hawking and hunting? I would fain borrow it.

Kno. Why, I hope you will not a hawking now, will you?

Step. No wosse, but I'll practise against the next year, uncle. I have bought me a hawk, and a hood, and bells, and all; I lack nothing but a book to keep it by.

Kno. O, most ridiculous!

Step. Nay, look you now, you are angry, uncle. Why, you know, an' a man have not skill in the hawking and hunting languages now-a-days, I'll not give a rush for him. They are more studied than the Greek, or the Latin. He is for no gallant's company without them. And by Gad's lid I scorn it, I, so I do, to be a consort for every hum-drum; hang them scroyls, there's nothing in them, in the world. What do you talk on it? Because I dwell at Hogsden. I shall keep company with none but the archers of Finsbury! or the citizens, that come a ducking to Islington ponds! A fine jest i'faith! slid, a gentleman mun show himself like a gentleman.—Uncle, I pray you be not angry. I know what I have to do; I trow, I am no novice.

Kno. You are a prodigal, absurd coxcomb: go to!
Nay, never look at me, 'tis I that speak.
Take it as you will, sir, I'll not flatter you.
Have you not yet found means enow to waste
That, which your friends have left you, but you must
Go cast away your money on a kite,
And know not how to keep it, when you've done?
O, 'tis comely! this will make you a gentleman!
Well, cousin, well! I see you are e'en past hope
Of all reclaim. Ay, so, now you're told on it,
You look another way.

Step. What would you ha' me do!

Kno. What would I have you do! I'll tell you, kinsman:
Learn to be wise, and practise how to thrive;
That would I have thee do: and not to spend
Your coin on every bauble, that you fancy,
On every foolish brain, that humours you.
I would not have you to invade each place,
Nor thrust yourself on all societies,
Till men's affections, or your own desert,
Should worthily invite you to your rank.
He, that is so respectless in his courses,
Oft sells his reputation at cheap market.
Nor would I you should melt away yourself
In flashing bravery, lest, while you affect
To make a blaze of gentry to the world,
A little puff of scorn extinguish it,
And you be left like an unsavoury snuff,
Whose property is only to offend.
I'd have you sober and contain yourself:
Not, that your sail be bigger than your boat:
But moderate your expences now (at first),
As you may keep the same proportion still.
Nor stand so much on your gentility,
Which is an airy, and mere borrowed thing,
From dead men's dust and bones: and none of yours
Except you make, or hold it. Who comes here?

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Save you, gentlemen.

Step. Nay, we do not stand much on our gentility, friend; yet, you are welcome; and I assure you mine uncle here is a man of a thousand a-year, Middlesex land; he has but one son in all the world; I am his next heir (at the common law) master Stephen, as simple as I stand here; if my cousin die (as there is hope he will.) I have a pretty living o' my own too, beside, hard by here.

Serv. In good time, sir.

Step. In good time, sir! why? and in very good time, sir. You do not flout, friend, do you?

Serv. Not I, sir.

Step. Not you, sir! you were best not, sir; an' you should, here be them can perceive it, and that quickly too: go to. And they can give it again soundly too, an' need be.

Serv. Why, sir, let this satisfy you: good faith, I had no such intent.

Step. Sir, an' I thought you had, I would talk with you, and that presently.

Serv. Good master Stephen, so you may, sir, at your pleasure.

Step. And so I would, sir, good my saucy companion, an' you were out of my uncle's ground, I can tell you; though I do not stand upon my gentility neither in it.

Kno. Cousin! cousin! Will this ne'er be left?

Step. Whoreson, base fellow? a mechanical serving man? By this cudgel, an' 'twere not for shame, I would——

Kno. What would you do, you peremptory gull?
If you cannot be quiet, get you hence.
You see, the honest man demeans himself
Modestly towards you, giving no reply
To your unseasoned, quarrelling, rude fashion:
And still you huff it, with a kind of carriage,
As void of wit, as of humanity.
Go, get you in! 'fore Heaven, I am ashamed
Thou hast a kinsman's interest in me.

[*Exit* STEPHEN.

Serv. I pray you, sir, is this master Kno'well's house?

Kno. Yes, marry, is it, sir.

Serv. I should inquire for a gentleman here, one master Edward Kno'well: do you know any such, sir, I pray you?

Kno. I should forget myself else, sir.

Serv. Are you the gentleman? cry your mercy, sir: I was required by a gentleman in the city, as I rode out at this end of the town, to deliver you this letter, sir.

Kno. To me, sir? [*To his most selected friend, Master Edward Kno'well.*] What might the gentleman's name be, sir, that sent it?

Serv. One Master Well-bred, sir.

Kno. Master Well-bred! A young gentleman, is he not?

Serv. The same, sir; Master Kitely married his sister: the rich merchant in the Old Jewry.

Kno. You say very true. Brain-worm!

Enter BRAIN-WORM.

Brain. Sir.

Kno. Make this honest friend drink here.—Pray you go in.

[*Exeunt* BRAINWORM *and Servant.*

This letter is directed to my son:
Yet I am Edward Kno'well too, and may,
With the safe conscience of good manners, use
The fellow's error to my satisfaction.
Well, I will break it ope (old men are curious)
Be it but for the style's sake, and the phrase,
To see if both do answer my son's praises,
Who is almost grown the idolater
Of this young Well-bred: What have we here? What's this?

[*The letter.*]

'Why, Ned, I beseech thee, hast thou fore-'sworn all thy friends i' the Old Jewry? or dost 'thou think us all Jews, that inhabit there? Leave 'thy vigilant father alone, to number over his 'green apricots, evening and morning, o' the 'north-west wall: an' I had been his son, I had 'saved him the labour long since; if taking in all 'the young wenches that pass by, at the back-'door, and coddling every kernel of the fruit for 'them would have served. But prithee, come 'over to me, quickly, this morning: I have such 'a present for thee! Our Turkey company never 'sent the like to the Grand Signior. One is a 'rhimer, sir, o' your own batch, your own leven; 'but doth think himself poet-major o' the town; 'willing to be shewn, and worthy to be seen.—'The other—I will not venture his description 'with you till you come, because I would have 'you make hither with an appetite. If the worst 'of them be not worth your journey, draw your 'bill of charges, as unconscionable as any Guild-'hall verdict will give it you, and you shall be 'allowed your Viaticum.

From the Windmill.'

From the Burdello, it might come as well;
The Spittal: is this the man,
My son hath sung so, for the happiest wit,
The choicest brain, the times have sent us forth?
I know not what he may be in the arts;
Nor what in schools: but, surely, for his manners,
I judge him a profane and dissolute wretch:
Worse, by profession of such great good gifts,
Being the master of so loose a spirit.
Why, what unhallowed ruffian would have writ
In such a scurrilous manner to a friend?
Why should he think, I tell my apricots?
Or play the Hesperian dragon with my fruit,
To watch it? Well, my son, I thought
You'd had more judgment to have made election
Of your companions, than to have taken on trust
Such petulant, jeering gamesters, that can spare
No argument, or subject from their jest.
But I perceive, affection makes a fool
Of any man, too much the father. Brain-worm!

Enter BRAIN-WORM.

Brain. Sir.

Kno. Is the fellow gone, that brought this letter?

Brain. Yes, sir, a pretty while since.

Kno. And where's your young master?

Brain. In his chamber, sir.

Kno. He spake not with the fellow, did he?

Brain. No, sir, he saw him not.

Kno. Take you this letter, seal it, and deliver it to my son;
But with no notice, that I have opened it, on your life.

Brain. O lord, sir, that were a jest indeed!

Kno. I am resolved I will not stop his journey;
Nor practise any violent means to stay
The unbridled course of youth in him: for that,
Restrained, grows more impatient.
There is a way of winning, more by love,
And urging of the modesty, than fear:
Force works on servile natures, not the free.
He, that's compelled to goodness, may be good;
But, 'tis but for that fit: where others, drawn
By softness, and example, get a habit.

Then, if they stray, but warn them; and the same
They would for virtue do, they will do for shame.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Young* KNO'WELL'S *Study.*

Enter EDWARD KNO'WELL *and* BRAIN-WORM.

E. Kno. Did he open it, say'st thou?

Brain. Yes, o' my word, sir, and read the contents.

E. Kno. That's bad. What countenance, pray thee, made he in the reading of it? Was he angry, or pleased?

Brain. Nay, sir, I saw him not read it, nor open it, I assure your worship.

E. Kno. No! how know'st thou, then, that he did either?

Brain. Marry, sir, because he charged me, on my life, to tell nobody that he opened it: which, unless he had done, he would never fear to have trevealed.

E. Kno. That's true: well, I thank thee, Brain-worm. [*Exit.*

Enter Master STEPHEN.

Step. Oh! Brain-worm, did'st thou not see a fellow here, in a what sha'-call him doublet? He brought mine uncle a letter e'en now.

Brain. Yes, master Stephen, what of him?

Step. Oh! I ha' such a mind to beat him—— where is he? can'st thou tell?

Brain. Faith, he is not of that mind: he is gone, master Stephen.

Step. Gone! which way? when went he? how long since?

Brain. He is rid hence. He took horse at the street door.

Step. And I staid i' the fields! whoreson, scanderberg rogue! O that I had but a horse to fetch him back again!

Brain. Why, you may ha' my master's gelding, to save your longing, sir.

Step. But I ha' no boots, that's the spite on't.

Brain. Why, a fine wisp of hay, rolled hard, master Stephen.

Step. No, faith, it's no boot to follow him now; let him e'en go and hang. Prithee, help to truss me a little. He does so vex me——

Brain. You'll be worse vexed, when you are trussed, master Stephen. Best keep unbraced, and walk yourself till you be cold; your choler may founder you else.

Step. By my faith, and so I will, now thou tell'st me on't. How dost thou like my leg, Brain-worm?

Brain. A very good leg, master Stephen; but the woollen stocking does not commend it so well.

Step. Foh, the stockings be good enough, now summer is coming on, for the dust: I will have a pair of silk against winter, that I go to dwell in the town. I think my leg would shew in a silk hose.

Brain. Believe me, master Stephen, rarely well.

Step. In sadness, I think it would; I have a reasonable good leg.

Brain. You have an excellent good leg, master Stephen; but I cannot stay to praise it longer now; I am very sorry for't. [*Exit.*

Step. Another time will serve, Brain-worm.—Gra-mercy, for this.

Enter Young KNO'WELL.

E. Kno. Ha, ha, ha!

Step. 'Slid! I hope he laughs not at me; an' he do——

E. Kno. Here was a letter, indeed, to be intercepted by a man's father! He cannot but think most virtuously both of me and the sender, sure, that make the careful coster-monger of him in our familiar epistles. I wish I knew the end of it, which now is doubtful, and threatens—what! my wise cousin! nay, then, I will furnish our feast with one gull more toward the mess. He writes to me of a brace, and here's one, that's three: O, for a fourth! Fortune! if ever thou'lt use thine eyes, I entreat thee——

Step. O, now I see who he laughs at. He laughs at somebody in that letter. By this good light, an' he had laughed at me——

E. Kno. How now, cousin Stephen, melancholy?

Step. Yes, a little. I thought you had laughed at me, cousin.

E. Kno. Why, what an' I had, coz, what would you ha' done?

Step. By this light, I would ha' told mine uncle.

E. Kno. Nay, if you would ha' told your uncle, I did laugh at you, coz.

Step. Did you, indeed?

E. Kno. Yes, indeed.

Step. Why, then——

E. Kno. What then?

Step. I am satisfied; it is sufficient.

E. Kno. Why, be so, gentle coz. And I pray you, let me entreat a courtesy of you. I am sent for, this morning, by a friend i' the Old Jewry, to come to him: 'tis but crossing o'er the field to Moor-gate: will you bear me company? I protest, it is not to draw you into bond, or any plot against the state, coz.

Step. Sir, that's all one, an' 'twere; you shall command me, twice so far as Moor-gate, to do you good, in such a matter. Do you think I would leave you? I protest——

E. Kno. No, no, you shall not protest, coz.

Step. By my fackins, but I will, by your leave; I will protest more to my friend, than I will speak of at this time.

E. Kno. You speak very well, coz.

Step. Nay, not so, neither; you shall pardon me: but I speak to serve my turn.

E. Kno. Your turn, coz! Do you know what you say? A gentleman of your sort, parts, carriage, and estimation, to talk of your turn in this company, and to me, alone, like a water-bearer at a conduit! fie! a wight, that, hitherto, his every step hath left the stamp of a great foot behind him, at every word the savour of a strong spirit; and he! this man, so graced, so gilded, or, as I may say, so tinfoyled by nature! Come, come, wrong not the quality of your desert, with looking downward, coz; but hold up your head, so; and let the idea of what you are be pourtrayed in your face, that men may read in your physiognomy, 'here, within this place, is to be 'seen the true and accomplished monster, or mi-'racle of nature,' which is all one. What think you of this, coz!

Step. Why, I do think of it; and I will be more proud, and melancholy, and gentleman-like, than I have been, I'll assure you.

E. Kno. Why, that's resolute, master Stephen! Now, if I can hold him up to his height, as it is happily begun, it will do well for a suburb-humour: we may hap have a match with the city, and play him for forty pounds. Come, coz.

Step. I'll follow you.

E. Kno. Follow me; you must go before.

Step. Nay, an' I must, I will. Pray you, shew me, good cousin. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The street before* COB'S *house.*

Enter Master MATTHEW.

Mat. I think this be the house. What, hoa!

Enter COB, *from the House.*

Cob. Who is there? O, Master Matthew! give your worship good morrow.

Mat. What, Cob! How dost thou, good Cob? Dost thou inhabit here, Cob?

Cob. Ay, sir, I and my lineage ha' kept a poor house here in our days.

Mat. Cob, canst thou shew me of a gentleman, one Captain Bobadil, where his lodging is?

Cob. O, my guest, sir, you mean?

Mat. Thy guest! Alas! ha, ha.

Cob. Why do you laugh, sir? Do you not mean Captain Bobadil?

Mat. Cob, pray thee, advise thyself well: do not wrong the gentleman and thyself too. I dare be sworn he scorns thy house. He! he lodge in such a base, obscure place as thy house! Tut, I know his disposition so well, he would not lie in thy bed, if thou would'st give it him.

Cob. I will not give it him, though, sir. Mass, I thought somewhat was in it we could not get him to-bed, all night! Well, sir, though he lies not on my bed, he lies on my bench. And if it please you to go in, sir, you shall find him with two cushions under his head, and his cloak wrapped about him, as though he had neither won nor lost; and yet, I warrant, he never cast better in his life, than he has done to-night.

Mat. Why, was he drunk?

Cob. Drunk, sir! you hear not me say so. Perhaps he swallowed a tavern-token, or some such device, sir: I have nothing to do withal. I deal with water, and not with wine. Give me my bucket there, hoa. God be with you, sir, it is six o'clock: I should have carried two turns by this. What hoa! my stopple! come.

Mat. Lie in a water-bearer's house! A gentleman of his havings! Well, I will tell him my mind.

Cob. What, Tib! shew this gentleman up to the captain.—[*Tib shews Master Mat. into the house.*] You should have some now, would take this Mr Matthew to be gentleman at the least. His father is an honest man, a worshipful fishmonger, and so forth; and now does he creep, and wriggle into acquaintance with all the brave gallants about the town, such as my guest is. O, my guest is a fine man! he does swear the legiblest of any man christened: by St. George—the foot of Pharaoh—the body o' me,—as I am a gentleman and a soldier; such dainty oaths! and withall, he does take this same filthy roguish tobacco, the finest and cleanliest! it would do a man good to see the fume come forth out at's tonnels! Well, he owes me forty shillings, my wife lent him out of her purse by six-pence a time, besides his lodging. I would I had it! I shall ha' it, he says, the next action. Helter skelter, hang sorrow, care 'll kill a cat, up-tails all, and a louse for the hangman! [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*A Room in* COB'S *House.* BOBADIL *discovered upon a bench.* TIB *enters to him.*

Bob. Hostess, hostess!

Tib. What say you, sir?

Bob. A cup o' thy small-beer, sweet hostess.

Tib. Sir, there's a gentleman below would speak with you.

Bob. A gentleman! 'ods so, I'm not within.

Tib. My husband told him you were, sir.

Bob. What a plague——what meant he?

Mat. [*Within.*] Captain Bobadil!

Bob. Who's there?—Take away the bason, good hostess. Come up, sir.

Tib. He would desire you to come up, sir. You come into a cleanly house here.

Enter Master MATTHEW.

Mat. 'Save you, sir; 'save you, captain.

Bob. Gentle Master Matthew! is it you, sir? Please you, sit down.

Mat. Thank you, good captain; you may see I am somewhat audacious.

Bob. Not so, sir. I was requested to supper,

last night, by a sort of gallants, where you were wished for, and drank to, I assure you.

Mat. Vouchsafe me by whom, good captain.

Bob. Marry, by young Well-bred, and others. Why, hostess! a stool here for this gentleman.

Mat. No haste, sir, 'tis very well.

Bob. Body of me! It was so late ere we parted last night, I can scarce open my eyes yet: I was but new risen as you came. How passes the day abroad, sir? can you tell?

Mat. Faith, some half hour to seven. Now trust me, you have an exceeding fine lodging here, very neat, and private!

Bob. Ay, sir: sit down. I pray you, Master Matthew, in any case, possess no gentleman of our acquaintance with notice of my lodging.

Mat. Who? I, sir? No

Bob. Not that I need to care who know it, for the cabin is convenient; but in regard I would not be too popular and generally visited, as some are.

Mat. True, captain, I conceive you.

Bob. For, do you see, sir, by the heart of valour in me, except it be to some peculiar and choice spirits, to whom I am extraordinarily engaged, as yourself, or so, I could not extend thus far.

Mat. O lord, sir, I resolve so.

[*Pulls out a paper, and reads.*

Bob. I confess, I love a cleanly and quiet privacy, above all the tumult and roar of fortune. What new piece ha' you there? Read it.

Mat. [*Reads.*] 'To thee, the purest object of my sense,

'The most refined essence Heaven covers,

'Send I these lines, wherein I do commence

'The happy state of turtle-billing lovers.'

Bob. 'Tis good; proceed, proceed. Where's this?

Mat. This, sir? a toy o' mine own, in my nonage: the infancy of my muses. But, when will you come and see my study? Good faith, I can shew you some very good things, I have done of late——That boot becomes your leg, passing well, captain, methinks.

Bob. So, so; it's the fashion gentlemen now use.

Mat. Troth, captain, and now you speak o' the fashion, Master Well-bred's elder brother and I are fallen out exceedingly: this other day, I happened to enter into some discourse of a hanger, which I assure you, both for fashion and workmanship, was most peremptory-beautiful, and gentleman-like; yet he condemned, and cried it down, for the most pied and ridiculous that ever he saw.

Bob. 'Squire Downright, the half-brother, was't not?

Mat. Ay, sir, George Downright.

Bob. Hang him, rook! He! why, he has no more judgment than a malt-horse. By St. George, I wonder you'd lose a thought upon such an animal! the most peremptory absurd clown of Christendom, this day, he is holden. I protest to you, as I am a gentleman and a soldier, I ne'er changed words with his like. By his discourse, he should eat nothing but hay. He was born for the manger, pannier or packsaddle! He has not so much as a good phrase in his belly, but all old iron and rusty proverbs! a good commodity for some smith to make hobnails of.

Mat. Ay, and he thinks to carry it away with his manhood still, where he comes. He brags he will gi' me the bastinado, as I hear.

Bob. How! he the bastinado! how came he by that word, trow?

Mat. Nay, indeed, he said cudgel me; I termed it so, for my more grace.

Bob. That may be: for I was sure, it was none of his word. But when? when said he so?

Mat. Faith, yesterday, they say: a young gallant, a friend of mine, told me so.

Bob. By the foot of Pharaoh, an' 'twere my case now, I should send him a challenge, presently. The bastinado! A most proper, and sufficient dependence, warranted by the great Caranza. Come hither, you shall challenge him. I'll shew you a trick or two, you shall kill him with, at pleasure: the first stoccata, if you will, by this air.

Mat. Indeed, you have absolute knowledge i' the mystery, I have heard, sir.

Bob. Of whom? Of whom ha' you heard it, I beseech you?

Mat. Troth, I have heard it spoken of by divers, that you have very rare and un-in one-breath-utterable skill, sir.

Bob. By Heaven, no, not I; no skill i' the earth! some small rudiments i' the science, as to know my time, distance, or so. I have profest it more for noblemen and gentlemen's use than mine own practice, I assure you. I'll give you a lesson. Look you, sir. Exalt not your point above this state, at any hand; so, sir. Come on! O, twine your body more about, that you may fall to a more sweet, comely, gentleman-like guard. So, indifferent. Hollow your body more, sir, thus. Now, stand fast o' your left leg; note your distance; keep your due proportion of time —Oh, you disorder your point most irregularly! Come, put on your cloak, and we'll go to some private place, where you are acquainted; some tavern or so—and have a bit——What money ha' you about you, Master Matthew?

Mat. Faith, I have not past a two shillings, or so.

Bob. 'Tis somewhat with the least: but come, we will have a bunch of raddishes, and salt, to taste our wine; and a pipe of tobacco, to close the orifice of the stomach: and then we will call upon young Wellbred. Perhaps we shall meet the Corydon, his brother, there, and put him to the question. Come along, Master Matthew.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A warehouse belonging to* KITELY.

Enter KITELY, CASH, *and* DOWNRIGHT.

Kite. THOMAS, come hither.
There lies a note within, upon my desk;
Here, take my key——It is no matter, neither.
Where is the boy?
Cash. Within, sir, in the warehouse.
Kite. Let him tell over, straight, that Spanish gold,
And weigh it, with the pieces of eight. Do you
See the delivery of those silver stuffs
To Mr Lucar. Tell him, if he will,
He shall have the grograns at the rate I told him,
And I will meet him, on the Exchange, anon.
Cash. Good, sir. [*Exit.*
Kite. Do you see that fellow, brother Downright?
Down. Ay, what of him?
Kite. He is a jewel, brother.——
I took him of a child, up, at my door,
And christened him; gave him my own name, Thomas;
Since bred him, at the hospital; where proving
A toward imp, I called him home, and taught him
So much, as I have made him my cashier,
And find him, in his place, so full of faith,
That I durst trust my life into his hands.
Down. So would not I in any bastard's, brother,
As, it is like, he is, although I knew
Myself his father. But you said you'd somewhat
To tell me, gentle brother; what is't? what is't?
Kite. Faith, I am very loth to utter it,
As fearing it may hurt your patience:
But that, I know, your judgment is of strength,
Against the nearness of affection———
Down. What need this circumstance? Pray you be direct.
Kite. I will not say how much I do ascribe
Unto your friendship; nor, in what regard
I hold your love; but, let my past behaviour,
And usage of your sister, but confirm
How well I've been affected to your——
Down. You are too tedious; come to the matter, the matter.
Kite. Then, without further ceremony, thus.
My brother Well-bred, sir, I know not how,
Of late, is much declined in what he was,
And greatly altered in his disposition.
When he came first to lodge, here, in my house,
Ne'er trust me, if I were not proud of him:
Methought he bare himself in such a fashion,
So full of man, and sweetness in his carriage.
And, what was chief, it shewed not borrowed in him,
But all he did became him as his own,
And seemed as perfect, proper, and possest,
As breath with life, or colour with the blood·
But now his course is so irregular,
So loose, affected, and deprived of grace,
And he himself, withal, so far fallen off
From that first place, as scarce no note remains,
To tell men's judgments where he lately stood.
He's grown a stranger to all due respect;
Forgetful of his friends; and, not content
To stale himself in all societies,
He makes my house, here, common as a mart,
A theatre, a public receptacle
For giddy humour, and diseased riot:
And here, as in a tavern or a stew,
He and his wild associates spend their hours
In repetition of lascivious jests:
Swear, leap, drink, dance, and revel night by night,
Controul my servants; and, indeed, what not!
Down. 'Sdains, I know not what I should say to him in the whole world! he values me at a cracked three-farthings, for aught I see. It will never out of the flesh, that's bred in the bone! I have told him enough, one would think, if that would serve. Well! he knows what to trust to, for George. Let him spend and spend, and domineer, till his heart ach; an' he think to be relieved by me, when he is got into one of your city-ponds, the counters, he has the wrong sow by the ear, i' faith, and claps his dish at a wrong man's door. I'll lay my hand o' my halfpenny, ere I part with it, to fetch him out, I'll assure him.
Kite. Nay, good brother, let it not trouble you, thus.
Down. 'Sdeath, he made me—I could eat my very spur-leathers, for anger! But, why are you so tame? Why do not you speak to him, and tell him how he disquiets your house?
Kite. O, there are divers reasons to dissuade, brother;
But, would yourself vouchsafe to travail in it,
Though but with plain and easy circumstance,
It would both come much better to his sense,
And savour less of stomach, or of passion.
You are his elder brother, and that title
Both gives and warrants you authority;
Whereas, if I should intimate the least,
It would but add contempt to his neglect,
Heap worse on ill, make up a pile of hatred,
That, in the rearing, would come tottering down,
And in the ruin bury all our love.
Nay, more than this, brother; if I should speak,
He would be ready, from his heat of humour,
And over-flowing of the vapour in him,
To blow the ears of his familiars
With the false breath of telling what disgraces
And low disparagements I had put upon him.
Whilst they, sir, to relieve him in the fable,
Make their loose comments upon every word.

Gesture, or look, I use; mock me all o'er;
And, out of their impetuous rioting phantasies,
Beget some slander that shall dwell with me.
And what would that be, think you? Marry, this:
They would give out, because my wife is fair,
Myself but newly married, and my sister,
Here sojourning a virgin in my house,
That I were jealous! Nay, as sure as death,
That they would say. And how that I had quarrelled
My brother purposely, thereby to find
An apt pretext to banish them my house.

Down. Mass, perhaps so: they're like enough to do it.

Kite. Brother, they would, believe it: so should I,
Like one of these penurious quack-salvers,
But set the bills up to mine own disgrace,
And try experiments upon myself:
Lend scorn and envy opportunity
To stab my reputation and good name.

Enter MATTHEW *and* BOBADIL.

Mat. I will speak to him——

Bob. Speak to him! Away! by the foot of Pharoah, you shall not; you shall not do him that grace.

Kite. What's the matter, sirs?

Bob. The time of day to you, gentleman of the house. Is Mr Well-bred stirring?

Down. How, then? what should he do?

Bob. Gentleman of the house, it is you: is he within, sir?

Kite. He came not to his lodgings to-night, sir, I assure you.

Down. Why, do you hear? you!

Bob. The gentleman-citizen hath satisfied me. I'll talk to no scavenger.

[*Exeunt* BOBADIL *and* MATTHEW.

Down. How, scavenger! stay, sir, stay!

Kite. Nay, brother Downright!

Down. 'Heart! stand you away, an' you love me.

Kite. You shall not follow him now, I pray you, brother; good faith you shall not: I will overrule you.

Down. Ha! scavenger! Well, go to, I say little: but, by this good day, (God forgive me I should swear) if I put up so, say, I am the rankest coward ever lived. 'Sdains, and I swallow this, I'll ne'er draw my sword in the sight of Fleet-street again, while I live; I'll sit in a barn with Madge Howlet, and catch mice first. Scavenger!

Kite. Oh, do not fret yourself thus! never think on it.

Down. These are my brother's consorts, these! these are his comrades, his walking mates! he is a gallant, a cavaliero, too, right hangman cut! Let me not live, an' I could not find in my heart to swinge the whole gang of them, one after another, and begin with him first. I am grieved it should be said he is my brother, and take these courses. Well, as he brews, so he shall drink, for George again. Yet, he shall hear on it, and that tightly, too, an' I live, in faith.

Kite. But, brother, let your reprehension, then,
Run in any easy current, not o'er high
Carried with rashness, or devouring choler;
But rather use the soft persuading way,
More winning than enforcing the consent.

Down. Ay, ay, let me alone for that, I warrant you. [*Bell rings.*

Kite. How now! Oh, the bell rings for breakfast.
Brother, I pray you, go in, and bear my wife
Company till I come; I'll but give order
For some dispatch of business to my servant—

Down. I will—Scavenger! Scavenger!

[*Exit* DOWNRIGHT.

Kite. Well, though my troubled spirit's somewhat eased,
'Tis not reposed in that security
As I could wish: but, I must be content.
Howe'er I set a face on't to the world,
Would I had lost this finger, at a venture,
So Well-bred had ne'er lodged within my house.
Why it cannot be, where there is such resort
Of wanton gallants, and young revellers,
That any woman should be honest long.
Is't like, that factious beauty will preserve
The public weal of chastity unshaken,
When such strong motives muster, and make head
Against her single peace? No, no. Beware.
When mutual appetite doth meet to treat,
And spirits of one kind and quality
Come once to parley, in the pride of blood,
It is not slow conspiracy that follows.
Well, to be plain, if I but thought the time
Had answered their affections, all the world
Should not persuade me, but I were a cuckold!
Marry, I hope they have not got that start;
For opportunity hath baulked them yet,
And shall do still, while I have eyes and ears
To attend the impositions of my heart.
My presence shall be as an iron-bar,
'Twixt the conspiring motions of desire:
Yea, every look or glance mine eye ejects,
Shall check occasion, as one doth his slave,
When he forgets the limits of prescription.

Enter Dame KITELY.

Dame. Sister Bridget, pray you fetch down the rose-water above in the closet. Sweetheart, will you come in to breakfast?

Kite. An' she have overheard me now! [*Aside.*

Dame. I pray thee, good muss, we stay for you.

Kite. By Heaven, I would not for a thousand angels. [*Aside.*

Dame. What ails you, sweetheart? are you not well? Speak, good muss.

Kite. Troth, my head aches extremely, on a sudden.

Dame. Oh, the lord!

Kite. How now! what!

Dame. Alas, how it burns! Muss, keep you warm; good truth it is this new disease! there's a number are troubled withal! For love's sake, sweetheart, come in, out of the air.

Kite. How simple, and how subtle are her answers!
A new disease, and many troubled with it!
Why true! she heard me, all the world to nothing.

Dame. I pray thee, good sweetheart, come in; the air will do you harm, in truth.

Kite. I'll come to you presently; 'twill away, I hope.

Dame. Pray Heaven it do. [*Exit Dame.*

Kite. A new disease! I know not new or old,
But it may well be called poor mortals' plague:
For, like a pestilence, it doth infect
The houses of the brain. First, it begins
Solely to work upon the phantasy,
Filling her seat with such pestiferous air
As soon corrupts the judgment, and from thence
Sends like contagion to the memory;
Still to each other giving the infection,
Which, as a subtle vapour, spreads itself
Confusedly through every sensive part,
Till not a thought, or motion in the mind,
Be free from the black poison of suspect.
Ah, but what misery it is to know this!
Or, knowing it, to want the mind's direction
In such extremes! Well, I will once more strive,
In spite of this black cloud, myself to be,
And shake the fever off, that thus shakes me.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Moorfields.*

Enter BRAINWORM, *disguised like a Soldier.*

Brain. 'Slid, I cannot choose but laugh to see myself translated thus. Now must I create an intolerable sort of lies, or my present profession loses the grace; and yet the lie to a man of my coat, is as ominous a fruit as the Fico. O, sir, it holds for good polity ever, to have that outwardly in vilest estimation, that inwardly is most dear to us. So much for my borrowed shape.—Well, the truth is, my old master intends to follow my young, dry-foot, over Moorfields to London this morning: now I, knowing of this hunting match, or rather conspiracy, and to insinuate with my young master (for so must we, that are blue-waiters, and men of hope and service do), have got me afore in this disguise, determining here to lie in ambuscade, and intercept him in the mid-way. If I can but get his cloak, his purse, his hat, nay, any thing to cut him off, that is, to stay his journey—*Veni, vidi, vici,* I may say with captain Cæsar; I am made for ever, i'faith. Well, now must I practise to get the true garb of one of those lance-knights, my arm here, and my—Young master! and his cousin, Master Stephen, as I am a true counterfeit man of war, and no soldier! [*Retires.*

Enter ED. KNO'WELL *and Master* STEPHEN.

E. Kno. So, sir, and how then, coz?

Step. S'foot, I have lost my purse, I think.

E. Kno. How! lost your purse! Where?—When had you it?

Step. I cannot tell: stay.

Brain. 'Slid, I am afraid they will know me! Would I could get by them!

E. Kno. What! ha' you it?

Step. No, I think I was bewitched, I——

E. Kno. Nay, do not weep the loss; hang it, let it go.

Step. Oh, 'tis here—No, an' it had been lost, I had not cared, but for a jet ring Miss Mary sent me.

E. Kno. A jet ring! oh, the poesy, the poesy!

Step. Fine, i'faith! '*Though fancy sleep, my love is deep;*' meaning, that though I did not fancy her, yet she loved me dearly.

E. Kno. Most excellent!

Step. And, then, I sent her another, and my poesy was: '*The deeper the sweeter, I'll be judged by St Peter.*'

E. Kno. How by St Peter? I do not conceive that.

Step. Marry, St Peter, to take up the metre.

E. Kno. Well, there the saint was your good patron; he helped you at your need: thank him, thank him.

Brain. I cannot take leave of them so; I will venture, come what will. Gentlemen, please you change a few crowns, for a very excellent good blade, here? I am a poor gentleman, a soldier, that, in the better state of my fortunes, scorned so mean a refuge, but now it is the humour of necessity to have it so. You seem to be, gentlemen, well affected to martial men, else I should rather die with silence than live with shame: however, vouchsafe to remember, it is my want speaks, not myself. This condition agrees not with my spirit.

E. Kno. Where hast thou served?

Brain. May it please you, sir, in all the late wars of Bohemia, Hungaria, Dalmatia, Poland; where not, sir? I have been a poor servitor by sea and land, any time these fourteen years, and followed the fortunes of the best commanders in Christendom. I was twice shot at the taking of Aleppo, once at the relief of Vienna; I have been at Marseilles, Naples, and the Adriatic Gulf; a gentleman-slave in the galleys thrice, where I was most dangerously shot in the head, through both the thighs, and yet being thus maimed, I am void of maintenance; nothing left me but my scars, the noted marks of my resolution.

Step. How will you sell this rapier, friend?

Brain. Generous sir, I refer it to your own

judgment; you are a gentleman, give me what you please.

Step. True, I am a gentleman, I know that, friend: but what though? I pray you say, what would you ask?

Brain. I assure you the blade may become the side, or thigh, of the best prince in Europe.

E. Kno. Aye, with a velvet scabbard.

Step. Nay, an't be mine, it shall have a velvet scabbard, coz, that's flat: I would not wear it as 'tis, an' you would give me an angel.

Brain. At your worship's pleasure, sir; nay, 'tis a most pure Toledo.

Step. I had rather it were a Spaniard; but tell me, what shall I give you for it? An' it had a silver hilt——

E. Kno. Come, come, you shall not buy it; hold, there's a shilling, fellow; take the rapier.

Step. Why, but I will buy it now, because you say so; and there's another shilling, fellow, I scorn to be outbidden. What, shall I walk with a cudgel, like a higginbottom, and may have a rapier for money?

E. Kno. You may buy one in the city.

Step. Tut, I'll buy this i' the field, so I will; I have a mind to't, because 'tis a field rapier. Tell me your lowest price.

E. Kno. You shall not buy it, I say.

Step. By this money but I will, though I give more than 'tis worth.

E. Kno. Come away, you are a fool.

Step. Friend, I am a fool, that's granted: but I'll have it for that word's sake. Follow me for your money.

Brain. At your service, sir. [*Exeunt.*

Enter KNO'WELL.

Kno. I cannot lose the thought yet of this letter,
Sent to my son; nor leave to admire the change
Of manners, and the breeding of our youth
Within the kingdom, since myself was one.
When I was young, he lived not in the stews,
Durst have conceived a scorn, and uttered it,
On a grey head: age was authority
Against a buffoon; and a man had then
A certain reverence paid unto his years,
That had none due unto his life.
But now we are fallen; youth from their fear,
And age from that, which bred it, good example.
Nay, would ourselves were not the first, even parents,
That did destroy the hopes in our own children;
The first words
We form their tongues with, are licentious jests.
Can it call whore? Cry bastard? O, then kiss it,
A witty child! Can't swear? The father's darling!
Give it two plums. Nay, rather than it shall learn
No bawdy song, the mother herself will teach it!
But this is in the infancy;
When it puts on the breeches,
It will put off all this. Ay, it is like;
When it is gone into the bone already!
No, no: this dye goes deeper than the coat,
Or shirt, or skin; it stains unto the liver
And heart, in some: and rather than it should not,
Note what we fathers do; look how we live;
What mistresses we keep; at what expence;
And teach them all bad ways to buy affliction!
Well, I thank Heaven, I never yet was he,
That travelled with my son before sixteen,
To shew him the Venetian courtezans,
Nor read the grammar of cheating, I had made,
To my sharp boy at twelve; repeating still
The rule, get money, still get money, boy,
No matter by what means.
These are the trades of fathers now. However,
My son, I hope, hath met within my threshold
None of these household precedents; which are strong
And swift, to rape youth to their precipice.
But let the house at home be never so clean
Swept, or kept sweet from filth,
If he will live abroad with his companions,
In riot and misrule, 'tis worth a fear.

Enter BRAIN-WORM.

Brain. My master! nay, faith, have at you; I am fleshed now, I have sped so well; though I must attack you in a different way. Worshipful sir, I beseech you, respect the state of a poor soldier! I am ashamed of this base course of life, (God's my comfort) but extremity provokes me to't: what remedy?

Kno. I have not for you.

Brain. By the faith I bear unto truth, gentleman, it is no ordinary custom in me, but only to preserve manhood. I protest to you, a man I have been, a man I may be, by your sweet bounty.

Kno. Prithee, good friend, be satisfied.

Brain. Good sir, by that hand you may do the part of a kind gentleman, in lending a poor soldier the price of two cans of beer, a matter of small value; the King of Heaven shall pay you, and I shall rest thankful: sweet worship—

Kno. Nay, an' you be so importunate—

Brain. Oh, tender sir, need will have his course! I was not made to this vile use! Well, the edge of the enemy could not have abated me so much. [*He weeps.*] It's hard, when a man hath served in his prince's cause, to be thus—honourable worship, let me derive a small piece of silver from you; it shall not be given in the course of time. By this good ground, I was fain to pawn my rapier last night for a poor supper; I had sucked the hilts long before, I am a pagan else: sweet honour!

Kno. Believe me, I am taken with some wonder,
To think a fellow of thy outward presence,

Should, in the frame and fashion of his mind,
Be so degenerate and sordid base!
Art thou a man, and sham'st thou not to beg?
To practise such a servile kind of life?
Why, were thy education never so mean,
Having thy limbs, a thousand fairer courses
Offer themselves to thy election.
Either the wars might still supply thy wants,
Or service of some virtuous gentleman,
Or honest labour: nay, what can I name,
But would become thee better than to beg!
But men of thy condition feed on sloth,
As doth the beetle on the dung she breeds in,
Not caring how the metal of your minds
Is eaten with the rust of idleness.
Now, afore me, whate'er he be, that should
Relieve a person of thy quality,
While thou insist in this loose desperate course,
I would esteem the sin not thine, but his.

Brain. Faith, sir, I would gladly find some other course, if so——

Kno. Aye, you would gladly find it, but you will not seek it.

Brain. Alas! sir, where should a man seek? in the wars there's no ascent by desert in these days, but—and for service, would it were as soon purchased as wished for! (the air's my comfort) I know what I would say——

Kno. What's thy name?

Brain. Please you, Fitz-Sword, sir.

Kno. Fitz-Sword,
Say that a man should entertain thee now,
Would'st thou be honest, humble, just, and true?

Brain. Sir, by the place and honour of a soldier——

Kno. Nay, nay, I like not those affected oaths! Speak plainly, man: what think'st thou of my words?

Brain. Nothing, sir, but wish my fortunes were as happy, as my service should be honest.

Kno. Well, follow me; I will prove thee, if thy deeds will carry a proportion to thy words.

[*Exit.*

Brain. Yes, sir, straight: I will but garter my hose. Oh! that my belly were hooped now, for I am ready to burst with laughing! Never was a bottle or bag-pipe fuller. S'lid! was there ever seen a fox in years to betray himself thus? Now I shall be possessed of all his counsels! and by that conduct my young master. Well, he is resolved to prove my honesty; faith, and I am resolved to prove his patience. Oh, I shall abuse him intolerably! This small piece of service will bring him clean out of love with the soldier for ever. He will never come within the sight of a red coat, or a musket-rest again. It's no matter; let the world think me a bad counterfeit, if I cannot give him the slip at an instant. Why, this is better than to have staid his journey! Well, I will follow him. Oh, how I long to be employed!

With change of voice, these scars, and many an oath,
I'll follow son and sire, and serve them both.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Stocks-Market.*

Enter MATTHEW, WELL-BRED, *and* BOBADIL.

Mat. YES, faith, sir! we were at your lodging to seek you too.

Well. Oh, I came not there to-night.

Bob. Your brother delivered us as much.

Well. Who? My brother, Down-right?

Bob. He. Mr Well-bred, I know not in what kind you hold me; but let me say to you this: as sure as honour, I esteem it so much out of the sunshine of reputation, to throw the least beam of regard upon such a———

Well. Sir, I must hear no ill words of my brother.

Bob. I protest to you, as I have a thing to be saved about me, I never saw any gentleman-like part—

Well. Good captain, [*faces about.*] to some other discourse.

Bob. With your leave, sir, an' there were no more men living upon the face of the earth, I should not fancy him, by St George.

Mat. Troth, nor I; he is of a rustical cut, I know not how: he doth not carry himself like a gentleman of fashion———

Well. Oh, Master Matthew, that is a grace peculiar but to a few, *quos æquus amavit Jupiter.*

Mat. I understand you, sir.

Enter Young KNO'WELL *and* STEPHEN.

Well. No question you do, or you do not, sir. Ned! By my soul, welcome! How dost thou, sweet spirit, my genius? 'Slid, I shall love Apollo and the mad Thespian girls the better while I live for this, my dear fury. Now I see there's some love in thee! Sirrah, these be the two I writ to thee of. Nay, what a drowsy humour is this now! Why dost thou not speak?

E. Kno. Oh, you are a fine gallant; you sent me a rare letter.

Well. Why, was it not rare?

E. Kno. Yes, I'll be sworn; I was never guilty of reading the like. Match it in all Pliny's epistles, and I'll have my judgment burned in the ear for a rogue: make much of thy vein, for it is inimitable. But I marvel what camel it was that had the carriage of it, for, doubtless, he was no ordinary beast that brought it.

Well. Why?

E. Kno. Why, sayest thou? Why, dost thou think that any reasonable creature, especially in the morning, the sober time of the day too, could have mistaken my father for me?

Well. 'Said, you jest, I hope.

E. Kno. Indeed, the best use we can turn it to, is to make a jest on't now; but I'll assure you, my father had the full view of your flourishing style, before I saw it.

Well. What a dull slave was this! But, sirrah, what said he to it, i'faith?

E. Kno. Nay, I know not what he said: but I have a shrewd guess what he thought.

Well. What, what?

E. Kno. Marry, that thou art some strange, dissolute young fellow, and I not a grain or two better, for keeping thee company.

Well. Tut! that thought is like the moon in her last quarter, 'twill change shortly. But, sirrah, I pray thee be acquainted with my two hang-bys here; thou wilt take exceeding pleasure in them, if thou hearest them once go: my wind-instruments. I'll wind them up——But what strange piece of silence is this? The sign of the dumb man?

E. Kno. Oh, sir, a kinsman of mine, one that may make your music the fuller, an' he please; he has his humour, sir.

Well. Oh, what is't, what is't?

E. Kno. Nay, I'll neither do your judgment, nor his folly, that wrong, as to prepare your apprehension. I'll leave him to the mercy of your search, if you can take him so.

Well. Well. Captain Bobadil, Master Matthew, I pray you know this gentleman here; he is a friend of mine, and one, that will deserve your affection. I know not your name, sir, but shall be glad of any occasion to render me more familiar to you.

Step. My name is Master Stephen, sir; I am this gentleman's own cousin, sir: his father is mine uncle, sir; I am somewhat melancholy, but you shall command me, sir, in whatsoever is incident to a gentleman.

Bob. Sir, I must tell you this, I am no general man; but for Mr Well-bred's sake (you may embrace it at what height of favour you please) I do communicate with you; and conceive you to be a gentleman of some parts. I love few words.

E. Kno. And I fewer, sir. I have scarce enow to thank you.

Mat. But are you indeed, sir, so given to it?

[*To Master* STEPHEN.

Step. Ay, truly, sir, I am mightily given to melancholy.

Mat. Oh, it is your only fine humour, sir; your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir: I am melancholy myself, divers times, sir; and then do I no more but take a pen and paper presently, and overflow you half a score or a dozen of sonnets at a sitting.

Step. Cousin, it is well; I am melancholy enough?

E. Kno. O, ay, excellent!

Well. Captain Bobadil, why muse you so?

E. Kno. He is melancholy too.

Bob. Faith, sir, I was thinking of a most honourable piece of service was performed, to-morrow, being St Mark's day, shall be some ten years now.

E. Kno. In what place, captain?

Bob. Why, at the beleaguering of Strigonium, where, in less than two hours, seven hundred resolute gentlemen, as any were in Europe, lost their lives upon the breach. I'll tell you, gentlemen; it was the first, but the best leagure, that ever I beheld with these eyes, except the taking of——what do you call it, last year, by the Genoese; but that (of all others) was the most fatal and dangerous exploit that ever I was ranged in, since I first bore arms before the face of the enemy, as I am a gentleman and a soldier.

Step. 'So, I had as lief as an angel, I could swear as well as that gentleman!

E. Kno. Then you were a servitor at both, it seems; at Strigonium, and what do you call it?

Bob. Oh, lord, sir! by St George, I was the first man that entered the breach; and had I not effected it with resolution, I had been slain, if I had had a million of lives.

E. Kno. It was a pity you had not ten; a cat's, and your own, i'faith. But was it possible?

Mat. Pray you, mark this discourse, sir.

Step. So I do.

Bob. I assure you, upon my reputation, it is true, and yourself shall confess.

E. Kno. You must bring me to the rack first.

Bob. Observe me judicially, sweet sir: they had planted me three demi-culverins, just in the mouth of the breach: now, sir, as we were to give on, their master-gunner (a man of no mean skill and mark, you must think) confronts me with his linstock, ready to give fire: I, spying his intendment, discharged my petrionel in his bosom, and with these single arms, my poor rapier, ran violently upon the Moors that guarded the ordnance, and put them all, pell-mell, to the sword.

Well. To the sword! to the rapier, captain!

E. Kno. Oh, it was a good figure observed, sir! but did you all this, captain, without hurting your blade?

Bob. Without any impeach o' the earth: you shall perceive, sir. It is the most fortunate weapon that ever rid on poor gentleman's thigh. Shall I tell you, sir? You talk of Morglay, Excalibar, Durindana, or so? Tut, I lend no credit to what is fabled of them; I know the virtue of mine own, and therefore I dare the bolder maintain it.

Step. I marvel whether it be a Toledo, or no.

Bob. A most perfect Toledo, I assure you, sir.

Step. I have a countryman of his here.

Mat. Pray you, let's see, sir. Yes, faith, it is!

Bob. This a Toledo! pish.

Step. Why do you pish, captain?

Bob. A Fleming, by Heaven! I'll buy them for a guilder a piece, an' I would have a thousand of them.

E. Kno. How say you, cousin? I told you thus much.

Well. Where bought you it, Master Stephen?

Step. Of a scurvy rogue soldier (a hundred of lice go with him); he swore it was a Toledo.

Bob. A poor provant rapier, no better.

Mat. Mass, I think it be, indeed! now I look on't better.

E. Kno. Nay, the longer you look on't the worse. Put it up, put it up!

Step. Well, I will put it up, but by——(I have forgot the captain's oath, I thought to have sworn by it) an' e'er I meet him——

Well. O, 'tis past help, now, sir; you must have patience.

Step. Whoreson rascal! I could eat the very hilts for anger.

E. Kno. A sign of good digestion; you have an ostrich stomach, cousin.

Step. A stomach! I would I had him here! you should see an' I had a stomach.

Well. It is better as it is. Come, gentlemen, shall we go?

Enter BRAIN-WORM.

E. Kno. A miracle, cousin! look here! look here!

Step. O, god'slid, by your leave, do you know me, sir?

Brain. Ay, sir, I know you by sight.

Step. You sold me a rapier, did you not?

Brain. Yes, marry, did I, sir.

Step. You said it was a Toledo, ha?

Brain. True, I did so.

Step. But it is none!

Brain. No, sir, I confess it is none.

Step. Do you confess it? Gentlemen, bear witness, he has confessed it. By God's will, an' you had not confessed it———

E. Kno. Oh, cousin, forbear, forbear.

Step. Nay, I have done, cousin.

Well. Why, you have done like a gentleman; he has confessed it, what would you more?

Step. Yet, by his leave, he is a rascal, under his favour, do you see.

E. Kno. Ay, by his leave, he is, and under favour. Pretty piece of civility! Sirrah, how dost like him?

Well. Oh, it's a most precious fool, make much of him. I can compare him to nothing more happily, than a drum; for every one may play upon him.

E. Kno. No, no, a child's whistle were far the fitter.

Brain. Sir, shall I entreat a word with you?

E. Kno. With me, sir! You have not another Toledo to sell, have you?

Brain. You are conceited, sir; your name is Mr Kno'well, as I take it?

E. Kno. You are in the right. You mean not to proceed in the catechism, do you?

Brain. No, sir, I am none of that coat.

E. Kno. Of as bare coat, though! Well say, sir?

Brain. Faith, sir, I am but a servant to the drum extraordinary, and indeed, this smoky varnish being washed off, and three or four patches removed, I appear your worship's in reversion, after the decease of your good father—Brain-worm.

E. Kno. Brain-worm! 'Slight, what breath of a conjurer hath blown thee hither in this shape?

Brain. The breath o' your letter, sir, this morning: the same, that blew you to the windmill, and your father after you.

E. Kno. My father!

Brain. Nay, never start; 'tis true; he has followed you over the fields by the foot, as you would do a hare i' the snow.

E. Kno. Sirrah, Well-bred, what shall we do, sirrah? My father is come over after me.

Well. Thy father! Where is he?

Brain. At justice Clement's house, here, in Coleman-street, where he but stays my return; and then——

Well. Who's this? Brain-worm?

Brain. The same, sir.

Well. Why, how, i' the name of wit, comest thou transmuted thus?

Brain. Faith, a device! a device! Nay, for the love of reason, gentlemen, and avoiding the danger, stand not here; withdraw, and I'll tell you all.

E. Kno. Come, cousin. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Warehouse.*

Enter KITELY *and* CASH.

Kite. What says he, Thomas? Did you speak with him?

Cash. He will expect you, sir, within this half hour.

Keit. Has he the money ready? Can you tell?

Cash. Yes, sir, the money was brought in last night.

Kite. O, that's well: fetch me my cloak, my cloak.
Stay, let me see; an hour to go and come;
Ay, that will be the least; and then 'twill be
An hour before I can dispatch him,
Or very near: well, I will say two hours.
Two hours! ha! things, never dreamt of yet,
May be contrived, ay, and effected too,
In two hours absence. Well, I will not go.
Two hours! No, fleering opportunity!
I will not give your subtlety that scope.
Who will not judge him worthy to be robbed,
That sets his doors wide open to a thief,

And shews the felon where his treasure lies?
Again, what earthly spirit but will attempt
To taste the fruit of beauty's golden tree,
When leaden sleep seals up the dragon's eyes?
I will not go. Business, go by for once.
No, beauty, no; you are too, too precious
To be left so, without a guard, or open!
You must be then kept up close, and well watched!
For, give you opportunity, no quick-sand
Devours or swallows swifter! He, that lends
His wife, if she be fair, or time, or place,
Compels her to be false. I will not go.
The dangers are too many. I am resolved for that.
Carry in my cloak again. Yet, stay. Yet do, too.
I will defer going on all occasions.
Cash. Sir, Snare, your scrivener, will be there with the bonds.
Kite. That's true! fool on me! I had clean forgot it! I must go. What's o'clock?
Cash. Exchange time, sir.
Kite. 'Heart! than will Well-bred presently be here too,
With one or other of his loose consorts.
I am a knave, if I know what to say,
What course to take, or which way to resolve.
My brain, methinks, is like an hour-glass,
Wherein my imagination runs, like sands,
Filling up time; but then are turned and turned;
So that I know not what to stay upon,
And less to put in act. It shall be so.
Nay, I dare build upon his secrecy;
He knows not to deceive me. Thomas!
Cash. Sir.
Kite. Yet now, I have bethought too, I will not—
Thomas, is Cob within?
Cash. I think he be, sir.
Kite. But he'll prate too—there's no speech of him.
No, there were no man o' the earth to Thomas,
If I durst trust him; there is all the doubt.
But should he have a chink in him, I were gone,
Lost in my fame for ever: talk for the Exchange.
The manner he hath stood with, 'till this present,
Doth promise no such change; what should I fear then?
Well, come what will, I'll tempt my fortune once.
Thomas—you may deceive me, but I hope—
Your love to me is more—
Cash. Sir, if a servant's
Duty, with faith, may be called love, you are
More than in hope, you are possessed of it.
Kite. I thank you heartily, Thomas; give me your hand.
With all my heart, good Thomas. I have, Thomas,
A secret to impart to you—but
When once you have it, I must seal your lips up.
So far I tell you, Thomas.
Cash. Sir, for that——
Kite. Nay, hear me out. Think, I esteem you, Thomas,
When I will let you in thus to my private.
It is a thing sits nearer to my crest,
Than thou art aware of, Thomas. If thou should'st
Reveal it, but———
Cash. How! I reveal it!
Kite. Nay,
I do not think thou would'st; but if thou should'st,
'Twere a great weakness.
Cash. A great treachery.
Give it no other name.
Kite. Thou wilt not do it, then?
Cash. Sir, if I do, mankind disclaim me ever!
Kite. He will not swear; he has some reservation,
Some concealed purpose, and close meaning, sure,
Else, being urged so much, how should he choose
But lend an oath to all this protestation?
He's no fanatic, I have heard him swear.
What should I think of it? Urge him again,
And by some other way? I will do so.
Well, Thomas, thou hast not sworn to disclose;
Yes, you did swear?
Cash. Not yet, sir, but I will,
Please you——
Kite. No, Thomas, I dare take thy word;
But if thou wilt swear, do—as thou think'st good;
I am resolved without it: at thy pleasure.
Cash. By my soul's safety then, sir, I protest
My tongue shall ne'er take knowledge of a word,
Delivered me in nature of your trust.
Kite. It is too much, these ceremonies need not;
I know thy faith to be as firm as rock.
Thomas, come hither, near; we cannot be
Too private in this business. So it is,—
(Now he has sworn, I dare the safelier venture)
I have of late, by divers observations—
But whether his oath can bind him, there it is!
I will bethink me ere I do proceed.
Thomas, it will be now too long to stay;
I'll spy some fitter time soon, or to-morrow.
Cash. Sir, at your pleasure.
Kite. I will think. Give me my cloak. And, Thomas,
I pray you search the books, 'gainst my return,
For the receipts 'twixt me and Traps.
Cash. I will, sir.
Kite. And, hear you, if your mistress's brother, Well-bred,
Chance to bring hither any gentlemen,
Ere I come back, let one straight bring me word.
Cash. Very well, sir.
Kite. To the Exchange; do you hear?
Or here in Coleman-Street, to Justice Clement's,
Forget it not, nor be out of the way.

Cash. I will not, sir.
Kite. I pray you have a care on't.
Or whether he come or no, if any other
Stranger, or else, fail not to send me word.
Cash. I shall not, sir.
Kite. Be it your special business
Now to remember it.
Cash. Sir, I warrant you.
Kite. But, Thomas, this is not the secret, Thomas,
I told you of.
Cash. No, sir, I do suppose it.
Kite. Believe me, it is not.
Cash. Sir, I do believe you.
Kite. By Heaven! it is not, that's enough. But, Thomas,
I would not you should utter it, do you see,
To any creature living; yet I care not.
Well, I must hence. Thomas, conceive thus much;
It was a trial of you, when I meant
So deep a secret to you: I mean not this,
But that I have to tell you. This is nothing, this.
But, Thomas, keep this from my wife, I charge you.
Locked up in silence, midnight, buried here—
No greater hell than to be slave to fear. [*Exit.*
Cash. Locked up in silence, midnight, buried here!
Whence should this flood of passion, trow, take head? ha!
Best dream no longer of this running humour,
For fear I sink! the violence of the stream
Already hath transported me so far,
That I can feel no ground at all! But soft,
Here is company: now must I—— [*Exit.*

Enter WELL-BRED, EDW. KNO'WELL, BRAIN-WORM, BOBADIL, STEPHEN.

Well. Beshrew me, but it was an absolute good jest, and exceedingly well carried.
E. Kno. Ay, and our ignorance maintained it as well, did it not?
Well. Yes, faith! but was it possible thou should'st not know him? I forgive Master Stephen, for he is stupidity itself.
E. Kno. 'Fore Heaven, not I. He had so written himself into the habit of one of your poor infantry, your decayed, ruinous, worm-eaten gentlemen of the round.
Well. Why, Brain-worm, who would have thought thou had'st been such an artificer?
E. Kno. An artificer! an architect! Except a man had studied begging all his life-time, and been a weaver of language from his infancy, for the clothing of it—I never saw his rival.
Well. Where got'st thou this coat, I marvel!
Brain. Of a Houndsditch man, sir, one of the devil's near kinsmen, a broker.

Enter CASH.

Cash. Francis! Martin! ne'er a one to be found now? What a spite's this?
Well. How now, Thomas, is my brother Kitely within?
Cash. No, sir; my master went forth e'en now; but master Downright is within. Cob! what, Cob! Is he gone too?
Well. Whither went your master, Thomas, can'st thou tell?
Cash. I know not; to Justice Clement's, I think, sir. Cob! [*Exit Cash.*
E. Kno. Justice Clement! What's he?
Well. Why, dost thou not know him? He is a city magistrate, a justice here; an excellent good lawyer, and a great scholar; but the only mad and merry old fellow in Europe! I shewed you him the other day.
E. Know. Oh, is that he? I remember him now. Good faith! and he has a very strange presence, methinks; it shews as if he stood out of the rank from other men. I have heard many of his jests in the university. They say, he will commit a man for taking the wall of his horse.
Well. Ay, or wearing his cloak on one shoulder, or serving of God. Any thing, indeed, if it come in the way of his humour.

Enter CASH.

Cash. Gasper, Martin, Cob! 'Heart! where should they be, trow?
Bob. Master Kitely's man, prithee vouchsafe us the lighting of this match.
Cash. Fire on your match, no time but now to vouchsafe! [*Aside.*] Francis! Cob!
Bob. Body of me! Here's the remainder of seven pound since yesterday was seven-night. It is your right Trinidado! Did you never take any, Master Stephen?
Step. No, truly, sir! but I'll learn to take it now, since you commend it so.
Bob. Sir, believe me, upon my relation; for what I tell you, the world shall not reprove. I have been in the Indies, where this herb grows, where neither myself, nor a dozen gentlemen more, of my knowledge, have received the taste of any other nutriment in the world, for the space of one and twenty weeks, but the fume of this simple only. Therefore, it cannot be, but 'tis most divine, especially your Trinidado. Your Nicotian is good too. I do hold it, and will affirm it before any prince in Europe, to be the most sovereign and precious weed, that ever the earth tendered to the use of man.
E. Know. This speech would have done decently in a tobacco-trader's mouth.

Enter CASH *and* COB.

Cash. At Justice Clement's he is, in the middle of Coleman-Street.
Cob. O, ho!
Bob. Where's the match I gave thee, Master Kitely's man?
Cash. Here it is, sir.
Cob. By God's me! I marvel what pleasure

or felicity they have in taking this roguish tobacco! it is good for nothing but to choke a man, and to fill him full of smoke and embers.

[BOBADIL *beats him with a cudgel*, MATTHEW *runs away.*

All. Oh, good captain! hold! hold!

Bob. You base scullion, you.

Cash. Come, thou must need be talking too; thou'rt well enough served.

Cob. Well, it shall be a dear beating; an' I live, I will have justice for this.

Bob. Do you prate? Do you murmur?

[BOBADIL *beats him off.*

E. Kno. Nay, good captain, will you regard the humour of a fool?

Bob. A whoreson filthy slave, a dung-worm, an excrement! Body o' Cæsar, but that I scorn to let forth so mean a spirit, I'd have stabbed him to the earth.

Well. Marry, the law forbid, sir.

Bob. By Pharaoh's foot, I would have done it. [*Exit.*

Step. Oh, he swears admirably! By Pharaoh's foot, body of Cæsar! I shall never do it, sure; upon mine honour, and by St George! no, I have not the right grace.

Well. But soft, where is Mr Matthew? gone!

Brain. No, sir; they went in here.

Well. O, let us follow them: Master Matthew is gone to salute his mistress in verse. We shall have the happiness to hear some of his poetry now. He never comes unfurnished. Brain-worm!

Step. Brain-worm? Where is this Brainworm?

E. Kno. Ay, cousin, no words of it, upon your gentility.

Step. Not I, body of me! by this air, St George, and the foot of Pharaoh!

Well. Rare! your cousin's discourse is simply drawn out with oaths.

E. Kno. 'Tis larded with them. A kind of French dressing, if you love it. Come, let us in. Come, cousin. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A hall in Justice* CLEMENT'S *house.*

Enter KITELY *and* COB.

Kite. Ha! How many are there, say'st thou?

Cob. Marry, sir, your brother, Master Well-bred—

Kite. Tut, beside him: what strangers are there, man?

Cob. Strangers! let me see; one, two—mass, I know not well, there are so many.

Kite. How, so many!

Cob. Ay, there is some five or six of them, at the most.

Kite. A swarm, a swarm!
Spite of the devil! how they sting my head
With forked stings, thus wide and large! But Cob,
How long hast thou been coming hither, Cob?

Cob. A little while, sir.

Kite. Didst thou come running?

Cob. No, sir.

Kite. Nay, then I am familiar with thy haste!
Bane to my fortunes! What meant I to marry?
I, that before was ranked in such content,
My mind at rest too in so soft a peace,
Being free master of my own free thoughts,
And now become a slave? What, never sigh!
Be of good cheer, man, for thou art a cuckold.
'Tis done, 'tis done! Nay, when such flowing store,
Plenty, itself, falls into my wife's lap,
The cornucopia will be mine, I know. But, Cob,
What entertainment had they? I am sure
My sister and my wife would bid them welcome! Ha!

Cob. Like enough, sir; yet I heard not a word of it.

Kite. No; their lips were sealed with kisses, and the voice,
Drowned in a flood of joy at their arrival,
Had lost her motion, state, and faculty.
Cob, which of them was't that first kissed my wife?
My sister, I should say, my wife, alas!
I fear not her. Ha! Who was it, say'st thou?

Cob. By my troth, sir, will you have the truth of it?

Kite. Ay, good Cob, I pray thee heartily.

Cob. Then I am a vagabond, and fitter for Bridewell than your worship's company, if I saw any body to be kissed, unless they would have kissed the post in the middle of the warehouse; for there I left them all, at their tobacco, with a pox!

Kite. How! were they not gone in then, ere thou cam'st?

Cob. O, no, sir!

Kite. Spite of the devil! What do I stay here then? Cob, follow me. [*Exit.*

Cob. Nay, soft and fair, I have eggs on the spit. Now am I, for some five and fifty reasons, hammering, hammering revenge! Nay, an' he had not lain in my house, 'twould never have grieved me; but, being my guest, one that, I'll be sworn, I loved and trusted; and he, to turn monster of ingratitude, and strike his lawful host! Well, I hope to raise up an host of fury for it. I'll to justice Clement for a warrant. Strike his lawful host! [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A room in* KITELY'S *house.*

Enter DOWNRIGHT *and Dame* KITELY.

Down. WELL, sister, I tell you true; and you will find it so, in the end.

Dame. Alas, brother, what would you have me to do? I cannot help it. You see my brother brings them in here; they are his friends.

Down. His friends! his friends! 'Slud they do nothing but haunt him up and down, like a sort of unlucky spirit, and tempt him to all manner of villany, that can be thought of. Well, by this light, a little thing would make me play the devil with some of them. An' 'twere not more for your husband's sake, than any thing else, I'd make the house too hot for the best of them. They should say, and swear, hell were broken loose, ere they went hence. But, by God's will, 'tis nobody's fault but yours; for an' you had done as you might have done, they should have been parboiled, and baked too, every mother's son, ere they should ha' come in e'er a one of them.

Dame. God's my life! did you ever hear the like? What a strange man is this! Could I keep out all them, think you? I should put myself against half a dozen men, should I? Good faith, you'd mad the patient'st body in the world to hear you talk so without any sense or reason!

Enter Mrs BRIDGET, *Master* MATTHEW, WELLBRED, STEPHEN, EDWARD KNO'WELL, BOBADIL, *and* CASH.

Bridget. Servant, in troth, you are too prodigal
Of your wit's treasure, thus to pour it forth
Upon so mean a subject as my worth.

Mat. You say well, mistress; and I mean as well.

Dow. Hey-day, here is stuff!

Well. O, now stand close. Pray Heaven she can get him to read; he should do it of his own natural impudence.

Bridg. Servant, what is this same, I pray you?

Mat. Marry, an elegy! an elegy! an odd toy—I'll read it, if you please.

Bridg. Pray you do, servant.

Dow. O, here's no foppery! Death! I can endure the stocks better.

E. Kno. What ails thy brother? Can he not bear the reading of a ballad?

Well. O, no; a rhime to him is worse than cheese, or a bag-pipe. But, mark, you lose the protestation.

Bob. Master Matthew, you abuse the expectation of your dear mistress, and her fair sister. Fie, while you live, avoid this prolixity.

Mat. I shall, sir.
Rare creature, let me speak without offence,
Would Heaven my rude words had the influence
To rule thy thoughts, as thy fair looks do mine,
Then shouldst thou be his prisoner, who is thine.

[*Master* STEPHEN *answers with shaking his head.*]

E. Kno. 'Slight, he shakes his head like a bottle, to feel an' there be any brain in it!

Well. Sister, what ha' you here? Verses?—Pray you, let us see. Who made these verses? They are excellent good.

Mat. O, Master Well-bred, 'tis your disposition to say so, sir. They were good in the morning; I made them extempore this morning.

Well. How, extempore!

Mat. I would I might be hanged else; ask Captain Bobadil. He saw me write them at the ——(pox on it) the Star yonder.

Step. Cousin, how do you like this gentleman's verses?

E. Kno. O, admirable! the best that ever I heard, coz!

Step. Body of Cæsar! they are admirable! The best, that ever I heard, as I am a soldier.

Dow. I am vext! I can hold ne'er a bone of me still! Heart, I think they mean to build and breed here.

Well. Sister Kitely, I marvel you get you not a servant, that can rhime, and do tricks too.

Dow. Oh, monster! Impudence itself, tricks! Come, you might practise your ruffian tricks somewhere else, and not here, I wuss. This is no tavern, nor drinking-school, to vent your exploits in.

Well. How now! whose cow has calved?

Dow. Marry, that has mine, sir. Nay, boy, never look askance at me for the matter; I will tell you of it; aye, sir, you and your companions; mend yourselves when I ha' done.

Well. My companions!

Dow. Yes, sir, your companions, so I say: I am not afraid of you nor them neither, your hangbys here. You must have your poets, and your potlings, your soldados and foolados, to follow you up and down the city, and here they must come to domineer and swagger. Sirrah, you ballad-singer; and Slops, your fellow there, get you out; get you home; or, by this steel, I'll cut off your ears, and that presently.

Well. 'Slight, stay, let us see what he dare do. Cut off his ears! cut a whetstone. You are an ass, do you see; touch any man here, and by this hand, I'll run my rapier to the hilts in you.

Dow. Yea, that would I fain see, boy.

[*They all draw, and they of the house make out to part them.*]

Dame. O, Jesu! murder! Thomas, Gasper!

Bridg. Help, help, Thomas.

E. Kno. Gentlemen, forbear, I pray you.

Bob. Well, sirrah! you Holofernes! by my hand, I will pink your flesh full of holes with my

rapier, for this; I will, by this good Heaven.—Nay, let him come, gentlemen, by the body of St George, I'll not kill him.

[*They offer to fight again, and are parted.*

Cash. Hold, hold, good gentlemen.

Dow. You whoreson, bragging coistril!

Enter KITELY.

Kite. Why, how now, what's the matter?—What's the stir here?
Put up your weapons, and put off this rage.
My wife and sister, they're the cause of this.
What, Thomas! where is the knave?

Cash. Here, sir.

Well. Come, let us go; this is one of my brother's ancient humours, this. [*Exit.*

Step. I am glad nobody was hurt by his ancient humour. [*Exit.*

Kite. Why, how now, brother, who enforced this brawl?

Dow. A sort of lewd rake-hells, that care neither for God nor the devil. And they must come here to read ballads, and roguery, and trash! I'll mar the knot of them ere I sleep, perhaps; especially Bob there: he that is all manner of shapes; and songs and sonnets, his fellow. But I'll follow them. [*Exit.*

Bridg. Brother, indeed you are too violent,
Too sudden in your humour.
There was one a civil gentleman,
And very worthily demeaned himself.

Kite. O, that was some love of yours, sister.

Bridg. A love of mine! I would it were no worse, brother! You'd pay my portion sooner than you think for. [*Exit.*

Dame. Indeed, he seemed to be a gentleman of exceeding fair disposition, and of very excellent good parts. What a coil and stir is here! [*Exit.*

Kite. Her love, by Heaven! my wife's minion!
Death, these phrases are intolerable!
Well, well, well, well, well, well!
It is too plain, too clear. Thomas, come hither.
What, are they gone?

Cash. Ay, sir, they went in.
My mistress, and your sister——

Kite. Are any of the gallants within?

Cash. No, sir, they are all gone.

Kite. Art thou sure of it?

Cash. I can assure you, sir.

Kite. What gentleman was it that they praised so, Thomas?

Cash. One, they call him Master Kno'well, a handsome young gentleman, sir.

Kite. Aye, I thought so. My mind gave me as much.
I'll die but they have hid him in the house
Somewhere; I will go and search. Go with me, Thomas,
Be true to me, and thou shalt find me a master.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Moorfields.*

Enter E. KNO'WELL, WELL-BRED, *and* BRAINWORM.

E. Kno. Well, Brain-worm, perform this business happily, and thou makest a purchase of my love for ever.

Well. In faith, now let thy spirits use their best faculties; but at my hand, remember the message to my brother; for there is no other means to start him out of his house.

Brain. I warrant you, sir, fear nothing. I have a nimble soul has waked all forces of my phantasy by this time, and put them in true motion. What you have possessed me withal, I'll discharge it amply, sir. Make it no question.

[*Exit.*

Well. Forth, and prosper, Brain-worm. Faith, Ned, how dost thou approve of my abilities in this device?

E. Kno. Troth, well, howsoever: but it will come excellent, if it take.

Well. Take, man! Why, it cannot choose but take, if the circumstances miscarry not. But tell me ingenuously, dost thou affect my sister Bridget as thou pretendest?

E. Kno. Friend, am I worth belief?

Well. Come, do not protest. In faith, she is a maid of good ornament, and much modesty; and except I conceived very worthily of her, thou should'st not have her.

E. Kno. Nay, that, I am afraid, will be a question yet, whether I shall have her or no.

Well. 'Slid thou shalt have her; by this light, thou shalt.

E. Kno. Nay, do not swear.

Well. By this hand, thou shalt have her. I will go fetch her presently. Point but where to meet, and, as I am an honest man, I will bring her.

E. Kno. Hold, hold, be temperate.

Well. Why, by ——, what shall I swear by? thou shalt have her, as I am ——

E. Kno. Pray thee, be at peace; I am satisfied; and do believe thou wilt omit no offered occasion to make my desires complete.

Well. Thou shalt see, and know I will not.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter FORMAL *and* KNO'WELL.

Form. Was your man a soldier, sir?

Kno. Aye, a knave; I took him begging o' the way,
This morning, as I came over Moorfields.

Enter BRAIN-WORM.

Oh, here he is! you have made fair speed, believe me.
Where, in the name of sloth, could you be thus—

Brain. Marry, peace be my comfort, where I thought I should have had little comfort of your worship's service.

Kno. How so?

Brain. Oh, sir! your coming to the city, your entertainment of me, and your sending me to watch——indeed, all the circumstances either of your charge, or my employment, are as open to your son, as to yourself.

Kno. How should that be! unless that villain, Brain-worm,
Have told him of the letter, and discovered
All that I strictly charged him to conceal! 'Tis so!

Brain. I am partly o' that faith; 'tis so, indeed.

Kno. But how should he know you to be my man?

Brain. Nay, sir, I cannot tell; unless it be by the black art! Is not your son a scholar, sir?

Kno. Yes, but I hope his soul is not allied
Unto such hellish practice; if it were,
I had just cause to weep my part in him,
And curse the time of his creation.
But where didst thou find them, Fitz-Sword?

Brain. You should rather ask, where they found me, sir; for I will be sworn I was going along in the street, thinking nothing, when (of a sudden) a voice calls, 'Mr Kno'well's man;' another cries, 'soldier;' and thus, half a dozen of them, till they had called me within a house, where I no sooner came, but out flew all their rapiers at my bosom, with some three or fourscore oaths to accompany them, and all to tell me, I was a dead man, if I did not confess where you were, and how I was employed, and about what; which, when they could not get out of me, (as I protest they must have dissected me, and made an anatomy of me first, and so I told them), they locked me up into a room i' the top of a high house, whence, by great miracle, having a light heart, I slid down by a bottom of packthread into the street, and so escaped. But, sir, thus much I can assure you; for I heard it while I was locked up; there were a great many rich merchants, and brave citizens' wives with them, at a feast, and your son, Mr Edward, withdrew with one of them, and has appointed to meet her anon, at one Cob's house, a water-bearer, that dwells by the wall. Now, there your worship shall be sure to take him; for there he preys, and fail he will not.

Kno. Nor will I fail to break his match, I doubt not.
Go thou along with justice Clement's man,
And stay there for me. At one Cob's house, say'st thou?

Brain. Aye, sir, there you shall have him. [*Exit Knowell.*] Yes! invisible! much wench, or much son! 'Slight, when he has staid there three or four hours, travailing with the expectation of wonders, and at length be delivered of air! O, the sport that I should then take to look on him, if I durst! But now I mean to appear no more before him in this shape. I have another trick to act yet. [*To* FORMAL.] Sir, I make you stay somewhat long.

Form. Not a whit, sir;
You have been lately in the wars, sir, it seems?

Brain. Marry have I, sir, to my loss, and expence of all, almost——

Form. Troth, sir, I would be glad to bestow a bottle of wine on you, if it please you to accept it——

Brain. O, sir——

Form. But to hear the manner of your services, and your devices, in the wars; they say they be very strange, and not like those a man reads in the Roman histories, or sees at Mile-End.

Brain. No, I assure you, sir; why, at any time, when it please you, I shall be ready to discourse with you all I know; and more too, somewhat.

Form. No better time than now, sir. We will go to the Windmill, there we shall have a cup of neat grist, as we call it. I pray you, sir, let me request you to the Windmill.

Brain. I will follow you, sir, and make grist of you, if I have good luck. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MATTHEW, EDWARD KNO'WELL, BOBADIL, *and* STEPHEN.

Mat. Sir, did your eyes ever taste the like clown of him, where we were to-day, Mr Wellbred's half brother? I think the whole earth cannot shew his parallel, by this day-light.

E. Kno. We are now speaking of him. Captain Bobadil tells me he is fallen foul of you too.

Mat. O aye, sir! he threatened me with the bastinado.

Bob. Aye, but I think I taught you prevention this morning for that—You shall kill him beyond question, if you be so generously minded.

Mat. Indeed, It is a most excellent trick!

Bob. O, you do not give spirit enough to your motion; you are too tardy, too heavy! O, it must be done like lightning; hey!

[*He practises at a post.*

Mat. Rare captain!

Bob. Tut, 'tis nothing, an't be not done in a—punto!

E. Kno. Captain, did you ever prove yourself upon any of our masters of defence here?

Mat. O, good sir! yes, I hope he has.

Bob. I will tell you, sir. They have assaulted me some three, four, five, six of them together, as I have walked alone in divers skirts of the town, where I have driven them before me the whole length of a street, in the open view of all our gallants, pitying to hurt them, believe me. Yet all this lenity will not overcome their spleen; they will be doing with the pismire, raising a hill, a man may spurn abroad with his foot at pleasure. By myself, I could have slain them all; but I delight not in murder. I am loth to bear any other than this bastinado for them; yet I hold it good policy not to go disarmed; for, though I be skilful, I may be oppressed with multitudes.

E. Kno. Aye, believe me, may you, sir; and, in my conceit, our whole nation should sustain the loss by it, if it were so.

Bob. Alas, no! What's a peculiar man to a nation? Not seen.

E. Kno. O, but your skill, sir!

Bob. Indeed, that might be some loss; but who respects it? I will tell you, sir, by the way of private, and under seal, I am a gentleman, and live here obscure, and to myself: but were I known to his majesty, and the lords, observe me, I would undertake, upon this poor head and life, for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the entire lives of his subjects in general, but to save the one half, nay, three parts of his yearly charge in holding war, and against what enemy soever. And how would I do it, think you?

E. Kno. Nay, I know not, nor can I conceive.

Bob. Why thus, sir. I would select nineteen more to myself, throughout the land; gentlemen they should be, of good spirit, strong and able constitution; I would chuse them by an instinct, a character that I have; and I would teach these nineteen the special rules, as, your Punto, your Reverso, your Stoccata, your Imbroccata, your Passada, your Montanto; till they could all play very near, or altogether, as well as myself. This done, say the enemy were forty thousand strong; we twenty would come into the field the tenth of March, or thereabouts; and we would challenge twenty of the enemy; they could not, in their honour, refuse us! Well, we would kill them; challenge twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them too; and thus would we kill every man his twenty a day, that's twenty score; twenty score, that's two hundred; two hundred a day, five days a thousand; forty thousand; forty times five, five times forty, two hundred days, kill them all up by computation. And this I will venture my poor gentleman-like carcase to perform, provided there be no treason practised upon us, by fair and discreet manhood, that is, civilly, by the sword.

E. Kno. Why are you so sure of your hand, captain, at all times?

Bob. Tut, never miss thrust, upon my reputation with you.

E. Kno. I would not stand in Downright's state, then, an' you meet him, for the wealth of any one street in London.

Bob. Why, sir, you mistake! If he were here now, by this welkin, I would not draw my weapon on him! Let this gentleman do his mind: but I will bastinado him, by the bright sun, wherever I meet him.

Mat. Faith, and I'll have a fling at him, at my distance.

Enter DOWNRIGHT, *walking over the stage.*

E. Kno. God's so! look ye where he is: yonder he goes.

Dow. What peevish luck have I, I cannot meet with these bragging rascals!

Bob. It's not he, is it?

E. Kno. Yes, faith, it is he!

Mat. I'll be hanged then, if that were he.

E. Kno. I assure you that was he.

Step. Upon my reputation, it was he.

Bob. Had I thought it had been he, he must not have gone so: but I can hardly be induced to believe it was he yet.

E. Kno. That I think, sir. But see, he is come again!

Dow. O, Pharaoh's foot! have I found you? Come, draw; to your tools. Draw, gipsey, or I'll thresh you.

Bob. Gentleman of valour, I do believe in thee; hear me——

Dow. Draw your weapon, then.

Bob. Tall man, I never thought on't till now; body of me! I had a warrant of the peace served on me even now, as I came along, by a water-bearer; this gentleman saw it, Master Matthew.

[*He beats him, and disarms him.* MATTHEW *runs away.*]

Dow. 'Sdeath, you will not draw, then?

Bob. Hold, hold, under thy favour, forbear.

Dow. Prate again, as you like this, you whoreson foist you. You will controul the point, you! Your consort is gone; had he staid, he had shared with you, sir. [*Exit* DOWNRIGHT.

E. Kno. Twenty, and kill them; twenty more, kill them too. Ha, ha!

Bob. Well, gentlemen, bear witness, I was bound to the peace, by this good day.

E. Kno. No, faith, it's an ill day, captain; never reckon it other: but say you were bound to the peace; the law allows you to defend yourself; that will prove but a poor excuse.

Bob. I cannot tell, sir. I desire good construction, in fair sort. I never sustained the like disgrace, by Heaven. Sure I was struck with a planet thence, for I had no power to touch my weapon.

E. Kno. Aye, like enough, I have heard of many that have been beaten under a planet. Go, get you to a surgeon. 'Slid, an' these be your tricks, your passados, and your montantos, I'll none of them.

Bob. I was planet-struck, certainly. [*Exit.*

E. Kno. O, manners! that this age should bring forth such creatures! that nature should be at leisure to make them! Come, coz.

Step. Mass, I'll have this cloak.

E. Kno. God's will, 'tis Downright's.

Step. Nay, it is mine now; another might have taken it up as well as I. I'll wear it, so I will.

E. Kno. How, an' he see it? He'll challenge it, assure yourself.

Step. Aye, but he shall not have it; I'll say I bought it.

E. Kno. Take heed you buy it not too dear, coz. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A chamber in* KITELY'S *House.*

Enter KITELY *and* CASH.

Kite. Art thou sure, Thomas, we have pryed into all and every part throughout the house? Is there no by-place, or dark corner, has escaped our searches?

Cash. Indeed, sir, none; there's not a hole or nook unsearched by us, from the upper loft unto the cellar.

Kite. They have conveyed him, then, away, or hid him in some privacy of their own——Whilst we were searching of the dark closet by my sister's chamber, didst thou not think thou heard'st a rustling on the other side, and a soft tread of feet?

Cash. Upon my truth, I did not, sir; or if you did, it might be only the vermin in the wainscot; the house is old, and over-run with them.

Kite. It is, indeed, Thomas—we should bane these rats—Dost thou understand me—we will—they shall not harbour here; I'll cleanse my house from them, if fire or poison can effect it—I will not be tormented thus—They gnaw my brain, and burrow in my heart——I cannot bear it.

Cash. I do not understand you, sir! Good now, what is it disturbs you thus? Pray, be composed; these starts of passion have some cause, I fear, that touches you more nearly.

Kite. Sorely, sorely, Thomas—it cleaves too close to me—Oh, me—[*Sighs.*] Lend me thy arm—so, good Cash.

Cash. You tremble, and look pale! Let me call assistance.

Kite. Not for ten thousand worlds——Alas! alas! it is not in medicine to give me ease—here, here it lies.

Cash. What, sir?

Kite. Why,—nothing, nothing—I am not sick, yet more than dead; I have a burning fever in my mind, and long for that, which, having, would destroy me,

Cash. Believe me, 'tis your fancy's imposition; shut up your generous mind from such intruders—I'll hazard all my growing favour with you; I'll stake my present, my future welfare, that some base whispering knave—nay, pardon me, sir—hath, in the best and richest soil, sown seeds of rank and evil nature! O, my master, should they take root—— [*Laughing within.*

Kite. Hark! hark! dost thou not hear! what think'st thou now? Are they not laughing at me? They are, they are. They have deceived the wittol, and thus they triumph in their infamy—This aggravation is not to be borne. [*Laughing again.*] Hark, again!—Cash, do thou, unseen, steal in upon them, and listen to their wanton conference.

Cash. I shall obey you, though against my will. [*Exit.*

Kite. Against his will! Ha! it may be so—He's young, and may be bribed for them—they've various means to draw the unwary in; if it be so, I'm lost, deceived, betrayed, and my bosom, my full-fraught bosom is unlocked and opened to mockery and laughter! Heaven forbid! He cannot be that viper; sting the hand, that raised and cherished him! Was this stroke added, I should be cursed—But it cannot be—no, it cannot be.

Enter CASH.

Cash. You are musing, sir.

Kite. I ask your pardon, Cash—ask me not why—I have wronged you, and am sorry—'tis gone.

Cash. If you suspect my faith—

Kite. I do not—say no more—and, for my sake, let it die and be forgotten——Have you seen your mistress, and heard——whence was that noise?

Cash. Your brother, Master Well-bred, is with them, and I found them throwing out their mirth on a very truly ridiculous subject; it is one Formal, as he stiles himself, and he appertains, so he phrases it, to Justice Clement, and would speak with you.

Kite. With me! Art thou sure it is the justice's clerk? Where is he?

Enter BRAIN-WORM, *as* FORMAL.

Who are you, friend?

Brain. An appendix to Justice Clement, vulgarly called his clerk.

Kite. What are your wants with me?

Brain. None.

Kite. Do you not want to speak with me?

Brain. No, but my master does.

Kite. What are the justice's commands?

Brain. He doth not command, but entreats Master Kitely to be with him directly, having matters of some moment to communicate unto him.

Kite. What can it be? Say, I'll be with him instantly, and if your legs, friend, go no faster than your tongue, I shall be there before you.

Brain. I will. Vale! [*Exit.*

Kite. 'Tis a precious fool, indeed!—I must go forth—But first, come hither, Thomas—I have admitted thee into the close recesses of my heart, and shewed thee all my frailties, passions, every thing.—

Be careful of thy promise, keep good watch.
Wilt thou be true, my Thomas?

Cash. As truth's self, sir——

But be assured you're heaping care and trouble
Upon a sandy base; ill-placed suspicion
Recoils upon yourself—She's chaste as comely!
Believe it, she is—Let your not note your humour;
Disperse the gloom upon your brow, and be
As clear as her unsullied honour.

Kite. I will then, Cash—thou comfortest me—
I'll drive these
Fiend-like fancies from me, and be myself again.
Think'st thou, she has perceived my folly? 'Twere
Happy, if she had not—She has not—
They, who know no evil, will suspect none.
Cash. True, sir, nor has your mind a blemish now.
This change has gladdened me—Here's my mistress,
And the rest; settle your reason to accost them.
Kite. I will, Cash, I will——

Enter WELL-BRED, *Dame* KITELY, *and* BRIDGET.

Well. What are you plotting, brother Kitely,
That thus of late you muse alone, and bear
Such weighty care upon your pensive brow?
[*Laughs.*
Kite. My care is all for you, good sneering brother;
And well I wish, you'd take some wholesome counsel,
And curb your headstrong humours; trust me, brother,
You were to blame to raise commotions here,
And hurt the peace and order of my house.
Well. No harm done, brother, I warrant you.
Since there is no harm done, anger costs
A man nothing, and a brave man is never
His own man, till he be angry—To keep
His valour in obscurity, is to keep himself,
As it were, in a cloak-bag. What's a brave
Musician unless he play?
What's a brave man unless he fight?
Dame. Aye, but what harm might have come of it, brother?
Well. What, schooled on both sides! Pr'ythee, Bridget, save me from the rod and lecture.
[BRIDG. *and* WELL. *retire.*
Kite. With what a decent modesty she rates him!
My heart's at ease, and she shall see it is——
How art thou, wife? Thou look'st both gay and comely.
In troth thou dost—I'm sent for out, my dear,
But I shall soon return—Indeed, my life,
Business, that forces me abroad, grows irksome.
I could content me with less gain and 'vantage,
To have thee more at home; indeed I could.
Dame. Your doubts, as well as love, may breed these thoughts.
Kite. That jar untunes me. [*Aside.*
What dost thou say? Doubt thee!
I should as soon suspect myself—No, no,
My confidence is rooted in thy merit,
So fixed and settled, that, wert thou inclined
To masks, to sports, and balls, where lusty youth
Leads up the wanton dance, and the raised pulse
Beats quicker measures, yet I could with joy,
With heart's ease and security—not but
I had rather thou should'st prefer thy home,
And me, to toys and such like vanities.
Dame. But sure, my dear,
A wife may moderately use these pleasures,
Which numbers and the time give sanction to,
Without the smallest blemish on her name.
Kite. And so she may—And I'll go with thee, child;
I will indeed—I'll lead thee there myself,
And be the foremost reveller. I'll silence
The sneers of envy, stop the tongue of slander;
Nor will I more be pointed at, as one
Disturbed with jealousy——
Dame. Why, were you ever so?
Kite. What!—Ha! never—ha, ha, ha!
She stabs me home. [*Aside.*] Jealous of thee!
No, do not believe it—Speak low, my love,
Thy brother will overhear us—No, no, my dear.
It could not be, it could not be—for—for—
What is the time now?—I shall be too late—
No, no, thou may'st be satisfied
There's not the smallest spark remaining—
Remaining! What do I say? There never was,
Nor can, nor ever shall be—so be satisfied—
Is Cob within there? Give me a kiss,
My dear; there, there, now we are reconciled—
I'll be back immediately—Good-bye, good-bye—
Ha! ha! jealous, I shall burst my sides with laughing,
Ha, ha! Cob, where are you, Cob? Ha, ha!—
[*Exit.*
[WELL-BRED *and* BRIDGET *come forward.*
Well. What have you done to make your husband part so merry from you? He has of late been little given to laughter.
Dame. He laughed indeed, but seemingly without mirth. His behaviour is new and strange. He is much agitated, and has some whimsy in his head, that puzzles mine to read it.
Well. 'Tis jealousy, good sister, and writ so largely, that the blind may read it; have you not perceived it yet?
Dame. If I have, 'tis not always prudent, that my tongue should betray my eyes; so far my wisdom tends, good brother, and little more I boast—But what makes him ever calling for Cob so? I wonder how he can employ him.
Well. Indeed, sister, to ask how he employs Cob, is a necessary question for you, that are his wife, and a thing not very easy for you to be satisfied in—But this I'll assure you, Cob's wife is an excellent bawd, sister, and oftentimes your husband haunts her house; marry, to what end I cannot altogether accuse him. Imagine you, what you think convenient. But I have known fair hides have foul hearts ere now, sister.
Dame. Never said you truer than that, brother; so much I can tell you for your learning. O, ho! is this the fruit of his jealousy? I thought some game was in the wind, he acted so much tenderness but now; but I'll be quit with him.—Thomas!

Enter CASH.

Fetch your hat, and go with me: I'll get my hood, and out the backward-way. I would to

fortune I could take him there! I'd return him his own, I warrant him! I'd fit him for his jealousy!

[*Exeunt.*

Well. Ha, ha! so e'en let them go; this may make sport anon—What, Brain-worm?

Enter BRAIN-WORM.

Brain. I saw the merchant turn the corner, and came back to tell you, all goes well; wind and tide, my master.

Well. But how got'st thou this apparel of the justice's man?

Brain. Marry, sir, my proper fine penman would needs bestow the grist o' me at the Windmill, to hear some martial discourse, where I so marshalled him, that I made him drunk with admiration; and because too much heat was the cause of his distemper, I stript him stark naked, as he lay along asleep, and borrowed his suit to deliver this counterfeit message in, leaving a rusty armour, and an old brown bill, to watch him 'till my return; which shall be, when I have pawned his apparel and spent the better part of the money, perhaps.

Well. Well, thou art a successful merry knave, Brain-worm; his absence will be subject for more mirth. I pray thee return to thy young master, and will him to meet me and my sister Bridget at the Tower instantly; for here, tell him, the house is so stored with jealousy, there is no room for love to stand upright in. We must get our fortunes committed to some large prison, say: and then the Tower, I know no better air, nor where the liberty of the house may do us more present service. Away.

[*Exit* BRAIN.

Bridg. What, is this the engine, that you told me of? What farther meaning have you in the plot?

Well. That you may know, fair sister-in-law, how happy a thing it is to be fair and beautiful.

Bridg. That touches not me, brother.

Well. That's true; that's even the fault of it; for, indeed, beauty stands a woman in no stead, unless it procure her touching—Well, there's a dear and well-respected friend of mine, sister, stands very strongly and worthily affected towards you, and hath vowed to inflame whole bonfires of zeal at his heart, in honour of your perfections. I have already engaged my promise to bring you, where you shall hear him confirm much more. Ned Kno'well is the man, sister.—There's no exception against the party; you are ripe for a husband, and a minute's loss to such an occasion is a great trespass in a wise beauty. What say you, sister? On my soul, he loves you; will you give him the meeting?

Bridg. Faith, I had very little confidence in my own constancy, brother, if I durst not meet a man: but this motion of yours savours of an old knight adventurer's servant a little too much, methinks.

Well. What's that, sister!

Bridg. Marry, of the go-between.

Well. No matter if it did; I would be such a one for my friend. But see, who is returned to hinder us.

Enter KITELY.

Kite. What villany is this? Called out on a false message! This was some plot; I was not sent for. Bridget, where's your sister?

Bridg. I think she be gone forth, sir.

Kite. How! is my wife gone forth? Whither, for Heaven's sake?

Bridg. She's gone abroad with Thomas.

Kite. Abroad with Thomas! Oh, that villain cheats me!
He hath discovered all unto my wife;
Beast that I was to trust him! Whither, I pray
You, went she?

Bridg. I know not, sir.

Well. I'll tell you, brother, whither I suspect she's gone.

Kite. Whither, good brother?

Well. To Cob's house, I believe; but keep my counsel.

Kite. I will, I will. To Cob's house! Does she haunt there?
She's gone on purpose now to cuckold me,
With that lewd rascal, who, to win her favour,
Hath told her all—Why would you let her go?

Well. Because she's not my wife: if she were, I'd keep her to her tether.

Kite. So, so; now 'tis plain. I shall go mad
With my misfortunes; now they pour in torrents.
I'm bruted by my wife, betrayed by my servant,
Mocked at by my relations, pointed at by my neighbours,
Despised by myself.—There is nothing left, now,
But to revenge myself first, next hang myself;
And then—all my cares will be over. [*Exit.*

Bridg. He storms most loudly; sure you have gone too far in this.

Well. 'Twill all end right, depend upon it.—But let us lose no time; the coast is clear; away, away; the affair is worth it, and cries haste.

Bridg. I trust me to your guidance, brother, and so fortune for us. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Stocks-Market.*

Enter MATTHEW *and* BOBADIL.

Mat. I WONDER, captain, what they will say of my going away? ha!

Bob. Why, what should they say? but as of a discreet gentleman; quick, wary, respectful of nature's fair lineaments, and that is all.

Mat. Why so! but what can they say of your beating?

Bob. A rude part, a touch with soft wood, a kind of gross battery used, lain on strongly, borne most patiently, and that is all. But wherefore do I wake their remembrance? I was fascinated, by Jupiter! fascinated; but I will be unwitched, and revenged by law.

Mat. Do you hear? Is it not best to get a warrant, and have him arrested, and brought before justice Clement?

Bob. It were not amiss; would we had it!

Mat. Why, here comes his man; let us speak to him.

Bob. Agreed. Do you speak.

Enter BRAIN-WORM *as* FORMAL.

Mat. Save you, sir.

Brain. With all my heart, sir!

Mat. Sir, there is one Downright hath abused this gentleman and myself, and we determine to make ourselves amends by law; now, if you would do us the favour to procure a warrant to bring him before your master, you shall be well considered of, I assure you, sir.

Brain. Sir, you know my service is my living; such favours as these, gotten of my master, is his only preferment, and therefore you must consider me, as I may make benefit of my place.

Mat. How is that, sir?

Brain. Faith, sir, the thing is extraordinary, and the gentleman may be of great account. Yet, be what he will, if you will lay me down a brace of angels in my hand, you shall have it; otherwise not.

Mat. How shall we do, captain? He asks a brace of angels; you have no money?

Bob. Not a cross, by fortune.

Mat. Nor I, as I am a gentleman, but twopence left of my two shillings in the morning for wine and raddish. Let us find him some pawn.

Bob. Pawn! we have none to the value of his demand.

Mat. O, yes, I can pawn my ring here.

Bob. And harkee, he shall have my trusty Toledo too. I believe I shall have no service for it to-day.

Mat. Do you hear, sir? We have no store of money at this time, but you shall have good pawns: look you, sir, I will pledge this ring, and that gentleman his Toledo, because we would have it dispatched.

Brain. I am content, sir; I will get you the warrant presently. What is his name, say you? Downright?

Mat. Ay, ay, George Downright.

Brain. Well, gentlemen, I will procure you the warrant presently; but who will you have to serve it?

Mat. That is true, captain, that must be considered.

Bob. Body of me, I know not! 'Tis service of danger!

Brain. Why, you were best get one of the varlets of the city, a serjeant; I'll appoint you one, if you please.

Mat. Will you, sir? Why we can wish no better.

Bob. We'll leave it to you, sir.

[*Exeunt* BOB. *and* MAT.

Brain. This is rare! Now will I go pawn this cloak of the justice's man's, at the broker's, for a varlet's suit, and be the varlet myself, and so get money on all sides. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The street before* COB'S *house.*

Enter KNO'-WELL.

Kno. O here it is; I have found it now—Hoa, who is within here? [TIB *appears at the window.*

Tib. I am within, sir, what is your pleasure?

Kno. To know who is within besides yourself.

Tib. Why, sir, you are no constable, I hope?

Kno. O, fear you the constable? Then I doubt not you have some guests within deserve that fear—I'll fetch him straight.

Tib. For Heaven's sake, sir——

Kno. Go to, come tell me, is not young Kno'well here?

Tib. Young Kno'well! I know none such, sir, on my honesty.

Kno. Your honesty, dame! It flies too lightly from you. There is no way but fetch the constable.

Tib. The constable; the man is mad, I think.

Enter CASH *and Dame* KITELY.

Cash. Hoa! who keeps house here?

Kno. O, this is the female copesmate of my son. Now shall I meet him straight. [*Aside.*

Dame. Knock, Thomas, hard.

Cash. Hoa! good wife.

Tib. Why, what is the matter with you?

Dame. Why, woman, grieves it you to ope the door? Belike you get something to keep it shut.

Tib. What mean these questions, pray you?

Dame. So strange you make it! Is not my husband here!

Kno. Her husband! [*Aside.*

Dame. My tried and faithful husband, Master Kitely.

Tib. I hope he needs not be tried here.

Dame. Come hither, Cash—I see my turtle coming to his haunts; let us retire. [*They retire.*

Kno. This must be some device to mock me withal.
Soft—who is this!—Oh! 'tis my son disguised.
I'll watch him and surprise him.

Enter KITELY, *muffled in a cloak.*

Kite. 'Tis truth, I see; there she skulks.
But I will fetch her from her hold—I will—
I tremble so, I scarce have power to do the justice
Her infamy demands.

[*As* KITELY *goes forward, Dame* KITELY *and* KNO'WELL *lay hold of him.*]

Kno. Have I trapped you, youth? You cannot 'scape me now.

Dame. O, sir! have I forestalled your honest market!
Found your close walks! You stand amazed
Now, do you? Ah, hide, hide your face, for shame!
I'faith, I am glad I have found you out at last.
What is your jewel, trow? In, come let's see her; fetch
Forth the wanton dame—If she be fairer,
In any honest judgment, than myself,
I'll be content with it: but she is change;
She feeds you fat, she soothes your appetite,
And you are well. Your wife, an honest woman,
Is meat twice sod to you, sir. O, you treacher!

Kno. What mean you, woman? Let go your hold.
I see the counterfeit—I am his father, and claim him as my own.

Kite. [*Discovering himself.*] I am your cuckold, and claim my vengeance.

Dame. What, do you wrong me, and insult me too?
Thou faithless man!

Kite. Out on thy more than strumpet's impudence!
Steal'st thou thus to thy haunts? And have I taken
Thy bawd and thee, and thy companion,
This hoary-headed letcher, this old goat,
Close at your villany, and would'st thou 'scuse it
With this stale harlot's jest, accusing me?
O, old incontinent, dost thou not shame
To have a mind so hot; and to entice,
And feed the enticement of a lustful woman?

Dame. Out, I defy thee, thou dissembling wretch!

Kite. Defy me, strumpet! Ask thy pander here;
Can he deny it, or that wicked elder?

Kno. Why, hear you, sir——

Cash. Master, 'tis in vain to reason, while these passions blind you—I'm grieved to see you thus.

Kite. Tut, tut, never speak; I see through every Veil you cast upon your treachery: but I have Done with you, and root you from my heart for ever.
For you, sir, thus I demand my honour's due;
Resolved to cool your lust, or end my shame.
[*Draws.*

Kno. What lunacy is this! Put up your sword, and undeceive yourself—No arm, that e'er poised weapon, can affright me. But I pity folly, nor cope with madness.

Kite. I will have proofs—I will—so you, good wife-bawd, Cob's wife; and you, that make your husband such a monster; and you, young pander, and old cuckold maker, I'll have you every one before the justice—Nay, you shall answer it; I charge you go. Come forth, thou bawd.

[*Goes into the house and brings out* TIB.

Kno. Marry, with all my heart, sir; I go willingly.
Though I do taste this as a trick upon me,
To punish my impertinent search; and justly;
And half forgive my son for the device.

Kite. Come, will you go?

Dame. Go! to thy shame, believe it.

Kite. Though shame and sorrow both my heart betide,
Come on—I must, and will be satisfied. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Stocks Market.*

Enter BRAINWORM.

Brain. Well, of all my disguises yet, now am I most like myself; being in this serjeant's gown. A man of my present profession never counterfeits, till he lays hold upon a debtor, and says, he arrests him; for then he brings him to all manner of unrest. A kind of little kings we are, bearing the diminutive of a mace, made like a young artichoke, that always carries pepper and salt in itself. Well, I know not what danger I undergo by this exploit; pray Heaven I come well off!

Enter BOBADIL *and Master* MATTHEW.

Mat. See, I think, yonder is the varlet, by his gown. Save you, friend; are not you here by appointment of justice Clement's man?

Brain. Yes, an't please you, sir, he told me two gentlemen had willed him to procure a warrant from his master, which I have about me, to be served on one Downright.

Mat. It is honestly done of you both; and see where the party comes you must arrest. Serve it upon him quickly, before he be aware——

Enter Master STEPHEN, *in* DOWNRIGHT'*s cloak.*

Bob. Bear back, master Matthew.

Brain. Master Downright, I arrest you i' the queen's name, and must carry you before a justice, by virtue of this warrant.

Step. Me, friend, I am no Downwright, I. I am

Master Stephen; you do not well to arrest me, I tell you truly. I am in nobody's bonds or books, I would you should know it. A plague on you heartily, for making me thus afraid before my time.

Brain. Why now are you deceived, gentlemen?

Bob. He wears such a cloak, and that deceived us. But see, here he comes, indeed! this is he, officer.

Enter DOWNRIGHT.

Down. Why, how now, Signor Gull! are you turned filcher of late? Come, deliver up my cloak.

Step. Your cloak, sir! I bought it even now in open market.

Brain. Master Downright, I have a warrant I must serve upon you, procured by these two gentlemen.

Down. These gentlemen! these rascals!

Brain. Keep the peace, I charge you, in her majesty's name.

Down. I obey thee. What must I do, officer?

Brain. Go before Mr Justice Clement, to answer what they can object against you, sir. I will use you kindly, sir.

Mat. Come, let us before, and make the justice, captain—— [*Exit.*

Bob. The varlet is a tall man, before heaven! [*Exit.*

Down. Gull, you'll gi' me my cloak?

Step. Sir, I bought it, and I'll keep it.

Down. You will?

Step. Aye, that I will.

Down. Officer, there is thy fee, arrest him.

Brain. Master Stephen, I must arrest you.

Step. Arrest me! I scorn it; there, take your cloak, I'll none on it.

Down. Nay, that shall not serve your turn, now, sir. Officer, I'll go with thee to the justice's. Bring him along.

Step. Why, is not here your cloak? what would you have?

Down. I'll ha' you answer it, sir.

Brain. Sir, I'll take your sword, and this gentleman's too, for his appearance.

Down. I'll ha' no words taken. Bring him along.

Brain. So, so, I have made a fair mash on't.

Step. Must I go?

Brain. I know no remedy, master Stephen.

Down. Come along before me here. I do not love your hanging look behind.

Step. Why, sir, I hope you cannot hang me for it. Can he, fellow?

Brain. I think not sir. It is but a whipping matter, sure!

Step. Why, then, let him do his worst, I am resolute. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A hall in Justice* CLEMENT'S *house.*

Enter CLEMENT, KNO'WELL, KITELY, *Dame* KITELY, TIB, CASH, COB, *and Servants.*

Clem. Nay, but stay, stay, give me leave. My chair, sirrah. You, master Kno'well, say you went thither to meet your son.

Kno. Aye, sir.

Clem. But who directed you thither?

Kno. That did mine own man, sir.

Clem. Where is he?

Kno. Nay, I know not now; I left him with your clerk; and appointed him to stay for me.

Clem. My clerk! About what time was this?

Kno. Marry, between one and two, as I take it.

Clem. And what time came my man with the false message to you, master Kitely?

Kite. After two, sir.

Clem. Very good: but, Mrs Kitely, how chance it that you were at Cob's? Ha!

Dame. An' please you, sir, I'll tell you. My brother Well-bred told me, that Cob's house was a suspected place——

Clem. So it appears, methinks: but on.

Dame. And that my husband used thither daily.

Clem. No matter, so he used himself well, mistress.

Dame. True, sir; but you know what grows by such haunts, oftentimes.

Clem. I see rank fruits of a jealous brain, mistress Kitely. But, did you find your husband there, in that case, as you suspected?

Kite. I found her there, sir.

Clem. Did you so? That alters the case.—— Who gave you knowledge of your wife's being there?

Kite. Marry, that did my brother Well-bred.

Clem. How! Well-bred first tell her, than tell you after? Where is Well-bred?

Kite. Gone with my sister, sir, I know not whither.

Clem. Why, this is a mere trick, a device; you are gulled in this most grossly, all! Alas, poor wench, wert thou suspected for this?

Tib. Yes, an' it please you.

Clem. I smell mischief here, plot and contrivance, master Kitely. However, if you will step into the next room with your wife, and think coolly of matters, you'll find some trick has been played you—I fear there have been jealousies on both parts, and the wags have been merry with you.

Kite. I begin to feel it—I'll take your counsel—Will you go in, dame?

Dame. I will have justice, Mr Kitely.

[*Exit* KITELY *and Dame.*

Clem. You will be a woman, Mrs Kitely, that I see—How now, what's the matter?

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, there's a gentleman i' the court without, desires to speak with your worship.

Clem. A gentleman! What is he?

Serv. A soldier, sir, he says.

Clem. A soldier! My sword, quickly. A soldier speak with me! Stand by, I will end your matters, anon—Let the soldier enter. Now, sir, what ha' you to say to me?

Enter BOBADIL *and* MATTHEW.

Bob. By your worship's favour——

Clem. Nay, keep out, sir, I know not your pretence; you send me word, sir, you are a soldier. Why, sir, you shall be answered here; here be them have been among soldiers. Sir, your pleasure?

Bob. Faith, sir, so it is, this gentleman and myself have been most uncivilly wronged and beaten by one Downright, a coarse fellow about the town here; and, for my own part, I protest, being a man in no sort given to this filthy humour of quarrelling, he hath assaulted me in the way of my peace; despoiled me of mine honour; disarmed me of my weapons; and rudely laid me along in the open streets; when I not so much as once offered to resist him.

Clem. O, god's precious! Is this the soldier? Lie there, my sword, 'twill make him swoon, I fear; he is not fit to look on't, that will put up a blow.

Mat. An't please your worship, he was bound to the peace.

Clem. Why, an' he were, sir, his hands were not bound, were they?

Serv. There's one of the varlets of the city, sir, has brought two gentlemen here, one upon your worship's warrant.

Clem. My warrant!

Serv. Yes, sir, the officer says, procured by these two.

Clem. Bid him come in. Set by this picture. What, Mr Downright! are you brought at Mr Freshwater's suit here?

Enter DOWNRIGHT, STEPHEN, *and* BRAIN-WORM.

Dow. I'faith, sir. And here's another, brought at my suit.

Clem. What are you, sir?

Step. A gentleman, sir. O, uncle!

Clem. Uncle! Who, Mr Kno'well?

Kno. Aye, sir, this is a wise kinsman of mine.

Step. God's my witness, uncle, I am wronged here monstrously; he charges me with stealing of his cloak, and would I might never stir, if I did not find it in the street by chance.

Dow. O, did you find it, now? You said you bought it ere-while.

Step. And you said I stole it. Nay, now my uncle is here, I will do well enough with you.

Clem. Well, let this breathe a-while. You that have cause to complain there, stand forth. Had you my warrant for this gentleman's apprehension?

Bob. Aye, an't please your worship.

Clem. Nay, do not speak in passion so. Where had you it?

Bob. Of your clerk, sir.

Clem. That's well, an' my clerk can make warrants, and my hand not at them! Where is the warrant? officer, have you it?

Brain. No, sir, your worship's man, master Formal, bid me do it for these gentlemen, and he would be my discharge.

Clem. Why, Mr Downright, are you such a novice to be served, and never see the warrant!

Dow. Sir, he did not serve it on me.

Clem. No, how then?

Dow. Marry, sir, he came to me, and said he must serve it, and he would use me kindly, and so——

Clem. O, God's pity, was it so, sir? He must serve it? Give me a warrant, I must serve one too—you knave, you slave, you rogue, do you say you must, sirrah? Away with him to the goal! I will teach you a trick for your must, sir.

Brain. Good sir, I beseech you be good to me.

Clem. Tell him, he shall go to the goal; away with him, I say.

Brain. Aye, sir, if you will commit me, it shall be for committing more than this. I will not lose by my travel any grain of my fame certain. [*Throws off his disguise.*

Clem. How is this!

Kno. My man, Brain-worm!

Step. O, yes, uncle, Brain-worm has been with my cousin Edward and I, all this day.

Clem. I told you all there was some device.

Brain. Nay, excellent Justice, since I have laid myself thus open to you, now stand strong for me, both with your sword and your balance.

Clem. Body o' me, a merry knave! Give me a bowl of sack. If he belongs to you, Master Kno'well, I bespeak your patience.

Brain. That is it I have most need of. Sir, if you will pardon me only, I will glory in all the rest of my exploits.

Kno. Sir, you know I love not to have my favours come hard from me. You have your pardon; though I suspect you shrewdly for being of counsel with my son against me.

Brain. Yes, faith, I have, sir; though you retained me doubly this morning for yourself; first, as Brain-worm, after, as Fitz-Sword. I was your reformed soldier. 'Twas I sent you to Cob's upon the errand without end.

Kno. Is it possible? Or that thou should'st disguise thyself so as I should not know thee?

Brain. O, sir! this has been the day of my metamorphoses; it is not that shape alone, that I have run through to-day. I brought Master Kitely a message too, in the form of Master Jus-

tice's man here, to draw him out of the way, as well as your worship; while Master Well-bred might make a conveyance of Mrs Bridget to my young master.

Kno. My son is not married, I hope?

Brain. Faith, sir, they are both as sure as love, a priest, and three thousand pounds, which is her portion, can make them; and by this time are ready to bespeak their wedding supper at the Windmill, except some friend here prevents them, and invite them home.

Clem. Marry, that will I; I thank thee for putting me in mind on't. Sirrah, go you and fetch them hither upon my warrant. Neither's friends have cause to be sorry, if I know the young couple aright. But I pray thee, what hast thou done with my man Formal?

Brain. Faith, sir, after some ceremony past, as making him drunk, first with story, and then with wine, but all in kindness, and stripping him to his shirt; I left him in that cool vein, departed, sold your worship's warrant to these two, pawned his livery for that varlet's gown to serve it in; and thus have brought myself, by my activity, to your worship's consideration.

Clem. And I will consider thee in a cup of sack. Here's to thee; which having drank off, this is my sentence, pledge me. Thou hast done, or assisted to nothing, in my judgment, but deserves to be pardoned for the wit of the offence. Go into the next room; let Master Kitely into this whimsical business, and, if he does not forgive thee, he has less mirth in him than an honest man ought to have. How now, who are these?

Enter EDWARD KNO'WELL, WELL-BRED, *and* BRIDGET.

O, the young company. Welcome, welcome. Give you joy. Nay, Mrs Bridget, blush not! you are not so fresh a bride, but the news of it has come hither before you. Master Bridegroom, I have made your peace, give me your hand. So will I for the rest, ere you forsake my roof.

All. We are the more bound to your humanity, sir.

Clem. Only these two have so little of man in them, they are no part of my care.

Step. And what shall I do?

Clem. Oh! I had lost a sheep, an' he had not bleated. Why, sir, you shall give Mr Downright his cloak; and I will entreat him to take it. A trencher and a napkin you shall have in the buttery, and keep Cob and his wife company here: whom I will entreat first to be reconciled; and you to endeavour with your wit to keep them so.

Step. I will do my best.

Clem. Call Master Kitely, and his wife, there.

Enter KITELY *and* DAME KITELY.

Did I not tell you there was a plot against you? Did I not smell it out, as a wise magistrate ought? Have not you traced, have you not found it, eh, Master Kitely?

Kite. I have—I confess my folly, and own I have deserved what I have suffered for it. The trial has been severe, but it is past. All I have to ask now, is, that, as my folly is cured, and my persecutors forgiven, my shame may be forgotten.

Clem. That will depend upon yourself, Master Kitely; do not you yourself create the food for mischief, and the mischievous will not prey upon you. But come, let a general reconciliation go round, and let all discontents be laid aside. You, Master Downright, put off your anger. You, Master Kno'well, your cares. And do you, Master Kitely, and your wife, put off your jealousies.

Kite. Sir, thus they go from me: kiss me, my wife.

See, what a drove of horns fly in the air,
Winged with my cleansed, and my credulous breath;
Watch them, suspicious eyes, watch where they fall!
See, see, on heads, that think they have none at all.
O, what a plenteous world of this will come!
When air rains horns, all may be sure of some.

Clem. 'Tis well, 'tis well. This night we will dedicate to friendship, love, and laughter. Master Bridegroom, take your bride, and lead every one a fellow. Here is my mistress, Brain-worm! to whom all my addresses of courtship shall have their reference: whose adventures this day, when our grand-children shall hear to be made a fable, I doubt not but it shall find both spectators and applause. [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

ALCHYMIST.

BY

JONSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SUBTLE, *the alchymist.*
FACE, *the housekeeper.*
SIR EPICURE MAMMON, *Knight.*
ABEL DRUGGER, *a tobacco man.*
SURLY, *a gamester.*
DAPPER, *a clerk.*
KASTRILL, *the angry boy.*
LOVEWIT, *master of the house.*
TRIBULATION, *a pastor of Amsterdam.*
ANANIAS, *a deacon there.*

WOMEN.

DOL COMMON, *colleague with Subtle and Face.*
DAME PLIANT, *a widow, sister to the angry boy.*

Neighbours, Officers, &c.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter FACE, SUBTLE, *and* DOL COMMON.

Face. BELIEVE it, I will.
Sub. Do thy worst. I dare thee.
Face. Sirrah, I'll strip you out of all your sleights.
Dol. Nay, look ye, sovereign, general, are you madmen?
Sub. O, let the wild sheep loose. I'll gum your silk
With good strong water, an' you come.
Dol. Will you have
The neighbours hear you? Will you betray all?
Face. Sirrah!
Sub. I shall mar
All that the taylor has made, if you approach.
Face. You most notorious whelp, you insolent slave,
Dare you do this?
Sub. Yes faith, yes faith.
Face. Why, who
Am I, my mungrel? Who am I?
Sub. I'll tell you,
Since you know not yourself—
Face. Speak lower, rogue.
Sub. Yes, you were once (time not long passed) the good,
Honest, plain, livery-man, that kept
Your master's worship's house here in the Friars,
For the vacations.
Face. Will you be so loud?
Sub. Since, by my means, translated suburb-captain.
Face. By your means, doctor Dog?
Sub. Within man's memory,
All this I speak of.
Face. Why, I pray you, have I
Been countenanced by you, or you by me?
Do but collect, sir, where I met you first.

Sub. I do not hear well.
Face. Not of this, I think it:
But I shall put you in mind, sir; at Pye-corner,
Taking your meal of steam in, from cooks' stalls;
Where, like the father of hunger, you did walk
Pitcously costive, with your pinched-horn nose,
And your complexion of the Roman wash,
Stuck full of black and melancholic worms,
Like powder corn shot at the Artillery-yard.
Sub. I wish you could advance your voice a little.
Face. When you went pinned up in the several rags
You had raked and picked from dunghills before day;
Your feet in mouldy slippers, for your kibes;
A felt of rug, and a thin threaden cloak,
That scarce would cover your no-buttocks—
Sub. So, sir!
Face. When all your alchymy, and your algebra,
Your minerals, vegetables, and animals,
Your conjuring, cozening, and your dozen of trades,
Could not relieve your corpse with so much linen
Would make you tinder but to see a fire;
I gave you count'nance, credit for your coals,
Your stills, your glasses, your materials;
Built you a furnace, drew you customers,
Advanced all your black arts, lent you, beside,
A house to practice in—
Sub. Your master's house?
Face. Where you have studied the more thriving skill
Of bawdry since.
Sub. Yes, in your master's house.
You and the rats here kept possession.
Make it not strange.
Face. You might talk softlier, rascal.
Sub. No, you Scarabe;
I'll thunder you in pieces: I will teach you
How to beware to tempt a fury again,
That carries tempest in his hand and voice.
Dol. Nay, general, I thought you were civil.
Face. I shall turn desperate, if you grow thus loud.
Sub. And hang thyself, I care not.
Face. Hang thee, collier,
And all thy pots and pans, in picture, I will,
Since thou hast moved me—
Dol. Oh, this will o'erthrow all.
Face. Write thee up bawd in Paul's, have all thy tricks
Of cozening with a hollow coal, dust, scrapings,
Searching for things lost with a sieve and sheers,
Erecting figures in your rows of houses,
And taking in of shadows with a glass,
Told in red letters; and a face cut for thee,
Worse than Gamaliel Ratsey's.
Dol. Are you sound?
Have you your senses, masters?
Face. I will have
A book, but barely reckoning thy impostures,
Shall prove a true philosopher's stone to printers.
Sub. Away, you trencher-rascal!
Face. Out, you dog-leech,
The vomit of all prisons!
Dol. Will you be
Your own destructions, gentlemen?
Sub. Cheater!
Face. Bawd!
Sub. Cow-herd!
Face. Conjurer!
Sub. Cut-purse!
Dol. We are ruined! lost! Have you no more regard
To your reputations? Where's your judgment? 'Slight,
Have yet some care of me, of your republic—
Face. Away, this brach. I'll bring the rogue within
The statute of sorcery, *tricesimo tertio*
Of Harry the eighth; ay, and, perhaps, thy neck
Within a noose for laundering gold, and barbing it.
Dol. You'll bring your head within a cockscomb, will you?
[*She catches out* FACE'S *sword, and breaks* SUBTLE'S *glass.*]
And you, sir, with your menstrue, gather it up.
'Sdeath! you abominable pair of stinkards,
Leave off your barking, and grow one again,
Or, by the light that shines, I'll cut your throats.
I'll not be made a prey unto the marshal,
For ne'er a snarling dog-bolt o' you both.
Have you together cozened all this while,
And all the world? and shall it now be said,
You've made most courteous shift to cozen yourselves?
You will accuse him! You will bring him in
Within the statute! Who shall take your word?
A whoreson, upstart, apocryphal captain,
Whom not a puritan in Black-Friars will trust
So much as for a feather! And you too
Will give the cause, forsooth! You will insult,
And claim a primacy in the divisions!
You must be chief! As if you only had
The powder to project with, and the work
Were not begun out of equality?
The venture tripartite? All things in common;
Without priority.
Face. It is his fault;
He ever murmurs, and objects his pains;
And says, the weight of all lies upon him.
Sub. Why, so it does.
Dol. How does it? Do not we
Sustain our parts?
Sub. Yes, but they are not equal.
Dol. Why, if your part exceed to-day, I hope
Ours may to-morrow match it.
Sub. Ay, they may.
Dol. May, murmuring mastiff! Ay, and do
Death on me!
Help me to throttle him.

Sub. Dorothy, mistress Dorothy!
'Ods precious, I'll do any thing. What do you mean?
Dol. Because of your fermentation and cibation——
Sub. Not I, by Heaven—
Dol. Your Sol and Luna——help me.
Sub. Would I were hanged then. I'll conform myself.
Dol. Will you, sir? Do so, then, and quickly: swear.
Sub. What shall I swear?
Dol. To leave your faction, sir,
And labour kindly in the common work.
Sub. Let me not breathe, if I meant ought beside.
I only used those speeches as a spur
To him.
Dol. I hope we need no spurs, sir. Do we?
Face. 'Slid, prove to-day, who shall shark best.
Sub. Agreed.
Dol. Yes, and work close and friendly.
Sub. 'Slight, the knot
Shall grow the stronger for this breach, with me.
Dol. Why so, my good baboons! Shall we go make
A sort of sober, scurvy, precise, neighbours,
(That scarce have smiled twice since the king came in)
A feast of laughter at our follies? No, agree.
And may Don Provost ride a feasting long,
In his old velvet jerkin,
(My noble sovereign, and worthy general)
Ere we contribute a new crewel garter
To his most worsted worship.
Sub. Royal Dol!
Spoken like Claridiana and thyself.
Face. For which, at supper, thou shalt sit in triumph,
And not be stiled Dol Common, but Dol Proper,
Dol Singular—— [*One knocks.*
Sub. Who's that? [*Knocks.*] To the window.
Pray Heaven
The master do not trouble us this quarter!
Face. Oh, fear not him. While there dies one a week
O' the plague, he's safe from thinking toward London.
Beside, he's busy at his hop-yards now:
I had a letter from him. If he do,
He'll send such word, for airing o' the house,
As you shall have sufficient time to quit it:
Though we break up a fortnight, 'tis no matter.
Sub. Who is it, Dol?
Dol. A fine young quodling.
Face. Oh!
My lawyer's clerk, I lighted on last night
In Holborn, at the Dagger. He would have
(I told you of him) a familiar,
To rifle with at horses, and win cups.
Dol. Oh, let him in.
Face. Get you
Your robes on: I will meet him, as going out.
Dol. And what shall I do?
Face. Not be seen. Away.
Seem you very reserved.
Sub. Enough.
Face. God be with you, sir.
I pray you let him know, that I was here.
His name is Dapper. I would gladly have staid, but——

Enter DAPPER.

Dap. Captain, I am here.
Sub. Who's that?
Face. He's come, I think, doctor.
Good faith, sir, I was going away.
Dap. In truth,
I am very sorry, captain.
Face. But I thought,
Sure I should meet you.
Dap. Aye, I am very glad,
I had a scurvy writ or two to make,
And I had lent my watch last night to one,
That dines to-day at the sheriff's, and so was robbed
Of my past-time. Is this the cunning man?
Face. This is his worship.
Dap. Is he a doctor?
Face. Yes.
Dap. And ha' you broke with him, captain?
Face. Ay.
Dap. And how?
Face. Faith, he does make the matter, sir, so dainty,
I know not what to say.
Dap. Not so, good captain.
Face. Would I were fairly rid on't, believe me.
Dap. Nay, now you grieve me, sir. Why should you wish so?
I dare assure you I'll be not ungrateful.
Face. I'll tell the doctor so.
Dap. Do, good sweet captain.
Face. Come, noble doctor, pray thee, let's prevail;
This is the gentleman, and he is no Chiause.
Sub. Captain, I have returned you all my answer.
I would do much, sir, for your love—but this
I neither may, nor can.
Face. Tut, but do not say so.
You deal now with a noble fellow, doctor.
One that will thank you richly, and he's no Chiause.
Let that, sir, move you.
Sub. Pray you, forbear.
Face. He has
Four angels here.
Sub. You do me wrong, good sir.
Face. Doctor, wherein? To tempt you with these spirits?
Sub. To tempt my art and love, sir, to my peril.

'Fore Heaven. I scarce can think you are my friend,
That so would draw me to apparent danger.
Face. I draw you! a horse draw you, and a halter.
You and your flies together.
Dap. Nay, good captain!
Face. That know no difference of men.
Sub. Good words, sir.
Face. Good deeds, sir, doctor Dogs-meat.
Dap. Nay, dear captain,
Use master doctor with some more respect.
Face. Hang him, proud stag, with his broad velvet head!
But for your sake, I would choak, ere I would change
An article of breath with such a puck-foist——
Come, let's be gone.
Sub. Pray you, let me speak with you.
Dap. His worship calls you, captain.
Face. I am sorry
I e'er embarked myself in such a business.
Dap. Nay, good sir, he did call you.
Face. Will he take, then?
Sub. First hear me——
Face. Not a syllable, unless you take.
Sub. Pray ye, sir——
Face. Upon no terms, but an assumpsit.
Sub. Your humour must be law.
[*He takes money.*
Face. Why now, sir, talk.
Now I dare hear you with mine honour. Speak.
So may this gentleman too.
Sub. Why, sir——
Face. No whispering.
Sub. 'Fore Heaven, you do not apprehend the loss
You do yourself in this.
Face. Wherein? For what?
Sub. Marry, to be so importunate for one,
That, when he has it, will undo you all!
He'll win up all the money i' the town,
If it be set him.
Face. How?
Sub. Yes, and blow up gamester after gamester,
As they do crackers in a puppet-play.
If I do give him a familiar,
Give you him all you play for: never set him;
For he will have it.
Face. You are mistaken, doctor.
Why, he does ask one but for cups and horses,
A rising fly; none of your great familiars.
Dap. Yes, captain, I would have it for all games.
Sub. I told you so.
Face. 'Slight, that's a new business!
I understood you, a tame bird, to fly
Twice in a term, or so, on Friday nights,
When you had left the office, for a nag
Of forty or fifty shillings.
Dap. Aye, 'tis true, sir;
But I do think now I shall leave the law,
And therefore——
Face. Why, this changes quite the case!
Do you think that I dare move him?
Dap. If you please, sir;
All's one to him, I see.
Face. What! for that money?
I cannot with my conscience: nor should you
Make the request, methinks.
Dap. No, sir, I mean
To add consideration.
Face. Why, then, sir,
I'll try. Say that it were for all games, doctor.
Sub. He'll draw you all the treasure of the realm,
If it be set him.
Face. Speak you this from art?
Sub. Aye, sir, and reason too, the ground of art.
He is o' the only best complexion
The queen of Fairy loves.
Face. What! is he!
Sub. Peace!
He'll over-hear you. Sir, should she but see him——
Face. What?
Sub. Do not you tell him.
Face. Will he win at cards too?
Sub. He will, he will.
Face. Indeed! a strange success, that some men should be born to!
Sub. He hears you, man!
Dap. Sir, I'll not be ungrateful.
Face. Faith, I have confidence in his good nature:
You hear, he says he will not be ungrateful.
Sub. Why, as you please; my venture follows yours.
Face. Troth, do it, doctor; think him trusty, and make him.
He may make us both happy in an hour;
Win some five thousand pound, and send us two on't.
Dap. Believe it, and I will, sir.
Face. And you shall, sir.
You have heard all?
Dap. No, what was't? Nothing, I, sir.
Face. Nothing? [FACE *takes him aside.*
Dap. A little, sir.
Face. Well, a rare star
Reigned at your birth.
Dap. At mine, sir! No.
Face. The doctor
Swears that you are——
Sub. Nay, captain, you'll tell all now.
Face. Allied to the queen of Fairy.
Dap. Who! that I am?
Believe it, no such matter.——
Face. Yes, and that
You were born with a caul o' your head.
Dap. Who says so?
Face. Come,

You know it well enough, though you dissemble it.
Dap. I' fac, I do not; you are mistaken.
Face. How!
Swear by your fac! and in a thing so known
Unto the doctor! How shall we, sir, trust you
In the matter? Can we ever think,
When you have won five or six thousand pound,
You'll send us shares in't, by this rate?
Dap. By Jove, sir,
I'll win ten thousand pound, and send you half.
I-fac's no oath.
Sub. No, no, he did but jest.
Face. Go to. Go thank the doctor. He's your friend,
To take it so.
Dap. I thank his worship.
Face. Do you think that will do? No, no;
Give him another angel.
Dap. Must I?
Face. Must you! 'Slight,
What else is thanks? Will you be trivial? Doctor,
When must he come for his familiar?
Dap. Shall I not ha' it with me?
Sub. Oh, good sir!
There must a world of ceremonies pass;
You must be bathed and fumigated first;
Besides, the queen of Fairy does not rise
Till it be noon.
Face. Not if she danced to-night.
Sub. And she must bless it.
Face. Did you never see
Her royal grace yet?
Dap. Whom?
Face. Your aunt of Fairy.
Sub. Not since she kissed him in the cradle, captain;
I can resolve you that.
Face. Well, see her grace,
Whate'er it cost you, for a thing that I know.
It will be somewhat hard to compass; but,
However, see her. You are made, believe it,
If you can see her. Her grace is a lone woman,
And very rich; and if she take a phantasy,
She will do strange things. See her, at any hand.
'Slid, she may hap to leave you all she has!
It is the doctor's fear.
Dap. How will't be done, then?
Face. Let me alone, take you no thought. Do you
But say to me, captain, I'll see her grace.
Dap. Captain, I'll see her grace.
Face. Enough.
Sub. Who's there? [*One knocks without.*
Anon. Conduct him forth by the back way.
Sir, against one o'clock prepare yourself;
Till when, you must be fasting; only take
Three drops of vinegar in at your nose,
Two at your mouth, and one at either ear;
Then bathe your finger's ends, and wash your eyes,

To sharpen your five senses, and cry hum
Thrice, and buz as often; and then come.
Face. Can you remember this?
Dap. I warrant you.
Face. Well, then, away. 'Tis but your bestowing
Some twenty nobles 'mong her grace's servants,
And put on a clean shirt; you do not know
What grace her grace may do you in clean linen.
Dap. Hum—buz. [*Exit.*
Face. Hum—buz. [*Exit.*
Sub. Come in.

Enter DRUGGER.

Drug. [*Within.*] I will see the doctor.
Sub. Good wives, I pray you forbear me now:
Troth, I can do you no good till afternoon.
What is your name, say you? Abel Drugger?
Drug. Yes, sir.
Sub. A seller of tobacco?
Drug. Yes, sir.
Sub. Umh.
Free of the grocers?
Drug. Yes, I'm free of the grocers.
Sub. Well——
Your business, Abel?
Drug. This, an't please your worship.
I am a young beginner, and am building
Of a new shop, an't like your worship, just
At corner of a street (here is the plot on't);
And I would know, by art, sir, of your worship,
Which way I should make my door, by necromancy,
And where my shelves; and which should be for boxes,
And which for pots. I would be glad to thrive, sir,
And I was wished to your worship by a gentleman,
One captain Face, that says you know men's planets,
And their good angels, and their bad.
Sub. I do,
If I do see them.

Enter FACE.

Face. What! my honest Abel!
Thou art well met here.
Drug. Troth, sir, I was speaking,
Just as your worship came here, of your worship.
I pray you speak for me to master doctor.
Face. He shall do any thing. Doctor, do you hear?
This is my friend, Abel, an honest fellow:
He lets me have good tobacco, and he
Does not sophisticate it.
Drug. No, I never sophisticate.
Face. He's a neat, spruce, honest fellow, and no goldsmith.
Drug. No, I am no goldsmith.

Sub. He's a fortunate fellow, that I am sure on——
Face. Already, sir, have you found it! Look thee, Abel!
Sub. And in right way towards riches—
Face. Sir?
Sub. This summer
He will be of the clothing of his company,
And next spring called to the scarlet, spend what he can.
Face. What, and so little beard?
Sub. You must think,
He may have a receipt to make hair come:
But he'll be wise, preserve his youth, and fine for it;
His fortune looks for him another way.
Face. 'Slid, doctor, how canst thou know this so soon?
I am amazed at that!
Sub. By a rule, captain,
In metaposcopy, which I do work by;
A certain star in the forehead, which you see not.
Your chesnut, or your olive-coloured face,
Does never fail: and your long ear doth promise.
I knew it, by certain spots too, in his teeth,
And on the nail of his mercurial finger.
Face. What finger's that?
Sub. His little finger. Look,
You were born upon a Wednesday?
Drug. Yes, indeed sir, and so I was.
Sub. The thumb, in chiromancy, we give Venus;
The fore-finger, to Jove; the midst to Saturn;
The ring, to Sol; the least, to Mercury;
Who was the lord, sir, of his horoscope,
His house of life being Libra; which foreshewed
He should be a merchant, and should trade with balance.
Face. Why this is strange? Is it not, honest Nab?
Drug. Yes, very strange.
Sub. There is a ship now, coming from Ormus,
That shall yield him such a commodity
Of drugs——Come hither, Abel;
This is the west, and this is the south.
[*Looking at the plan.*
Drug. Yes, sir.
Sub. And those are your two sides?
Drug. Aye, sir.
Sub. Make me your door, then, south; your broadside, west:
And, on the east side of your shop, aloft,
Write Mathlai, Tarmael, and Baraborat:
Upon the north-part, Rael, Velel, Thiel.
They are the names of those mercurial spirits,
That do fright flies from boxes.
Drug. Yes, sir.
Sub. And
Beneath your threshold, bury me a loadstone,
To draw in gallants, that wear spurs; the rest
They'll seem to follow.
Face. That's a secret, Nab.
Sub. And, on your stall, a puppet, with a vice,
And a court-fucus to call city-dames.
You shall deal much with minerals.
Drug. Sir, I have
At home already.
Sub. Ay, I know, you have arsnike,
Vitriol, salt-tartre, argale, alkaly,
Cinoper: I know all. This fellow, captain,
Will come, in time, to be a distiller,
And give a say (I will not say directly,
But very fair) at the Philosopher's Stone.
Face. Why, how now, Abel! is this true?
Drug. Good captain,
What must I give?
Face. Nay, I'll not counsel thee.
Thou hear'st what wealth (he says spend what thou canst)
Thou art like to come to.
Drug. I would give him a crown.
Face. A crown! and towards such a fortune? Heart,
Thou shalt rather give him thy shop. No gold about thee?
Drug. Yes, I have a Portague, I have kept this half year.
Face. Out on thee, Nab. 'Slight, there was such an offer!
'Shalt keep it no longer, I'll gi' it him for thee.
Drug. Will ye?
Face. Doctor, Nab prays your worship to drink this, and swears
He will appear more grateful, as your skill
Does raise him in the world.
Drug. I would intreat
Another favour of your worship.
Face. What is it, Nab?
Drug. But to look over, sir, my almanack,
And cross out my ill days, that I may neither
Bargain nor trust upon them.
Face. That he shall, Nab.
Leave it; it shall be done, 'gainst afternoon.
Sub. And a direction for his shelves.
Face. Now, Nab,
Art thou well pleased, Nab?
Drug. Thank, sir, both your worships.
I am a made man. [*Exit.*
Face. Away.
Why, now you smoaky prosecutor of nature!
Now do you see, that something's to be done,
Beside your beech-coal, and your cor'sive waters,
Your crosslets, crucibles, and cucurbites?
You must have stuff brought home to you, to work on?
And yet, you think, I am at no expence
In searching out these veins, then following them,
Then trying them out. 'Fore God, my intelligence
Costs me more money than my share oft comes to
In these rare works.
Sub. You are pleasant, sir. How now?

Enter DOL.

Face. What says my dainty Dolkin?
Dol. Yonder fishwife
Will not away. And there's your giantess,
The bawd of Lambeth.
Sub. Heart, I cannot speak with them.
Dol. Not afore night, I have told them, in a voice,
Through the trunk, like one of your familiars.
But I have spied sir Epicure Mammon.
Sub. Where?
Dol. Coming along, at far end of the lane,
Slow of his feet, but earnest of his tongue,
To one, that's with him.
Sub. Face, go you, and shift.
Dol, you must presently make ready too——
Dol. Why, what's the matter?
Sub. Oh, I did look for him
With the sun's rising: marvel, he could sleep!
This is the day I am to perfect for him
The *Magisterium*, our great-work, the stone;
And yield it, made, into his hands; of which
He has this month talked, as he were possessed.
He's in belief of chemistry so bold,
If his dream last, he'll turn the age to gold.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter MAMMON *and* SURLY.

Mam. COME on, sir. Now you set your foot on shore
In *novo orbe;* here's the rich Peru:
And there within, sir, are the golden mines,
Great Solomon's Ophir! He was sailing to't
Three years, but we have reached it in ten months.
This is the day, wherein, to all my friends,
I will pronounce the happy word, Be rich.
This day you shall be *spectatissimi*,
And have your punques, and punquetees, my Surly,
And unto thee, I speak it first, Be rich. Face,
Where is my Subtle, there! Within, ho!
Face. [*Within.*] Sir, he'll come to you, by and by.
Mam. That's his fire-drake,
His lungs, his Zephirus; he, that puffs his coals,
Till he firk Nature up in her own centre.
You are doubtful, sir. This night, I'll change
All that is metal, in my house, to gold.
And, early in the morning, will I send
To all the plumbers, and the pewterers,
And buy their tin, and lead up; and to Lothbury,
For all the copper.
Sur. What, and turn that too?
Mam. Yes, and I'll purchase Devonshire and Cornwall,
And make them perfect Indies! you admire now?
Sur. No, faith.
Mam. But when you see the effects of the great medicine,
You will believe me?
Sur. Yes, when I see it, I will.
Mam. Why,
Do you think, I fable with you? I assure you,
He that has once the flower of the sun,
The perfect ruby, which we call Elixir,
Not only can do that, but by its virtue,
Can confer honour, love, respect, long life,
Give safety, valour, yea, and victory,
To whom he will. In eight and twenty days,
I'll make an old man of fourscore a child.
Sur. No doubt; he's that already.
Mam. Nay, I mean,
Restore his years, renew him, like an eagle,
To the fifth age; make him get sons and daughters,
Become stout Marses, and beget young cupids.
Sur. The decayed vestals of Drury-Lane would thank you,
That keep the fire alive there.
Mam. 'Tis the secret
Of Nature, naturized 'gainst all infections,
Cures all diseases coming of all causes;
A month's grief in a day; a year's in twelve;
And of what age soever, in a month.
Past all the dozes of your drugging doctors.
You're still incredulous?
Sur. Faith I have a humour,
I would not willingly be gulled. Your stone
Cannot transmute me.
Mam. Surly,
Will you believe antiquity? Records?
I'll shew you a book, where Moses, and his sister,
And Solomon, have written of the art;
Aye, and a treatise penned by Adam.
Sur. How!
Mam. Of the philosopher's stone, and in high Dutch.
Sur. Did Adam, write, sir, in high Dutch?
Mam. He did.
Which proves it was the primitive tongue. How now?

Enter FACE.

Do we succeed; Is our day come? and holds it?
Face. The evening will set red upon you, sir:
You have colour for it, crimson: the red ferment
Has done his office; three hours hence, prepare you
To see projection.
Mam. My Surly,
Again, I say to thee, aloud, be rich;

This day, thou shalt have ingots; and, to-morrow,
Give lords the affront. Is it, my Zephirus, right?
Blushes the bolt's-head?
Face. Like a wench with child, sir,
That were, but now, discovered to her master.
Mam. Excellent witty, Lungs! My only care is,
Where to get stuff enough now, to project on.
This town will not half serve me.
Face. No, sir? Buy
The covering off o' churches.
Mam. That's true.
Face. Yes,
Let them stand bare, as do their auditory;
Or cap them new with shingles.
Mam. No, good thatch:
Thatch will lie light upon the rafters, Lungs.
Lungs, I will manumit thee from the furnace;
I will restore thee thy complexion, Puffe,
Lost in the embers; and repair this brain,
Hurt wi' the fume o' the metals.
Face. I have blown, sir,
Hard for your worship; these bleared eyes
Have waked, to read your several colours, sir;
Of the pale citron, the green lion, the crow,
The peacock's tail, the plumed swan.
Mam. And lastly,
Thou hast descryed the flower?
Face. Yes, sir.
Mam. Where's master?
Face. At his prayers, sir: he,
Good man, he's doing his devotions,
For the success.
Mam. Lungs, I will set a period
To all thy labours: thou shalt be the master
Of my seraglio.
For I do mean
To have a list of wives and concubines,
Equal with Solomon, who had the stone
Alike with me:
Thou art sure thou saw'st it, blood?
Face. Both blood and spirit, sir.
Mam. I will have all my beds blown up; not stuffed;
Down is too hard.
(Is it arrived at ruby?)——Where I spy
A wealthy citizen, or a rich lawyer,
Have a sublimed pure wife, unto that fellow
I'll send a thousand pounds, to be my cuckold.
Face. And shall I carry it?
Mam. No, I'll have no bawds,
But fathers and mothers. They will do it best,
Best of all others. And my flatterers
Shall be the pure, and gravest of divines,
That I can get for money. My meet fools,
Eloquent burgesses.
We will be brave, Puffe, now we have the medicine.
My meat shall all come in, in Indian shells.
Dishes of agate set in gold, and studded
With emeralds, saphirs, hyacinths, and rubies
My foot-boy shall eat pheasants, calvered salmons,
Knots, godwits, lampreys: I myself will have
The beards of barbels served instead of sallads;
Oiled mushrooms,
Dressed with an exquisite and poignant sauce;
For which, I'll say unto my cook, there's gold,
Go forth, and be a knight.
Face. Sir, I'll go look
A little, how it heightens. [*Exit.*
Mam. Do. My shirts
I'll have of taffata-sarsnet, soft and light
As cob-webs; and for all my other raiment,
It shall be such as might provoke the Persian,
Were he to teach the world riot anew.
My gloves of fishes and birds-skins, perfumed
With gums of paradise and eastern air——
Sur. And do you think to have the stone with this?
Mam. No, I do think to have all this with the stone.
Sur. Why, I have heard, he must be *homo frugi*,
A pious, holy, and religious man,
One free from mortal sin, a very virgin.
Mam. That makes it, sir; he is so. But I buy it.
My venture brings it me. He, honest wretch,
A notable, superstitious, good soul,
Has worn his knees bare, and his slippers bald,
With prayer and fasting for it; and, sir, let him
Do it alone, for me, still. Here he comes.
Not a prophane word, afore him! 'tis poison.

Enter SUBTLE.

Good-morrow, father.
Sub. Gentle son, good-morrow!
And to your friend there. What is he is with you?
Mam. An heretic that I did bring along,
In hope, sir, to convert him.
Sub. Son, I doubt
You are covetous, that thus you meet your time
I' the just point: prevent your day, at morning!
This argues something, worthy of a fear
Of importune, and carnal appetite;
Take heed, you do not cause the blessing leave you,
With your ungoverned haste. I should be sorry
To see my labours, now e'en at perfection,
Got by long watching, and large patience
Not prosper, where my love and zeal hath placed them.
Which, in all my ends,
Have looked no way, but unto public good,
To pious uses, and dear charity,
Now grown a prodigy with men. Wherein
If you, my son, should now prevaricate,
And to your own particular lusts employ
So great and catholic a bliss, be sure,
A curse will follow, yea, and overtake
Your subtle, and most secret ways

Mam. I know, sir.
You shall not need to fear me. I but come,
To have you to confute this gentleman.
Sur. Who is,
Indeed, sir, somewhat costive of belief
Toward your stone; would not be gulled.
Sub. Well, son.
All, that I can convince him in, is this:
The work is done; bright Sol is in his robe.
We have a medicine of the triple soul;
Thanks be to Heaven,
And make us worthy of it! *Ulen Spigel!*
Face. [*Within.*] Anon, sir.
Sub. Look well to the register,
And let your heat still lessen by degrees,
To the Aludels.
And bring me the complexion of glass B.
Face. I will, sir.
Sur. What a brave language here is! next to canting!
Sub. I have another work, you never saw, son,
That three days since passed the philosopher's wheel,
In the lent heat of Athanor; and is become
Sulphur of Nature.
Mam. But 'tis for me?
Sub. What need you?
You have enough, in that is perfect.
Mam. Oh, but——
Sub. Why, this is covetous!
Mam. No, I assure you.
I shall employ it all in pious uses,
Founding of colleges and grammar schools,
Marrying young virgins, building hospitals,
And now and then a church.
How now? What colour says it?

Enter FACE.

Face. The ground black, sir.
Mam. That's your crow's head?
Sur. Your cocks-comb's, is't not?
Sub. No, 'tis not perfect, would it were the crow.
The work wants something.
Sur. Oh, I looked for this.
The hay's a pitching.
Sub. Are you sure you loosed them
In their own *menstrue?*
Face. Yes, sir, and then married them
And put them in a bolt's head, nipped to digestion,
According as you bade me, when I set
The liquor of Mars to circulation,
In the same heat.
Sub. The process then was right?
Face. Yes, by the token, sir, the retort brake,
And what was saved was put into the pellicane,
And signed with Hermes' seal.
Sub. I think 'twas so.
We should have a new *amalgama.*
Sur. Oh, this ferret
Is rank as any pole-cat!
Sub. But I care not.
Let him e'en die; we have enough beside,
In *embrion.* H has his whit shirt on?
Face. Yes, sir.
He's ripe for *inceration*: he stands warm
In his ash fire. I would not, you should let
Any die now, if I might counsel, sir,
For luck's sake to the rest. It is not good.
Mam. He says right.
Face. Nay, I know it, sir.
Sur. Ay, are you bolted?
I have seen the ill fortune. What is some three ounces
Of fresh materials?
Mam. Is't no more?
Face. No more, sir,
Of gold, *t'amalgame,* with some six of mercury.
Mam. Away, here's money. What will serve?
Face. Ask him, sir.
Mam. How much?
Sub. Give him nine pounds: you may give him ten.
Sur. Yes. Twenty, and be cozened; do.
Mam. There 'tis.
Sub. This needs not. But that you will have it so,
To see conclusions of all.
Go your ways.
Have you set the oil of Luna in Kemia?
Face. Yes, sir.
Sub. And the philosopher's vinegar?
Face. Ay. [*Exit.*
Sur. We shall have a sallad.
Mam. When do you make projection?
Sub. Son, be not hasty. I exalt our medicine,
By hanging him in *balneo vaporoso,*
And giving him solution, then congeal him,
And then dissolve him, then again congeal him:
For look, how oft I iterate the work,
So many times I add unto his virtue.
Get you your stuff here against afternoon,
Your brass, your pewter, and your andirons.
Mam. Not those of iron?
Sub. Yes, you may bring them too.
We'll change all metals.
Sur. I believe you in that.
Mam. Then I may send my spits?
Sub. Yes, and your racks.
Sur. And dripping-pans, and pot-hangers, and hooks,
Shall he not?
Sub. If he please.
Sur. To be an ass.
Sub. How, sir!
Mam. This gentleman you must bear withal.
I told you, he had no faith.
Sur. And little hope, sir;
But much less charity, should I gull myself.
Sub. Why, what have you observed, sir, in our art,
Seems so impossible?
Sur. But your whole work, no more.
That you should hatch gold in a furnace, sir,
As they do eggs in Egypt!

Sub. Sir, do you
Believe, that eggs are hatched so?
Sur. If I should?
Sub. Why, I think that the greater miracle;
No egg but differs from a chicken more
Than metals in themselves.
Sur. That cannot be.
The egg's ordained by Nature to that end,
And is a chicken in *potentia*.
Sub. The same we say of lead, and other metals,
Which would be gold, if they had time.
Mam. And that
Our art doth further.
Sub. Ay, for 'twere absurd
To think, that nature in the earth bred gold
Perfect in the instant. Something went before.
There must be remote matter.
Sur. Ay, what is that?

Enter DOLL.

Sub. Marry, we say——
God's precious—What do you mean? Go in, good lady.
Let me intreat you.—Where's this varlet?

Enter FACE.

Face. Sir.
Sub. You very knave! Do you use me thus?
Face. Wherein, sir?
Sub. Go in, and see, you traitor. Go.
[*Exit* FACE.
Mam. Who is it, sir?
Sub. Nothing, sir. Nothing.
Mam. What's the matter, good sir?
I have not seen you thus distempered? Who is't?
Sub. All arts have still had, sir, their adversaries;
But ours the most ignorant. What now?
[FACE *returns.*
Face. 'Twas not my fault, sir; she would speak with you.
Sub. Would she, sir? Follow me.
[*Exit* SUBTLE.
Mam. Stay, Lungs.
Face. I dare not, sir.
Mam. How! Pray thee stay.
Face. She's mad, sir, and sent hither——
Mam. Stay, man, what is she?
Face. A lord's sister, sir.
He'll be mad too.
Mam. I warrant thee.
Why sent hither?
Face. Sir, to be cured.
Sur. Why, rascal?
Face. Lo you. Here, sir. [*He goes out.*
Mam. 'Fore heaven, a *bradamante*, a brave piece.
Sur. Heart, this is a bawdy-house! I'll be burnt else.
Mam. Oh, by this light, no, do not wrong him. He's
Too scrupulous that way. It is his vice.
No, he's a rare physician, do him right;
An excellent Paracelsian, and has done
Strange cure with mineral physic. He deals all
With spirits, he. He will not hear a word
Of Galen, or his tedious recipes.

Enter FACE.

How now, Lungs?
Face. Softly, sir, speak softly. I meant
To have told your worship all. This must not hear.
Mam. No, he will not be gulled! let him alone.
Face. You are very right, sir; she is a most rare scholar,
And is gone mad with studying Broughton's works.
If you but name a word touching the Hebrew,
She falls into her fit, and will discourse
So learnedly of genealogies,
As you would run mad too, to hear her, sir.
Mam. How might one do to have conference with her, Lungs?
Face. Oh, divers have run mad upon the conference.
I do not know, sir: I am sent in haste,
To fetch a viol. [*Exit.*
Sur. Be not gulled, sir Mammon.
Mam. Wherein? Pray ye, be patient.
Sur. Yes, as you are,
And trust confederate knaves, and bawds, and whores.
Mam. You are too foul, believe it.

Enter FACE.

Come here, Ulen, one word.
Face. I dare not, in good faith.
Mam. Stay, knave.
Face. He is extreme angry, that you saw her, sir.
Mam. Drink that. [*Gives him money.*] What is she, when she's out of her fit.
Face. Oh, the most affablest creature, sir, so merry!
So pleasant! she'll mount you up, like quicksilver,
Over the helm; and circulate, like oil,
A very vegetal; discourse of state,
Of mathematics, bawdry, any thing——
Mam. Is she no ways accessible? No means,
No trick to give a man a taste of her—wit——
Or so?
Sub. [*Within.*] Ulen!
Face. I'll come to you again, sir. [*Exit.*
Mam. Surly, I did not think one of your breeding
Would traduce personages of worth.
Sur. Sir Epicure,
Your friend to use: yet, still loth to be gulled.
I do not like your philosophical bawds.
Their stone is enough to pay for,
Without this bait.
Mam. 'Heart, you abuse yourself.

I know the lady, and her friends, and means,
The original of this disaster. Her brother
Has told me all.
Sur. And yet you never saw her
Till now?
Mam. Oh, yes! but I forgot: I have, believe it,
One of the treacherousest memories, I do think,
Of all mankind.
Sur. What call you her brother?
Mam. My lord——
He will not have his name known, now I think on't.
Sur. A very treacherous memory!
Mam. O' my faith!
Sur. Tut, if you ha' it not about you, pass it,
Till we meet next.
Mam. Nay, by this hand, 'tis true:
He's one I honour, and my noble friend,
And I respect his house.
Sur. Heart! can it be,
That a grave sir, a rich, that has no need,
A wise sir, too, at other times, should thus,
With his own oaths and arguments, make hard means
To gull himself!

Enter FACE.

Face. Here's one from captain Face, sir,
[*To* SURLY.
Desires you to meet him in the Temple Church,
Some half hour hence, and upon earnest business.
Sir, if you please to quit us now, and come
[*He whispers* MAMMON.
Again within two hours, you shall have
My master busy examining of the works;
And I will steal you in unto the party,
That you may see her converse. Sir, shall I say
You'll meet the captain's worship?
Sur. Sir, I will. [*Exit* FACE.
Now, I am sure it is a bawdy-house;
I'll swear it, were the marshall here to thank me;
The naming this commander doth confirm it.
Don Face! why 'tis the most authentic dealer
In these commodities—The superintendant
To all the quainter traffickers in town.
Him will I prove, by a third person, to find
The subtleties of this dark labyrinth;
Which, if I do discover, dear sir Mammon,
You'll give your poor friend leave, though no philosopher,
To laugh; for you that are, 'tis thought, shall weep.

Enter FACE.

Face. Sir, he does pray, you'll not forget.
Sur. I will not, sir.
Sir Epicure, I shall leave you. [*Exit.*
Mam. I follow you, straight.
Face. But do so, good sir, to avoid suspicion:
This gentleman has a parlous head.

Mam. But wilt thou, Ulen,
Be constant to thy promise?
Face. As my life, sir.
Mam. And wilt thou insinuate what I am, and praise me,
And say I am a noble fellow?
Face. Oh, what else, sir?
And that you'll make her royal, with the stone,
An empress, and yourself king of Bantam.
Mam. Wilt thou do this?
Face. Will I, sir!
Mam. Lungs, my Lungs!
I love thee.
Face. Send your stuff, sir, that my master
May busy himself about projection.
Mam. Thou hast witched me, rogue! Take, go.
Face. Your jack and all, sir.
Mam. Thou art a villain—I will send my jack,
And the weights too. Slave, I could bite thine ear!
Away; thou dost not care for me.
Face. Not I, sir.
Mam. Come, I was born to make thee, my good weasel;
Set thee on a bench, and have thee twirl a chain,
With the best lord's vermin of them all.
Face. Away, sir.
Mam. A count, nay, a count-palatine——
Face. Good sir, go.
Mam. Shall not advance thee better; no, nor faster. [*Exit* MAMMON.

Enter SUBTLE *and* DOL.

Sub. Has he bit?
Face. And swallowed too, my Subtle.
I have given him line, and now he plays, i'faith.
Sub. And shall we twitch him!
Face. Through both the gills.
A wench is a rare bait.
Sub. Dol, my lord What'shum's sister, you must now
Bear yourself stately.
Dol. Oh, let me alone.
I'll not forget my race, I warrant you.
I'll keep my distance, laugh, and talk aloud:
Have all the tricks of a proud scurvy lady,
And be as rude as her woman.
Face. Well said, Sanguine,
Sub. But will he send his andirons?
Face. His jack too;
And's iron shoeing-horn; I have spoken to him. Well,
I must not lose my wary gamester, yonder.
Sub. Oh, monsieur Caution, that will not be gulled?
Face. Ay; if I can strike a fine hook into him, now!
The Temple Church, there I have cast mine angle.
Well, pray for me; I'll about it. [*One knocks.*
Sub. What, more gudgeons?
Dol, scout, scout! stay, Face, you must go to the door. [*Exit* FACE.

Pray Heaven it be my Anabaptist. Who is't, Dol?
Dol. I know him not. He looks like an end of gold and silver-man.
Sub. God's-so! 'tis he; he said he would send—
What call you him?
The sanctified elder, that should deal
For Mammon's jack and andirons—Let him in. Stay,
And help me off with my gown—Away,
Madam, to your withdrawing chamber. Now,
[*Exit* DOL.
In a new tune, new gesture, but old language.
This fellow is sent from one negociates with me
About the stone too; for the holy brethren
Of Amsterdam, the exiled saints, that hope
To raise their discipline by it. I must use him
In some strange fashion now, to make him admire me.

Enter FACE *and* ANANIAS.

Where is my drudge?
Face. Sir.
Sub. Take away the recipient,
And rectify your menstrue from the phlegma.
Then pour it o' the sol, in the cucurbite,
And let them macerate together.
Face. Yes, sir;
And save the ground?
Sub. No; *terra damnata*
Must not have entrance in the work.
[*Exit* FACE.
Who are you? [*To* ANANIAS.
Ana. A faithful brother, if it please you.
Sub. What's that?
Or what is homogene, or heterogene?
Ana. I understand no heathen language, truly.
Sub. Heathen, you knipper-doling! Is *ars sacra*,
Or *chrysopœia*, or *spagyrica*,
Or the pamphysick or panarchick knowledge,
A heathen language?
Ana. Heathen Greek, I take it.
Sub. How! Heathen Greek?
Ana. All's heathen but the Hebrew.

Enter FACE.

Sub. Sirrah, my varlet, stand you forth, and speak to him
Like a philosopher: answer i' the language,
Name the vexations, and the martyrizations
Of metals in the work.
Face. Sir, putrefaction,
Solution, ablution, sublimation,
Cohobation, calcination, ceration, and
Fixation.
Ana. Oh, oh!———
Sub. This is heathen Greek to you still. What is
Your *lapus philosophicus*?
Face. 'Tis a stone, and not
A stone; a spirit, a soul, and a body;
Which, if you dissolve, it is dissolved;
If you coagulate, it is coagulated;
If you make it to fly, it flieth.
Sub. Enough. [*Exit* FACE.
This is heathen Greek to you——
What are you, sir?
Ana. Please you, a servant of the exiled brethren,
That deal with widows' and with orphans' goods,
And make a just account unto the saints;
A deacon.
Sub. Oh, you are sent from master Wholsome,
Your teacher?
Ana. From Tribulation Wholsome,
Our very zealous pastor.
Sub. Good. I have
Some orphans' goods to come here.
Ana. Of what kind, sir?
Sub. Pewter and brass, andirons and kitchenware;
Metals that we must use our medicine on;
Wherein the brethren may have a penn'orth,
For ready money.
Ha' you brought more money,
To buy more coals?
Ana. No, surely.
Sub. No! How so?
Ana. The brethren bid me say unto you, sir,
Surely, they will not venture any more,
Till they may see projection.
Sub. How!
Ana. You have had
For the instruments, as bricks, and loam, and glasses,
Already thirty pounds; and for materials,
They say, some ninety more: and they have heard since,
That one at Heidelberg made it of an egg,
And a small paper of pin-dust.
Sub. What's your name?
Ana. My name is Ananias.
Sub. Out! the varlet
That cozened the apostles! Hence, away!
Flee, mischief! Had your holy consistory
No name to send me of another sound
Than wicked Ananias? Send you your elders
Hither, to make atonement for you, quickly,
And give me satisfaction; or out goes
The fire, and down the alembicks, and the furnace,
If they stay threescore minutes. The acqueity,
Terreity, and sulphureity,
Shall run together again, and all be annulled,
Thou wicked Ananias! [*Exit* ANANIAS.
This will fetch them,
And make them haste towards their gulling more.
A man must deal like a rough nurse, and fright
Those, that are froward, to an appetite.

Enter FACE *and* DRUGGER.

Face. He's busy with his spirits; but we'll upon him.
Sub. How now? What mates, what bawards have we here?

Face. I told you he would be furious. Sir, here's Nab,
Has brought ye another piece of gold to look on.
(We must appease him. Give it me.) and prays you,
You would devise—What is it, Nab?
Drug. A sign, sir.
Face. Ay, a good lucky one; a thriving sign, doctor.
Sub. I was devising now.
Face. 'Slight, do not say so;
He will repent he gave you any more.
[*Aside to* SUBTLE.
What say you to his constellation, doctor?
The Balance?
Sub. No, that way is stale and common.
A townsman born in Taurus, gives the bull,
Or the bull's head; in Aries, the ram;
A poor device. Come hither, Abel.
No, I will have his name
Formed in some mystic character, whose *radii*,
Striking the senses of the passers by,
Shall, by a virtual influence, breed affections,
That may result upon the party owns it:
As thus——
Drug. I don't understand it.
Face. Nab!
Sub. He shall have a bell, that's Abel.
Drug. And so it is.
Sub. And by it standing one whose name is Dee,
In a rug gown; there's D, and rug, that's Drug;
And right anenst him a dog snarling er:
There's Drugger, Abel Drugger.
Drug. My name!
Sub. That's his sign.
And here's now mystery and hieroglyphic!
Face. Abel, thou art made.
Drug. I do thank his worship.
Face. Six o' thy legs more will not do it, Nab.
What'st got there, Nab?
Drug. A pipe of tobacco.
Face. A pipe of tobacco! Give it me.
He has brought you a pipe of tobacco, doctor.
Drug. Yes, sir—Captain Face, captain Face, your worship!
Face. What dost say, Nab?
Drug. I have another thing I would impart——
Face. Out with it, Nab.
Drug. Sir, there is lodged hard by me,
A rich young widow——
Face. Good; a *bona roba!*
Drug. But nineteen at the most.
Face. Very good, Abel.
Drug. Marry, she's not in fashion yet; she wears
A hood; but it stands acop.
Face. No matter, Abel.
Drug. And I do now and then give her a *fucus*—
Face. What! dost deal, Nab?
Sub. I did tell you, captain.

Drug. And physic too, sometimes, sir; for which she trusts me
With all her mind. She's come up here of purpose
To learn the fashion.
Face. Good; on, Nab.
Drug. And she does strangely long to know her fortune.
Face. God'slid, Nab, send her to the doctor hither.
Drug. Yes, I have spoken to her of his worship already:
But she's afraid it will be blown abroad,
And hurt her marriage.
Face. Hurt it! Tis the way
To heal it, if 'twere hurt; to make it more
Followed and sought. Nab, thou shalt tell her this:
She'll be more known, more talked of; and your widows
Are ne'er of any price till they be famous;
Their honour is the multitude of suitors.
Send her, it may be thy good fortune. What,
Thou dost not know?
Drug. No, sir, she'll never marry
Under a knight. Her brother has made a vow.
Face. What, and dost thou despair, my little Nab,
Knowing what the doctor has set down for thee,
And seeing so many of the city dubbed?
One glass o' thy water, with a madam, I know
Will have it done, Nab. What's her brother? A knight?
Drug. No, sir, a gentleman, newly warm in his land, sir.
Scarce cold in his one-and-twenty, that does govern
His sister here, and is a man himself
Of some three thousand a year, and is come up
To learn to quarrel, and to live by his wits,
And go down again, and die i' the country,
When he can't live any longer here.
Face. How! to quarrel?
Drug. Yes, sir, to carry quarrels,
As gallants do; to manage them by line.
Face. 'Slid, Nab, the doctor is the only man
In Christendom for him.
Drug. Is he?
Face. He has made a table,
With mathematical demonstrations,
Touching the art of quarrels.
Drug. Has he?
Face. He will give him
An instrument to quarrel by.
Drug. Will he?
Face. Go, bring them both,
Him and his sister. And for thee, with her
The doctor haply may persuade. Go to.
Sha't give his worship a new damask suit
Upon the premises.
Sub. Oh, good captain——
Face. He shall:

He is the honestest fellow, doctor——Stay not;
No offers; bring the damask and the parties.
Drug. I'll try my power, sir.
Face. And thy will, too, Nab.
Sub. 'Tis good tobacco, this. What is't a pound?
Drug. I'll sell your worship a hogshead of it.
Face. He'll send you a hogshead, doctor.
[ABEL *runs out, and* FACE *brings him back.*
Sub. Oh, no!
Face. He will do't:
He is the goodest soul——Abel, about it.
Thou shalt know more anon. Away, begone.
Drug. I'll give him a pound.——I'll give him two pound. [*Exit.*

Face. A miserable rogue, and lives with cheese,
And has the worms. That was the cause, indeed,
Why he came now. He dealt with me in private,
To get a medicine for them.
Sub. And shall, sir. This works.
Face. A wife, a wife for one of us, my dear Subtle:
We'll e'en draw lots,
But Dol must have no breath on't.
Sub. Mum.
Away you to your Surly, yonder; catch him.
Face. Pray Heaven, I have not staid too long.
Sub. I fear it. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter TRIBULATION *and* ANANIAS.

Trib. These chastisements are common to the saints;
And such rebukes we of the separation
Must bear with willing shoulders, as the trials
Sent forth to tempt our frailties.
Ana. In pure zeal,
I do not like the man. He is a Heathen,
And speaks the language of Canaan, truly.
Trib. I think him a prophane person, indeed.
Ana. Let us call on him, then.
Trib. The motion's good,
And of the spirit; I will knock first. Peace be within.

Enter SUBTLE.

Sub. Oh, are you come? 'Twas time. Your three score minutes
Were at the last thread, you see. Wicked Ananias!
Art thou returned? Nay, then, it goes down yet.
Trib. Sir, be appeased; he is come to humble
Himself in spirit, and ask your patience,
If too much zeal hath carried him aside
From the due path.
Sub. Why, this doth qualify.
Trib. The brethren had no purpose, verily,
To give you the least grievance; but are ready
To lend their willing hands to any project
The spirit and you direct.
Sub. This qualifies more.
Trib. And for the orphans' goods, let them be valued,
Or what is needful else to the holy work,
It shall be numbered. Here, by me, the saints
Throw down their purse before you.
Sub. This qualifies most!
Why, thus it should be; now you understand.
Have I discovered so unto you of our stone,
And of the good that it shall bring your cause?
Nature's miracle,
The divine secret, that doth fly in clouds
From east to west; and whose tradition
Is not from men, but spirits.
Ana. I hate traditions:
I do not trust them——
Trib. Peace.
Ana. They are popish, all.
I will not peace. I will not——
Trib. Ananias!
Ana. Please the profane, to grieve the godly.
I may not.
Sub. Well, Ananias, thou shalt overcome.
Trib. It is an ignorant zeal, that haunts him, sir:
But, truly, else, a very faithful brother.
Sub. Has he a competent sum there i' the bag,
To buy the goods within? I am made guardian,
And must for charity and conscience sake,
Now see the most be made for my poor orphans:
Though I desire the brethren too, good gainers.
There they are within. When you have viewed and bought them,
And ta'en the inventory of what they are,
They are ready for projection; there's no more
To do; cast on the medicine, so much silver
As there is tin there, so much gold as brass,
I'll give't you in by weight.
Trib. But how long time,
Sir, must the saints expect yet?
Sub. Let me see—
How's the moon now? Eight, nine, ten days hence,
He will be silver potate; then, three days
Before he citronise: some fifteen days
The *majisterium* will be perfected.
Ana. About the second day of the third week
In the ninth month?
Sub. Yes.
Trib. What will the orphans' goods arise to, think you?
Sub. Some hundred marks: as much as filled three cars
Unladen now; you'll make six millions of them.
But I must ha' more coals laid in.
Trib. How?
Sub. Another load,

And then we have finished. If the holy purse
Should, with this draught, fall low, and that the saints
Do need a present sum, I have a trick
To melt the pewter you shall buy now, instantly,
And, with a tincture, make you as good Dutch dollars
As any are in Holland.
Trib. Can you so?
Sub. Ay, and shall 'bide the third examination.
Ana. It will be joyful tidings to the brethren.
Sub. But you must carry it secret.
Trib. Aye; but stay:
This act of coining, is it lawful?
Ana. Lawful!
We know no magistrate; or if we did,
This is foreign coin.
Sub. It is no coining, sir;
It is but casting.
Trib. Ha! you distinguish well:
Casting of money may be lawful.
Ana. 'Tis, sir.
Trib. Truly, I take it so.
Sub. There is no scruple,
Sir, to be made of it: believe Ananias;
This case of conscience he is studied in.
Trib. I'll make a question of it to the brethren.
[*Knock without.*
Sub. There is some to speak with me. Go in, I pray you,
And view the parcels. That is the inventory.
I'll come to you straight. [*Exeunt* TRIBULATION *and* ANANIAS.] Who is it? Face? Appear.

Enter FACE.

How now? Good prize?
Face. Good pox! Yond' costive cheater
Never came on.
Sub. How, then?
Face. I have walked the round
Till now, and no such thing.
Sub. And have you quit him?
Face. Quit him! an' hell would quit him too, he were happy.
'Slight! would you have me stalk like a mill-jade
All day, for one, that will not yield us grains?
I know him of old.
Sub. Oh, but to have gulled him,
Had been a mastery.
Face. Let him go, black boy!
And turn thee, that some fresh news may possess thee.
A noble count, a don of Spain,
Furnished with pistolets and pieces of eight,
Will straight be here, my rogue, to have thy bath,
(That is the colour) and to make his battery
Upon our Dol, our castle, our Cinque-port,
Our Dover-pier, our what thou wilt.
Where is the doxy?
Sub. I will send her to thee;
And but dispatch my brace of little John Leydens,
And come again myself.
Face. Are they within, then?
Sub. Numbering the sum.
Face. How much?
Sub. A hundred marks, boy. [*Exit.*
Face. Why, this is a lucky day! Ten pounds of Mammon;
Three of my clerk; a portague of my grocer;
This of the brethren; beside reversions,
And estates to come i' the widow, and my count.
My share to-day will not be bought for forty—

Enter DOL.

Dol. What?
Face. Pounds, dainty Dorothy—Art thou so near?
Dol. Yes—say, lord general, how fares our camp?
Face. This dear hour
A dainty Don is taken with my Dol;
And thou may'st make his ransom what thou wilt,
My Dousabel.
Dol. What is he, general?
Face. An Adalontado,
A Grandee, girl. Was not my Dapper here yet?
Dol. No.
Face. Nor my Drugger?
Dol. Neither.
Face. A pox on them!
They are so long a furnishing!

Enter SUBTLE.

How now? Ha' you done?
Sub. Done! They are gone. The sum
Is here in bank, my Face. I would we knew
Another champion now would buy them outright.
Face. 'Slid, Nab shall do it against he have the widow,
To furnish household.
Sub. Excellent well thought on.
Pray heaven he come!
Face. I pray he keep away,
Till our new business be o'erpast.
Sub. But, Face,
How cam'st thou by this secret Don?
Face. A spirit
Brought me the intelligence in a paper here,
As I was conjuring yonder in my circle
For Surly. I ha' my flies abroad. Your bath
Is famous, Subtle, by my means. Sweet Dol,
You must go tune your virginal: no losing
O' the least time. And do you hear? His great
Verdugoship has not a jot of language:
So much the easier to be cozened, my Dolly;
He will come here in a hired coach, obscure,
And our own coachman, whom I have sent to guide;

No creature else. Who's that? [*One knocks.*
Sub. It is not he!
Face. Oh, no, not yet, this hour.
Sub. Who is't?
Dol. Dapper,
Your clerk.
Face. God's will! then, queen of fairy,
On with your tire; and, doctor, with your robes.
Let us dispatch him, for God's sake.
Sub. 'Twill be long.
Face. I warrant you: take but the cues I give you,
It shall be brief enough. 'Slight, here are more!
Abel, and, I think, the angry boy, the heir,
That fain would quarrel.
Sub. And the widow?
Face. No;
Not that I see. Away.
[*Exeunt* SUBTLE *and* DOL.
O, sirs, you are welcome!

Enter DAPPER, DRUGGER, *and* KASTRIL.

The doctor is within, moving for you.
I have had the most ado to win him to it.
He swears you'll be the darling of the dice.
Dap. Shall see her grace?
Face. See her, and kiss her too—What, honest Nab!
Hast brought the damask?
Drug. No, sir, here's tobacco.
Face. 'Tis well done, Nab. Thou'lt bring the damask, too?
Drug. Yes. Here's the gentleman, captain; master Kastril,
I have brought to see the doctor.
Face. Where's the widow? [*Whispers.*
Drug. Sir, as he likes, his sister (he says) shall come.
Face. Oh, is it so?
Drug. I'll introduce him. Master Kastril, captain Face.
Face. Good time. Is your name Kastril, sir?
Kas. Aye, and the best of the Kastrils; I'd be sorry else,
By fifteen hundred a-year. Where is the doctor?
My mad tobacco boy, here, tells me of one
That can do things. Has he any skill?
Face. Wherein, sir?
Kas. To carry a business, manage a quarrel fairly,
Upon fit terms.
Face. It seems, sir, you are but young
About the town, that can make that a question.
Kas. Sir, not so young, but I have heard some speech
Of the angry boys, and seen them take tobacco,
And in his shop; and I can take it too:
And I would fain be one of them, and go down
And practise in the country.
Face. Sir, for the duello,
The doctor, I assure you, shall inform you,
To the least shadow of a hair; and, then, rules
To give and take the lie by.
Kas. How! to take it?
Face. Yes, in oblique, he'll shew you, or in circle,
But never in diameter. I'll tell you his method:
First, he will enter you at some ordinary.
Kas. No, I'll come not there. You shall pardon me.
Face. For why, sir?
Kas. There's gaming there, and tricks.
Face. Why, would you be
A gallant, and not game?
Kas. Aye, 'twill spend a man.
Face. Spend you! it will repair you, when you are spent.
How do they live by their wits there, that have vented
Six times your fortune?
Kas. What, three thousand a year?
Face. Aye, forty thousand.
Here's a young gentleman
Is born to nothing, forty marks a year,
Which I count nothing. He is to be initiated,
And have a fly o' the doctor. He will win you,
By irresistible luck, within this fortnight,
Enough to buy a barony.
Kas. Do you not gull one?
Face. 'Ods my life! do you think it?
Why, Nab here knows it.
And then for making matches for rich widows,
Young gentlewomen, heirs, the fortunatest man!
He's sent to, far and near, all over England,
To have his counsel, and to know their fortunes.
Kas. Adzooks! my sister shall see him.
Face. I'll tell you, sir,
What he did tell me of Nab.
It's a strange thing;
By the way, you must eat no cheese, Nab; it breeds melancholy,
And that same melancholy breeds worms) but pass it;
He told me, honest Nab, he was ne'er at tavern
But once in's life!
Drug. Troth, and no more I was not——
Face. And then he was so sick——
Drug. Could he tell you that too?
Face. How should I know it?
Drug. In troth, I'll tell you the whole story:
We had been a shooting,
And had a piece of fat ram mutton to supper,
That lay so heavy o' my stomach——
Face. And he has no head
To bear any wine: for what with the noise of the fiddlers,
And care of his shop; for he dares keep no servant——
Drug. My head did so ache——
Face. As he was fain to be brought home,
The doctor told me. And then a good old woman——
Drug. (Yes, faith, she dwells in Sea coal-lane) did cure me

With sodden ale, and pellitory o' the wall;
Cost me but two-pence. I had another sickness,
Was worse than that——
Face. Aye, that was the grief
Thou took'st for being 'sessed at eighteen pence,
For the water-work.
Drug. In truth, and it was like
To have cost me almost my life.
Face. Thy hair went off.
Drug. Yes;
'Twas done for spite.
Face. Nay, so says the doctor.
Kas. Pray thee, tobacco boy, go fetch my sister;
I'll see this learned boy before I go;
And so shall she.
Face. Sir, he is busy now;
But if you have a sister to fetch hither,
Perhaps your own pains may command her sooner,
And he by that time will be free.
Kas. I go.
Face. Drugger, she's thine—the damask.
[*Exeunt* DRUGGER *and* KASTRIL
Subtle and I
Must wrestle for her. [*Aside.*] Come on, Master Dapper;
You see how I turn clients here away,
To give your cause dispatch. Have you performed
The ceremonies were enjoined you?
Dap. Yes, o' the vinegar,
And the clean shirt.
Face. 'Tis well; that shirt may do you
More worship than you think.
Ha' you provided for her grace's servants?
Dap. Yes, here are six-score Edward's shillings.
Face. Good.
Dap. And an old Harry's sovereign.
Face. Very good.
Dap. And three James's shillings, and an Elizabeth's groat;
Just twenty nobles.
Face. Oh, you are too just!
I would you had the other noble in Mary's.
Dap. I have some Philip and Mary's.
Face. Aye, those same
Are best of all. Where are they? Hark! the doctor.

Enter SUBTLE.

Sub. Is her grace's cousin come?
Face. He is come.
Sub. And is he fasting?
Face. Yes.
Sub. And hath cried hum?
Face. Thrice, you must answer.
Dap. Thrice.
Sub. And as oft, buz?
Face. If you have, say.
Dap. I have.
Sub. Then, to her cuz,
Hoping that he hath vinegared his senses,
As he was bid, the fairy queen dispenses,
By me, this robe, the petticoat of fortune;
Which that he straight put on, she doth importune,
And though to fortune near be her petticoat,
Yet nearer is her smock, the queen doth note:
And therefore, even of that a piece she has sent,
Which, being a child, to wrap him in, was rent;
And prays him for a scarf, he now will wear it
(With as much love as then her grace did tear it)
About his eyes, to shew he is fortunate.
[*They blind him with a rag.*
And, trusting unto her to make his state,
He'll throw away all worldly pelf upon him:
Which, that he will perform, she doth not doubt him.
Face. She need not doubt him, sir. Alas! he has nothing
But what he will part withal as willingly,
Upon her grace's word (throw away your purse),
As she should ask it.
She cannot bid that thing, but he'll obey.
If you have a ring about you, cast it off,
Or a silver seal at your wrist: her grace will send
Her fairies here to search you; therefore deal
Directly with her highness. If they find
That you conceal a mite, you are undone.
[*He throws away as they bid him.*
Dap. Truly, there's all.
Face. All what!
Dap. My money, truly.
Face. Keep nothing that is transitory about you.
Look, the elves are come
To pinch you, if you tell not truth. Advise you.
Dap. Oh, I have a paper with a spur-ryal in't.
Face. Ti, ti,
They knew it, they say.
Dap. By this good light, I ha' nothing
But a half crown
Of gold, about my wrist, that my love gave me.
And a leaden heart I wore, sin' she forsook me.
Face. I thought 'twas something. And would you incur
Your aunt's displeasure for these trifles? Come,
I had rather you had thrown away twenty half-crowns.
You may wear your leaden heart still. [*Knock.*] How now?

Enter DOL.

Sub. What news, Dol?
Dol. Yonder's your knight, sir Mammon.
Face. God's lid, we never thought of him till now.
Where is he?
Dol. Here, hard by. He's at the door.
Sub. And you are not ready now.
Dol. He must be sent back.
Face. Oh, by no means.

What shall we do with this same puffing here,
Now he's o' the spit?
Sub. Why, lay him back awhile,
With some device. Ti, ti, ti, ti, ti. Would her grace speak with me? [*Knock.*
I come. Help, Dol.
Face. Who's there? Sir Epicure?
[*He speaks through the key-hole, the other knocking.*]
My master's i' the way. Please you to walk
Three or four turns, but till his back be turned,
And I am for you. Quickly, Dol. [*Exit* DOL.
Sub. Her grace
Commends her kindly to you, Master Dapper.
Dap. I long to see her grace.
Sub. She now is set
At dinner in her bed, and she has sent you,
From her own private trencher, a dead mouse,
And a piece of gingerbread, to be merry withal,
And stay your stomach, lest you faint with fasting:
Yet, if you could hold out, till she saw you, (she says)
It would be better for you.
Face. Sir, he shall
Hold out, an' 'twere this two hours, for her highness;
I can assure you that. We will not lose
All we ha' done——
Sub. He must not see, nor speak
To any body, till then.
Face. For that we'll put, sir,
A stay in's mouth.
Sub. Of what?
Face. Of gingerbread.
Make you it fit.
Gape, sir, and let him fit you.
Sub. Where shall we now
Bestow him?
Dol. I' the privy.
Sub. Come, along, sir,
I now must shew you fortune's privy lodgings.
Face. Are they perfumed, and his bath ready?
Sub. All.
Only the fumigation's somewhat strong.
Face. Sir Epicure, I am yours, sir, by and by.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

FACE *and* MAMMON *meet.*

Face. Oh, sir, you are come i' the only finest time.
Mam. Where's master?
Face. Now preparing for projection, sir.
Your stuff will be all changed shortly.
Mam. Into gold?
Face. To gold and silver, sir.
Mam. Silver I care not for.
Face. Yes, sir, a little to give beggars.
Mam. Where's the lady?
Face. At hand here. I ha' told her such brave things of you,
Touching your bounty, and your noble spirit——
Mam. Hast thou?
Face. As she is almost in her fit to see you.
But, good sir, no divinity i' your conference,
For fear of putting her in a rage——
Mam. I warrant thee.
Face. The very house, sir, would run mad.—You know it,
How scrupulous he is, and violent
'Gainst the least act of sin.
Mam. I am schooled, good Cleon.
Face. And you must praise her house, remember that,
And her nobility.
Mam. Let me alone;
No herald, nor no antiquary, Lungs,
Shall do it better. Go.

Enter DOL.

Here she comes.
Face. To him, Dol, suckle him. This is the noble knight
I told your ladyship. [*Exit* FACE.
Mam. Madam, with your pardon,
I kiss your vesture.
Dol. Sir, I were uncivil
If I would suffer that; my lip to you, sir.
Mam. I hope my lord, your brother, be in health, lady.
Dol. My lord, my brother is, though I no lady, sir.
Mam. 'Tis your prerogative.
Dol. Rather your courtesy.
Mam. Were there nought else to enlarge your virtues to me,
These answers speak your breeding and your blood.
Dol. Blood we boast none, sir; a poor baron's daughter.
Mam. Poor! and got you? Profane not. Had your father
Slept all the happy remnant of his life,
After that act,
He had done enough to make himself
And his posterity noble.
Sweet madam, let me be particular——
Dol. Particular, sir? I pray you, know your distance.
Mam. In no ill sense, sweet lady, but to ask
How your fair graces pass the hours? I see

You are lodged here i' the house of a rare man,
An excellent artist; but what's that to you?
Dol. Yes, sir, I study here the mathematics,
And distillation.
Mam. Oh, I cry your pardon.
He's a divine instructor.
Dol. Ave, and for his physick, sir——
Mam. Above the art of Esculapius,
That drew the envy of the thunderer!
I know all this, and more.
Dol. Troth, I am taken, sir,
Whole with these studies, that contemplate nature.
Mam. It is a noble humour: but this form
Was not intended to so dark a use.
I muse, my lord, your brother, will permit it!
You should spend half my land first, were I he.
Does not this diamond look better on my finger
Than i' the quarry?
Dol. Yes.
Mam. Why, you are like it.
You were created, lady, for the light!
Here, you shall wear it; take it, the first pledge
Of what I speak, to bind you to believe me.
Dol. In chains of adamant?
Mam. Yes, the strongest bands.
And take a secret, too: here, by your side,
Doth stand, this hour, the happiest man in Europe.
Dol. You are contented, sir?
Mam. Nay, in true being,
The envy of princes, and the fear of states.
Dol. Say you so, sir Epicure?
Mam. Yes, and thou shalt prove it,
Daughter of honour. I have cast mine eye
Upon thy form, and I will rear this beauty
Above all stiles.
Dol. You mean no treason, sir?
Mam. No: I will take away that jealousy.
I am the lord of the philosopher's stone,
And thou the lady.
Dol. How, sir! ha' you that?
Mam. I am the master of the mastery.
This day the good old wretch here, o' the house,
Has made it for us; now he's at projection.
Think, therefore, thy first wish now; let me hear it;
And it shall rain into thy lap, no shower,
But floods of gold, whole cataracts, a deluge—

Enter FACE.

Face. Sir, you're too loud; I hear you every word
I no the laboratory. Some fitter place;
The garden, or great chamber above. How like you her?
Mam. Excellent! Lungs. There's for thee.
[*Gives money.*
Face. But do you hear?
Good sir, beware no mention of the Rabbins.
Mam. We think not on them,
[*Exeunt* MAMMON *and* DOL.
Face. Oh, it is well, sir. Subtle!

Enter SUBTLE.

Face. Dost thou not laugh!
Sub. Yes. Are they gone?
Face. All's clear.
Sub. The widow is come.
Face. And your quarrelling disciple?
Sub. Aye.
Face. I must to my captainship again, then.
Sub. Stay, bring them in first.
Face. So I meant. What is she?
A bonny belle?
Sub. I know not.
Face. We'll draw lots.
You'll stand to that?
Sub. What else?
To the door, man.
Face, You'll have the first kiss, 'cause I am not ready.
Sub. Yes, and perhaps hit you through both the nostrils.

Enter KASTRIL *and* PLIANT.

Face. Who would you speak with?
Kas. Where's the captain?
Face. Gone, sir,
About some business.
Kas. Gone!
Face. He'll return straight.
But, master doctor, his lieutenant, is here.
Sub. Come near, my worshipful boy, my *Terræ Fili.*
That is, my boy of land; make thy approaches.
Welcome: I know thy lust, and thy desires,
And I will serve and satisfy them. Begin;
Charge me from thence, or thence, or in this line;
Here is my centre: ground thy quarrel.
Kas. You lie!
Sub. How, child of wrath and anger! the loud lie!
For what, my sudden boy?
Kas. Nay, that look you to,
I am afore-hand.
Sub. O, this is no true grammar,
And as ill logick! You must render causes, child,
Your first and second intentions, know your canons,
And your divisions, moods, degrees, and differences,
And ha' your elements perfect——
Kas. What, is this
The angry tongue he talks in?
Sub. That false precept
Of being afore-hand, has deceived a number,
And made them enter quarrels, oftentimes,
Before they were aware; and afterward
Against their wills.
Kas. How must I do then, sir?
Sub. I cry this lady mercy: she should first
Have been saluted.

I do call you lady. [*Kisses her.*
Because you are to be one, ere't be long,
My soft and luxom widow. [*He kisses her.*
Kas. Is she, i' faith?
Sub. Yes, or my heart is an egregious liar.
Kas. How know you?
Sub. By inspection on her forehead,
And subtility of her lip, which must be tasted
Often, to make a judgment.
[*He kisses her again.*
Here is yet a line,
In *vivo frontis*, tells me, he is no knight.
Pli. What is he, sir?
Sub. Let me see your hand.
Oh, your *linea Fortunæ* makes it plain;
He is a soldier, or a man of art, lady;
But shall have some great honour shortly.
Pli. Brother,
He's a rare man, believe me!
Kas. Hold your peace.
Here comes the other rare man.

Enter FACE.

'Save you, captain.
Face. Good master Kastril, is this your sister?
Kas. Ay, sir,
Please to kuss her, and be proud to know her.
Face. I shall be proud to know you, lady.
Pli. Brother, he calls me lady too.
Kas. Ay, peace, I heard it.
Face. The count is come.
Sub. Why, you must entertain him.
Face. What'll you do
With these the while?
Sub. Why have them up, and shew them
Some fustian book, or the dark glass.
Face. 'Fore god,
She is a delicate dab-chick! I must have her.
[*Exit.*
Sub. Must you? Ay, if your fortune will, you must.
Come, sir, the captain will come to us presently:
I'll have you to my chamber of demonstrations,
Where I'll shew you my instrument,
That hath the several scales upon't, shall make you
Able to quarrel, at a straw's breadth by moonlight.
And, lady, I'll have you look in a glass,
Some half an hour, but to clear your eye-sight,
Against you see your fortune; which is greater
Than I may judge upon the sudden, trust me.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter FACE.

Face. Where are you, doctor?
Sub. [*within.*] I'll come to you presently.
Face. I will have this same widow, now I have seen her,
On any composition.

Enter SUBTLE.

Sub. What do you say?
Face. Have you disposed of them.
Sub. I have sent them up.
Face. Subtle, in troth, I needs must have this widow.
Sub. Is that the matter?
Face. Nay, but hear me.
Sub. Go to,
If you rebel once, Dol shall know it all.
Therefore be quiet, and obey your chance.
Face. Nay,
But understand: I'll give you composition.
Sub. I will not treat with thee. What, sell my fortune?
'Tis better than my birth-right. Do not murmur.
Win her, and carry her. If you grumble, Dol
Knows it directly.
Face. Well, sir, I am silent.
Will you go help to fetch in Don in state?
Sub. I follow you, sir. We must keep Face in awe,
Or he will overlook us like a tyrant. [*Aside.*
Brain of a taylor! Who comes here? Don John?

Enter SURLY *like a Spaniard.*

Sur. *Sennores, beso las manos, a vuestras mercedes.*
Sub. Don, your scurvy, yellow, Madrid face is welcome.
Sur. *Gratia.*
Sub. He speaks out of a fortification.
Pray god, he ha' no squibs in those deep sets.
Sur. *Por dios, sennores, muy linda casa!*
Sub. What says he?
Face. Praises the house, I think;
I know no more but's action.
Sub. Yes, the Casa,
My precious Diego, will prove fair enough
To cozen you in. Do you mark? You shall
Be cozened, Diego.
Face. Cozened, do you see?
My worthy Donzel, cozened.
Sur. *Entiendo.*
Sub. Do you intend it? So do we, dear Don.
Have you brought pistolets, or portagues,
My solemn Don? Dost thou feel any?
Face. Full. [*He feels his pockets.*
Sub. You shall be emptied, Don, pumped and drawn
Dry, as they say.
Face. 'Slid, Subtle, how shall we do!
Sub. For what?
Face. Why Dol's employed, you know.
Sub. That's true.
'Fore Heaven, I know not:
Mammon must not be troubled.
Face. Mammon? in no case.
Think; you must be sudden.
Sur. *Entiendo, que la sennora es tan hermosa,*

que codicio tan a ver la, como la bien aventuranza de mi vida.

Face. *Mi vida ?* 'Slid, Subtle, he puts me in mind of the widow.

What dost thou say to draw her to't ? Ha !

And tell her it is her fortune ?

Sub. Dispatch, and call her brother, too.

[*Exit* FACE.

Sur. *Tiengo, duda, sennores,*

Que no me hagan alguna traycion.

Sub. How, issue on? Yes, *præsto sennor.* Please you

Enthratha the *Chambratha*, worthy Don ?

Where, if you please the fates, in your *Bathada*,

You shall be soaked, and stroaked, and tubbed, and rubbed,

And scrubbed, and fubbed, dear Don, before you go.

You shall, in faith, my scurvy baboon Don,

Be curried, clawed, and flawed, and tawed, indeed.

[*Exit* SURLY.

I will the heartlier go about it now,

And make the widow a punk so much the sooner,

To be revenged on this impetuous Face :

The quickly doing of it is the grace.

Enter FACE, KASTRIL, *and* PLIANT.

Face. Come, lady; I knew the doctor would not leave,

Till he had found the very nick of her fortune.

Kas. To be a countess, say you? A Spanish countess, sir ?

Pli. Why, is that better than an English countess ?

Face. Better ! 'Slight, make you that a question, lady ?

Enter SUBTLE.

Here comes the doctor.

Sub. My most honoured lady,

(For so I am now to stile you, having found,

By this my scheme, you are to undergo

An honourable fortune, very shortly)

What will you say now, if some——

Face. I have told her all, sir;

And her right worshipful brother here, that she shall be

A countess ; do not delay them, sir; a Spanish countess.

Sub. Still, my scarce worshipful captain, you can keep

No secret. Well, since he has told you, madam,

Do you forgive him, and I do.

Kas. She shall do that, sir;

I'll look to't, 'tis my charge.

Sub. Well, then, nought rests

But that she fit her love now to her fortune.

Pli. Truly, I shall never brook a Spaniard.

Sub. No?

Pli. Never since eighty-eight could I abide them.

And that was some three year afore I was born, in truth.

Sub. Come, you must love him, or be miserable.

Kas. Gods'lid you shall love him, or I'll kick you.

Pli. Why ?

I'll do as you will ha' me, brother.

Kas. Do.

Or by this hand you are not my suster,

If you refuse.

Pli. I will not refuse, brother.

Enter SURLY.

Sur. *Que es esto, sennores, que non se venga ?*

Esta tardanza me mata !

Face. It is the count come ;

The doctor knew he would be here, by his art.

Sub. *En gallanta madama, don ! gallantissima !*

Sur. *Par todos los dioses, le mas acabada*

Hermosura, que he visto en mi vida !

Face. Is't not a gallant language, that they speak ?

Kas. An admirable language ! Is't not French?

Face. No, Spanish, sir.

Kas. It goes like law-French ;

And that, they say, is the courtliest language.

Face. List, sir.

Sur. *Valga me dios.*

Face. He admires your sister.

Kas. Must not she make a curtsy ?

Sub. Od's will, she must go to him, man, and kiss him !

It is the Spanish fashion for the women

To make first court. Sir ?

Sur. *Por el amor de dios, que es esto, que se tarda ?*

Kas. Nay, see ; she will not understand him ! Gull !

Noddy !

Pli. What say you, brother ?

Kas. Ass, my suster !

Go kuss him, as the cunning man would ha' you.

Sur. *Sennora, si sera servida, entremus.*

Kas. Where does he carry her ?

[*Exeunt* SURLY *and* PLIANT.

Face. Into the garden, sir;

Take you no thought; I must interpret for her.

Sub. Give Dol the word. [*Exit* FACE.] Come, my fierce child, advance.

We'll to our quarrelling lesson again.

Kass. Agreed.

I love a Spanish boy with all my heart.

Sub. Nay, by this means, sir, you shall be brother

To a great count.

Kas. Ay, I knew that at first.

This match will advance the house of the Kastrils.

Sub. Pray God your sister prove but pliant.

Kas. Why,

Her name is so by her other husband.

Sub. How!
Kas. The widow Pliant. Knew you not that?
Sub. Yes, yes, I knew it by my art.
Come, let's go to practise.
Kas. Yes; but do you think, doctor,
I ne'er shall quarrel well?
Sub. I warrant you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Another Apartment.*

Enter DOL *and* MAMMON.

Dol. For, after Alexander's death——
[*In her fit of talking.*
Mam. Good lady——
Dol. That Perdiccas and Antigonus were slain,
The two that stood, Seleuc' and Ptolmee——
Mam. Madam.
Dol. Made up the two legs, and the fourth beast,
That was Gog-north, and Egypt-south; which after
Was called Gog-iron-leg, and South-iron-leg——
Mam. La—
Dol. And then Gog-horned. So was Egypt, too.
Then Egypt-clay-leg, and Gog-clay-leg.
Mam. Sweet madam.
Dol. And last Gog-dust, and Egypt-dust, which fall
In the last link of the fourth chain. And these
Be stars in story, which none see or look at——
Mam. What shall I do?
Dol. For, as he says, except
We call the rabins, and the heathen Greeks——
Mam. Dear lady!
Dol. To come from Salem, and from Athens,
And teach the people of Great-Britain——

Enter FACE.

Face. What's the matter, sir.
Dol. To speak the tongue of Eber and Javan—
Mam. Oh, she's in her fit.
Dol. We shall know nothing——
Face. Death, sir,
We are undone. My master will hear!
Sub. [*within.*] What's to do there?
Face. Oh, we are lost. Now she hears him, she is quiet.
Mam. Where shall I hide me?
[*Upon* SUBTLE'S *entry, they disperse.*]
Sub. How, what sight is here!
Close deeds of darkness, and that shun the light!
Bring him again; who is he?—What, my son!
Oh, I have lived too long.
Mam. Nay, good, dear father,
There was no unchaste purpose.
Sub. No? and flee me,
When I come in?
Mam. That was my error.
Sub. Error?
Guilt, guilt, my son. Give it the right name. No marvel
If I found check in our great work within,
When such affairs as these were managing!
Mam. Why, have you so?
Sub. It has stood still this half hour;
And all the rest of our less works gone back.
Where is the instrument of wickedness,
My lewd false drudge?
Mam. Nay, good sir, blame not him;
Believe me, 'twas against his will or knowledge.
I saw her by chance.
Sub. Will you commit more sin
To excuse a varlet?
Mam. By my hope, 'tis true, sir.
Sub. Nay, then, I wonder less, if you, for whom
The blessing was prepared, would so tempt heaven,
And lose your fortunes.
Mam. Why, sir?
Sub. This will retard
The work, a month at least.
Mam. Why, if it do,
What remedy? but think it not, good father:
Our purposes were honest.
Sub. As they were,
So the reward will prove.
[*A great crack, and noise within.*]
How now! Ay me!
God, and all saints be good to us! What's that?
Face. Oh, sir, we are defeated: all the works
Are flown in *fumo*:
Retorts, receivers, pellicanes, bolt-heads,
All struck in shivers! Help, good sir! alas!
[SUBTLE *falls down as in a swoon.*
Coldness and death invade him. Nay, sir Mammon,
Do the fair office of a man! You stand,
As you were readier to depart than he.
[*One knocks.*
Who's there? My lord, her brother, is come!
Mam. Ha, Lungs?
Face. His coach is at the door. Avoid his sight,
For he's as furious as his sister is mad.
[*One knocks.*
Mam. Alas!
Face. My brain is quite undone with the fume, sir.
I ne'er must hope to be mine own man again.
Mam. Is all lost, Lungs? Will nothing be preserved,
Of all our cost?
Face. Faith, very little, sir:
A peck of coals or so, which is cold comfort, sir.
Mam. Oh, my voluptuous mind! I'm justly punished.
Face. And so am I, sir.
Mam. Cast from all my hopes——
Face. Nay, certainties, sir.
Mam. By mine own base affections.
Sub. Oh, the cursed fruits of vice and lust!
[SUBTLE *seems to come to himself.*
Mam. Good father,

It was my sin. Forgive it.
Sub. Hangs my roof
Over us still, and will not fall, Oh justice!
Upon us, for this wicked man?
Face. Nay, look, sir,
You grieve him now with staying in his sight:
Good sir, the nobleman will come too, and take you,
And that may breed a tragedy.
Mam. I'll go.
Face. Aye, and repent at home, sir. It may be,
For some good penance you may have it yet;
A hundred pounds to the box at Bethlem.
Mam. Yes.
Face. For the restoring such as ha' lost their wits.
Mam. I'll do it.
Face. I'll send one to you to receive it.
Mam. Do.
Is no projection left?
Face. All flown, or stinks, sir.
Mam. Will nought be saved that's good for medicine, think'st thou?
Face. I cannot tell, sir. There will be, perhaps,
Something, about the scraping of the shards,
Will cure the itch:
It shall be saved for you, and sent home. Good sir,
This way, for fear the lord should meet you.
[*Exit* MAMMON.
Sub. Face.
Face. Ay.
Sub. Is he gone?
Face. Yes, and as heavily
As all the gold he hoped for were in his blood.
Let us be light though.
Sub. Ay, as balls, and bound
And hit our heads against the roof for joy:
There's so much of our care now cast away.
Face. Now to our Don.
Sub. Yes, your young widow, by this time,
Is made a countess. She's now in travail
Of a young heir for you.
Face. Good, sir.
Sub. Off with your case,
And greet her kindly, as a bridegroom should,
After these common hazards.
Face. Very well, sir.
Will you go fetch don Diego off the while?
Sub. And fetch him over, too, if you'll be pleased, sir.
Would Dol were in her place to pick his pockets now.
Face. Why, you can do it as well, if you would set to it.
I pray you prove your virtue.
Sub. For your sake, sir. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Alchymist's room.*

Enter SURLY *and* DAME PLIANT.

Sur. Lady, you see into what hands you are fallen!
'Mongst what a nest of villains! and how near
Your honour was to have catched a certain ruin,
(Through your credulity) had I but been
So punctually forward, as place, time,
And other circumstances would have made a man:
For you're a handsome woman; would you were wise too!
I am a gentleman come here disguised,
Only to find the knaveries of this citadel,
And, where I might have wronged your honour, and have not,
I claim some interest in your love. You are,
They say, a widow, rich; and I am a batchelor,
Worth nought: your fortunes may make me a man,
As mine have preserved you a woman. Think upon it,
And whether I have deserved you, or no.
Pli. I will, sir.
Sur. And for these household-rogues, let me alone
To treat with them.

Enter SUBTLE.

Sub. How doth my noble Diego?
And my dear madam countess? Hath the count
Been courteous, lady? liberal and open?
Donsel, methinks you look melancholic,
I do not like the dulness of your eye;
Be lighter; I will make your pockets so.
[*He falls to picking of them.*
Sur. Will you, don bawd, and pick-purse? How now? Reel you? [*Strikes him.*
Stand up, sir; you shall find, since I am so heavy,
I'll give you equal weight.
Sub. Help, murder!
Sur. No, sir, there's no such thing intended. A good cart,
And a clean whip, shall ease you of that fear.
I am the Spanish don, that should be cozened,
Do you see? Cozened! Where's your captain Face?

Enter FACE.

Face. How, Surly!
Sur. Oh, make your approach, good captain.
I have found, from whence your copper rings and spoons
Come now, wherewith you cheat abroad in taverns.
And this doctor,
Your sooty, smoaky-bearded compeer, he

Will close you so much gold in a bolt's head,
[FACE *steals off.*
And, on a turn, convey (in the stead) another
With sublimed mercury, that shall burst i' the heat,
And all fly out *in fumo!* What, is he gone!
Nay, sir, you must tarry,
Though he be escaped, and answer by the ears, sir.

Enter FACE *and* KASTRIL.

Face. Why, now's the time, if ever you will quarrel
Well, as they say, and be a true-born child.
The doctor and your sister both are abused.
Kas. Where is he? Which is he? He is a slave,
Whate'er he is, and the son of a whore. Are you
The man, sir, I would know?
Sur. I should be loth, sir,
To confess so much.
Kas. Then you lie i' your throat.
Sur. How!
Face. A very arrant rogue, sir, and a cheater,
Employed here by another conjurer,
That does not love the doctor, and would cross him,
If he knew how——
Sur. Sir, you are abused.
Kas. You lie:
And 'tis no matter.
Face. Well said, sir. He's
The impudentest rascal——
Sur. You are, indeed! Will you hear me, sir?
Face. By no means—Bid him begone.
Kas. Begone, sir, quickly.
Sur. This is strange! lady, do you inform your brother.
Face. There is not such a foist in all the town:
The doctor had him presently; and finds yet,
The Spanish count will come here. Bear up, Subtle.
Sub. Yes, sir, he must appear within this hour.
Face. And yet this rogue will come in a disguise,
By the temptation of another spirit,
To trouble our art, though he could not hurt it.
Kas. Aye,
I know—Away; you talk like a foolish mouther.
Sur. Sir, all is truth, she says.
Face. Do not believe him, sir.
He is the lying'st swabber! Come your ways, sir.
Sur. You are valiant out of company.
Kas. Yes. How, then, sir?

Enter DRUGGER.

Face. Nay, here's an honest fellow, too, that knows him,
And all his tricks—Make good what I say, Abel:
This cheater would ha' cozened thee of the widow.
[*To* ABEL.
He owes this honest Drugger, here, seven pounds,
He has had on him in two penn'orths of tobacco.
Drug. Yes, sir; and he has damned himself three
Terms to pay me.
Face. And what does he owe for *lotium*?
Drug. Thirty shillings, sir.
Sur. Hydra of villany!
Face. Nay, sir, you must quarrel him out of the house.
Kas. I will, sir. If you get not out o' doors, you lie;
And you are a pimp.
Sur. Why, this is madness, sir,
Not valour in you. I must laugh at this.
Kas. It is my humour. You are a pimp, and a trig,
And an Amadis de Gaul, or a Don Quixotte.
Drug. Or a knight o' the curious coxcomb, do you see?

Enter ANANIAS.

Ana. Peace to the household!
Kas. I'll keep peace for no man.
Ana. Casting of dollars is concluded lawful.
Kas. Is he the constable?
Sub. Peace, Ananias.
Face. No, sir.
Kas. Then, you are an otter, and a shad, a whit,
A very Tim.
Sur. You'll hear me, sir?
Kas. I will not.
Ana. What is the motive?
Sub. Zeal in the gentleman,
Against his Spanish slops.
Ana. They are prophane,
Lewd, superstitious, and idolatrous breeches.
Sur. New rascals!
Kas. Will you begone, sir?
Ana. Avoid, satan.
Thou art not of the light. That ruff of pride
About thy neck betrays thee, and is the same
With that which the unclean birds, in seventy-seven,
Were seen to prank it with on divers coasts.
Thou look'st like Antichrist, in the lewd hat.
Sur. I must give way.
Kas. Begone, sir!
Sur. But I'll take a course with you.
Ana. Depart, proud Spanish fiend.
Sur. Captain and doctor——
Ana. Child of perdition!
Kas. Hence, sir. [*They fight. Exit* SURLY.]
Did I not quarrel bravely?
Face. Yes, indeed, sir.
Kas. Nay, an' I give my mind to it, I shall do it.
Drug. Well, and how did I?
Face. Very well;
But you must follow, sir, and threaten him tame;
He'll turn again else.

Kas. I'll return him, then.
Face. Drugger, this rogue prevented us; for thee,
We had determined that thou shouldst have come
In a Spanish suit, and have carried her so; and he,
A brokerly slave, goes, puts it on himself.
Hast brought the damask?
Drug. Yes, sir.
Face. Thou must borrow
A Spanish suit. Hast thou no credit with the players?
Drug. Yes, sir. Did you never see me play the fool?
Face. Thou shalt, if I can help it.
Hieronymo's old cloak, ruff, and hat will serve;
[SUBTLE *hath whispered him this while.*
I'll tell thee more when thou bring'st them.
[*Exit* DRUGGER.
Ana. Sir, I know
The Spaniard hates the brethren, and hath spies
Upon their actions: and that this was one,
I make no scruple.
And 'tis revealed no less to them than me,
That casting of money is most lawful.
Sub. True;
But here I cannot do it. If the house
Should chance to be suspected, all would out,
And we be locked up in the Tower for ever,
To make gold there for the state; never come out;
And then you are defeated.
Ana. I will tell
This to the elders, and the weaker brethren,
That the whole company of the separation
May join in humble prayer again.
Sub. And fasting.
Ana. Yea, for some fitter place. The peace of mind
Rest within these walls! [*Exit* ANANIAS.
Sub. Thanks, courteous Ananias.
Face. What did he come for?
Sub. About casting dollars,
Presently out of hand. And so I told him,
A Spanish minister came here to spy
Against the faithful.
Face. I conceive. Come, Subtle.
Thou art so down upon the least disaster!
How wouldst thou ha' done, if I had not helped thee out?
Sub. I thank thee, Face, for the angry boy, i'faith.
Face. Who would have looked it should have been that rascal, Surly?
Well, sir,
Here's damask come to make you a suit.
Sub. Where's Drugger?
Face. He's gone to borrow me a Spanish habit.
I'll be the count now.
Sub. But where's the widow?
Face. Within, with my lord's sister: madam Dol
Is entertaining her.
Sub. By your favour, Face;
Now she is honest, I will stand again.
Face. You will not offer it?
Sub. Why?
Face. Stand to your word,
Or——here comes Dol; she knows——
Sub. You are tyrannous still.
Face. Strict for my right.

Enter DOL.

How now, Dol? Hast told her
The Spanish count will come?
Dol. Yes; but another is come
You little looked for.
Face. Who's that?
Dol. Your master;
The master of the house.
Sub. How, Dol!
Face. She lies.
This is some trick. Come, leave your quibblings, Dorothy.
Dol. Look out and see.
Sub. Art thou in earnest?
Dol. 'Slight!
Forty o' the neighbours are about him, talking.
Face. 'Tis he, by this good day!
Dol. 'Twill prove an ill day
For some of us.
Face. We are undone, and taken.
Dol. Lost, I'm afraid.
Sub. You said he would not come
While there died one a week, within the liberties.
Face. No; 'twas within the walls.
Sub. What shall we do now, Face?
Face. Be silent; not a word, if he call or knock.
I'll into mine old shape again, and meet him,
Of Jeremy the butler. In the mean time,
Do you two pack up all the goods and purchase,
That we can carry i' the two trunks. I'll help him
Off for to day, if I cannot longer; and then,
At night, I'll ship you both away to Ratcliff,
Where we'll meet to-morrow, and there we'll share.
Let Mammon's brass and pewter keep the cellar—
We'll have another time for that. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter LOVEWIT *and Neighbours.*

Love. Has there been such resort, say you?
1 *Nei.* Daily, sir.
2 *Nei.* And nightly, too.
3 *Nei.* Ay, some as brave as lords.
4 *Nei.* Ladies and gentlewomen.
5 *Nei.* Citizens' wives, and knights in coaches.
2 *Nei.* Yes, and oyster-women.
1 *Nei.* Beside other gallants.
3 *Nei.* Sailor's wives.
4 *Nei.* Tobacco-men.
5 *Nei.* Another Pimlico!
Love. What device should he bring forth now?
I love a teeming wit as I love my nourishment.
Pray, Heaven, he have not kept such open house,
That he hath sold my hangings and my bedding;
I left him nothing else. If he have eat them,
A plague o' the mouth, say I.
When saw you him?
1 *Nei.* Who, sir? Jeremy?
2 *Nei.* Jeremy, butler?
We saw him not this month.
Love. How!
4 *Nei.* Not these five weeks, sir.
6 *Nei.* These six weeks, at the least.
Love. Ye amaze me, neighbours!
5 *Nei.* Sure, if your worship know not where he is,
He's slipped away.
6 *Nei.* Pray, Heaven, he be not made away.
[*He knocks.*
Love. Ha! It is no time to question, then.
6 *Nei.* About
Some three weeks since, I heard a doleful cry,
As I sat up, a mending my wife's stockings.
Love. This is strange, that none will answer!
Didst thou hear
A cry, say'st thou?
6 *Nei.* Yes, sir, like unto a man
That had been strangled an hour, and could not speak.
2 *Nei.* I heard it, too, just this day three weeks, at two o'clock
Next morning.
Love. These be miracles, or you make them so.
A man an hour strangled, and could not speak,
And you both heard him cry!
3 *Nei.* Yes, downward, sir.
Love. Thou art a wise fellow. Give me thy hand, I pray thee.
What trade art thou?
3 *Nei.* A smith, an't please your worship.
Love. A smith! then lend me thy help to get this door open.
3 *Nei.* That I will, presently, sir; but fetch my tools. [*Exit.*
1 *Nei.* Sir, best to knock again, afore you break it.

Enter FACE.

Love. I will.
Face. What mean you, sir?
All Nei. Oh, here's Jeremy!
Face. Good sir, come, from the door.
Love. Why, what's the matter?
Face. Yet farther; you are too near yet.
Love. In the name of wonder, what means the fellow?
Face. The house, sir, has been visited.
Love. Stand thou, then, farther.
Face. No, sir, I had it not.
Love. Who had it then? I left
None else but thee i' the house.
Face. Yes, sir, my fellow,
The cat, that keeps the buttery, had it on her
A week before I spied it; but I got her
Conveyed away i' the night. And so I shut
The house up for a month——
Love. How!
Face. Purposing then, sir,
To have burnt rose-vinegar, treacle, and tar,
And have made it sweet, that you should ne'er have known it.
Because I knew the news would but afflict you, sir.
Love. Why, this is stranger!
The neighbours tell me all, here, that the doors
Have still been open——
Face. How, sir!
Love. Gallants, men, and women,
And of all sorts, tag-rag, been seen to flock here
In threaves, these ten weeks, as to a second hog's-den,
In days of Pimlico and Eye-bright.
Face. Sir,
Their wisdoms will not say so!
Love. To-day, they speak
Of coaches and gallants; one in a French hood
Went in, they tell me; and another was seen
In a velvet gown, at the window; divers more
Pass in and out
Face. They did pass through the doors, then,
Or walls, I assure their eye-sights, and their spectacles;
For here, sir, are the keys, and there have been,
In this my pocket, now above twenty days.
For, on my faith to your worship, for these three weeks,
And upwards, the door has not been opened.
Love. Strange!
4 *Nei.* Good faith, I think I saw a coach.
Love. Do you but think it now?
And but one coach?
4 *Nei.* We cannot tell, sir; Jeremy
Is a very honest fellow.

Face. Did you see me at all?
1 *Nei.* No; that we are sure on.
Love. Fine rogues to have your testimonies built on!

Re-enter 3d Neighbour.

3 *Nei.* Is Jeremy come?
1 *Nei* Oh, yes; you may leave your tools;
We were deceived; he says he has had the keys,
And the door has been shut these three weeks.
3 *Nei.* Like enough.
Love. Peace, and get hence, you changelings!
Face. [*Aside.*] Surly come!
And Mammon made acquainted! They'll tell all.
How shall I beat them off? What shall I do?
Nothing's more wretched than a guilty conscience.

Enter SURLY *and* MAMMON.

Sur. No, sir, he was a great physician. This,
It was no bawdy-house, but a mere chancel.
You knew the lord and his sister.
Mam. Nay, good Surly——
Sur. The happy word, be rich——
Mam. Play not the tyrant.
Sur. Should be to-day pronounced to all your friends.
And where be your andirons, now, and your brass-pots,
That should have been golden flaggons, and great wedges?
Mam. Let me but breathe. What, they have shut their doors,
Methinks.
Sur. Aye, now, 'tis holiday with them.
Mam. Rogues,
Cozeners, impostors, bawds!
Face. What mean you, sir?
[MAMMON *and* SURLY *knock.*
Mam. To enter, if we can.
Face. Another man's house!
Here is the owner, sir; turn to him,
And speak your business.
Mam. Are you, sir, the owner?
Love. Yes, sir.
Mam. And are those knaves within your cheaters?
Love. What knaves, what cheaters?
Mam. Subtle, and his Lungs.
Face. The gentleman is distracted, sir. No Lungs,
Nor lights have been seen here these three weeks, sir,
Within these doors, upon my word.
Sur. Your word!
Groom arrogant.
Face. Yes, sir; I am the housekeeper,
And know the keys have not been out of my hands.
Sur. This is a new face.
Face. You do mistake the house, sir.
What sign was't at!
Sur. You rascal! this is one
O' the confederacy. Come, let's get officers,
And force the door.
Love. Pray you, stay, gentlemen.
Sur. No, sir, we'll come with warrant.
Mam. Aye, and then
We shall have your doors open.
[*Exeunt* SURLY *and* MAMMON.
Love. What means this?
Face. I cannot tell, sir.
1 *Nei.* These are two o' the gallants,
That we do think we saw.
Face. Two of the fools!
You talk as idly as they. Good faith, sir,
I think the moon hath crazed them all! Oh, me,
The angry boy come too! He'll make a noise,
And ne'er away till he have betrayed us all.
[*Aside.*

Enter KASTRIL.

Kas. What rogues, bawds, slaves! you'll open the door anon. [KASTRIL *knocks.*
Punk, cockatrice, my suster. By this light
I'll fetch the marshall to you.
Face. Who would you speak with, sir?
Kas. The bawdy doctor, and the cozening captain,
And puss, my suster.
Love. This is something, sure!
Face. Upon my trust, the doors were never open, sir.
Kas. I have heard all their tricks told me twice over,
By the fat knight, and the lean gentleman.
Love. Here comes another.
Face. Ananias too!
And his pastor! [*Aside.*

Enter ANANIAS *and* TRIBULATION.

Ana. Come forth, you seed of sulphur, sons of fire;
Your stench is broke forth: abomination
Is in the house.
Kas. Aye, my suster's there.
Ana. The place
Is become a cage of unclean birds.
Kas. Yes, I will fetch the scavenger and the constable.
Trib. You shall do well.
Ana. We'll join to weed them out.
Kas. You will not come, then, punk device, my suster?
Ana. Call her not sister. She's a harlot, verily.
Kas. I'll raise the street.
Love. Good gentlemen, a word——
Ana. Satan, avoid, and hinder not our zeal.
Love. The world's turned Bedlam!
Face. These are all broke loose
Out of St Katharine's, where they use to keep
The better sort of mad folks.
1 *Nei.* All these persons
We saw go in and out here.

2 *Nei.* Yes, indeed, sir.
3 *Nei.* These were the parties.
Face. Peace, you drunkards. Sir,
I wonder at it! Please you to give me leave
To touch the door: I'll try an' the lock be changed.
Love. It amazes me!
Face. Good faith, sir, I believe
There's no such thing. 'Tis all *deceptio visus.*
Would I could get him away!
[DAPPER *cries out within.*
Dap. Master captain, master doctor.
Love. Who's that?
Face. Our clerk within, that I forgot! [*Aside.*] I know not, sir.
Dap. For God's sake, when will her grace be at leisure?
Face. Ha!
Illusions, some spirit o' the air!——His gag is melted,
And now he sets out the throat. [*Aside.*
Dap. I'm almost stifled.
Face. Would you were altogether! [*Aside.*
Love. 'Tis in the house.
Ha! list——
Face. Believe it, sir, in the air.
Love. Peace, you——
Dap. Mine aunt's grace does not use me well.
Sub. You fool,
Peace, you'll mar all.
Face. Or you will else, you rogue.
Love. Oh, is it so? Then you converse with spirits.
Come, sir, no more o' your tricks, good Jeremy;
The truth's the shortest way.
Face. Dismiss this rabble, sir.
What shall I do? I am catched. [*Aside.*
Love. Good neighbours,
I thank you all. You may depart. Come, sir,
You know, that I am an indulgent master;
And therefore conceal nothing. What's your medicine,
To draw so many several sorts of wild-fowl?
Face. Sir, you were wont to affect mirth and wit:
(But here's no place to talk on't in the street.)
Give me but leave to make the best of my fortune,
And only pardon me the abuse of your house;
'Tis all I beg. I'll help you to a widow,
In recompense, that you shall give me thanks for,
Will make you seven years younger, and a rich one.
'Tis but your putting on a Spanish cloak;
I have her within. You need not fear the house;
It was not visited.
Love. But by me, who came
Sooner than you expected.
Face. It is true, sir.
Pray you, forgive me.
Love. Let's see your widow. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Chamber.*

Enter SUBTLE, DAPPER, *and* DOL.

Sub. How! ha' you eaten your gag?
Dap. Yes, faith, it crumbled
Away in my mouth.
Sub. You ha' spoiled all then.
Dap. No;
I hope my aunt of Fairy will forgive me.
Sub. Your aunt's a gracious lady; but, in troth,
You were to blame.
Dap. The fume did overcome me,
And I did do't to stay my stomach. Pray you,
So satisfy her grace.

Enter FACE.

Face. How now! Is his mouth down?
Sub. Ay, he has spoken.
Face. A pox! I heard him, and you too—He's undone, then—
I have been fain to say the house is haunted
With spirits, to keep churl back.
Sub. And hast thou done it?
Face. Sure, for this night.
Sub. Why, then, triumph and sing
Of Face so famous, the precious king
Of present wits!
Face. Did you not hear the coil
About the door?
Sub. Yes, and I dwindled with it.
Face. Shew him his aunt, and let him be dispatched:
I'll send her to you.
Drugger is at the door; go take his suit,
And bid him fetch a parson presently.
Say, he shall marry the widow.
[*Exeunt* DAPPER *and* SUBTLE.
Now, queen Dol,
Ha' you packed up all?
Dol. Yes.
Face. And how do you like
The lady Pliant?
Dol. A good dull innocent.

Re-enter SUBTLE.

Sub. Here's your Hieronymo's cloak and hat.
Face. Give me them.
Sub. And the ruff, too.
Face. Yes; I'll come to you presently. [*Exit.*
Sub. Now is he gone about his project, Dol,
I told you of, for the widow.
Dol. 'Tis direct
Against our articles.
Sub. Well, we'll fit him, wench.
Hast thou gulled her of her jewels, or her bracelets?
Dol. No, but I will do't.
Sub. Soon at night, my Dolly,
When we are shipped, and all our goods aboard,
Eastward for Ratcliff, we will turn our course
To Brainford, westward, if thou say'st the word,

And take our leave of this o'erweening rascal,
This peremptory Face.
Dol. Content; I'm weary of him.
Sub. We'll tickle it at the pigeons,
When we have all, and may unlock the trunks,
And say, this is mine and thine, and thine and mine. [*They kiss.*

Enter FACE.

Face. What now, a billing?
Sub. Yes, a little exalted,
In the good passage of our stock affairs.
Face. Come, my venturers,
You ha' packed up all? Where be the trunks? Bring forth.
Sub. Here.
Face. Let us see them. Where's the money?
Sub. Here.
Face. The brethren's money, this. Drugger's and Dapper's in this,
Mammon's ten pounds: eight score before.
Where be the French petticoats,
And girdles, and hangers?
Sub. Here i' the trunk,
And the bolts of lawn.
Face. Is Drugger's damask there?
Sub. Yes.
Face. Give me the keys.
Dol. Why you the keys?
Sub. No matter, Dol; because
We shall not open them, before he comes.
Face. 'Tis true, you shall not open them, indeed;
Nor have them forth. Do you see? Not forth, Dol.
Dol. No!
Face. No, my smock-rampant. The right is, my master
Knows all, has pardoned me, and he will keep them;
Doctor, 'tis true (you look) for all your figures:
I sent for him indeed. Wherefore, good partners,
Both he, and she, be satisfied: for here
Determines the *indenture tripartite*,
'Twixt Subtle, Dol, and Face. All I can do,
Is to help you over the wall, o' the backside;
Or lend you a sheet to save your velvet gown, Dol.
Here will be officers presently; bethink you
Of some course suddenly to 'scape the dock;
For thither you'll come else. Hark you! thunder. [*Some knock.*
Sub. You are a precious fiend!
Offi. Open the door. [*Outside.*
Face. Dol, I am sorry for thee i'faith. But, hear'st thou?
It shall go hard, but I will place thee somewhere:
Thou shalt have my letter to mistress Amo.
Dol. Hang you——
Face. Or madam Cæsarean.
Dol. Pox upon you, rogue:
Would I had but time to beat thee! [*Exit* DOL.
Face. Subtle,
Let's know where you set up next: I'll send you
A customer, now and then, for old acquaintance:
What new course have you?
Sub. Rogue, I'll hang myself,
That I may walk a greater devil than thou,
And haunt thee i' the flock-bed, and the buttery. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A street before* LOVEWIT'S *house.*

LOVEWIT *above.* *Enter Officers,* MAMMON, SURLY, FACE, KASTRIL, ANANIAS, *and* TRIBULATION.

Love. What do you mean, my masters?
Mam. Open your door,
Cheaters, bawds, conjurers.
Offi. Or we'll break it open.
Love. What warrant have you?
Offi. Warrant enough, sir, doubt not.
Love. Is there an officer there?
Offi. Yes, two or three for failing.
Love. Have but patience,
And I will open it straight.
Face. Sir, have you done?
Is it a marriage? perfect?
Love. Yes, my brain.
Face. Off with your ruff, and cloak then; be yourself, sir.
Sur. Down with the door.
Kas. 'Slight, ding it open.
Love. Hold,
Hold, gentlemen! what means this violence?
Mam. Where is this collier?
Sur. And my captain Face?
Mam. These day-owls?
Sur. That are birding in men's purses.
Mam. Madam Suppository?
Kas. Doxey, my suster?
Ana. Locusts of the foul pit.
Trib. Prophane as Bell and the Dragon.
Ana. Worse than the grashoppers, or the lice of Egypt.
Love. Good gentlemen, hear me. Are you officers,
And cannot stay this violence?
Offi. Keep the peace.
Love. Gentlemen, what is the matter! Whom do you seek?
Mam. The chymical cozener.
Sur. And the captain pander.
Kas. The nun, my suster.
Mam. Madam Rabbi.
Ana. Scorpions and caterpillars.
Love. Fewer at once, I pray you.
Offi. One after another, gentlemen, I charge you.
By virtue of my staff.
Ana. They are the vessels

Of pride, lust, and the cart.
Love. Good zeal, lie still
A little while.
Trib. Peace, deacon Ananias.
Love. The house is mine here, and the doors are open:
If there be any such persons you seek for,
Use your authority;
I am but newly come to town, and finding
This tumult 'bout my door (to tell you true)
It somewhat 'mazed me; till my man here, fearing
My more displeasure, told me had done
Somewhat an insolent part, let out my house
To a doctor, and a captain; who, what they are,
Or where they be, he knows not.
Mam. Are they gone? [*They enter.*
Love. You may go in and search, sir. Here, I find
The empty walls worse than I left them, smoked,
A few cracked pots and glasses, and a furnace;
The ceiling filled with poesies of the candle:
Only one gentlewoman, I met here,
That is within, that said she was a widow——
Kas. Ave, that's my suster. I'll go thump her. Where is she? [*Exit.*
Love. And should ha' married a Spanish count, but he,
When he came to't, neglected her so grossly,
That I, a widower, am gone through with her.
Sur. How! Have I lost her, then?
Love. Were you the Don, sir!
Good faith, now, she does blame you extremely, and says
You swore, and told her, you had taken the pains
To dye your beard, and umbre o'er your face,
Borrowed a suit and ruff all for her love,
And then did nothing. What an oversight,
And want of putting forward, sir, was this!
Well fare an old harquebuzier, yet!
Could prime his powder, and give fire, and hit,
All in a twinkling.

Enter MAMMON.

Mam. The whole nest are fled!
Love. What sort of birds were they?
Mam. A kind of choughs,
Or thievish daws, sir, that have picked my purse
Of eight score and ten pounds, within these five weeks,
Beside my first materials, and my goods,
That lie i' the cellar, which I am glad they ha' left.
I may have them home yet.
Love. Think you so, sir?
Mam. Aye.
Love. By order of law, sir, but not otherwise.
Mam. Not mine own stuff?
Love. Sir, I can take no knowledge,
That they are yours, but by public means.
If you can bring certificate, that you were gulled of them,
Or any formal writ out of a court,
That you did cozen yourself, I will not hold them.
Mam. I'll rather lose them.
Love. That you shall not, sir,
By me, in troth. Upon these terms they are yours.
What should they ha' been, sir? turned into gold all?
Mam. No.
I cannot tell. It may be they should. What then?
Love. What a great loss in hope have you sustained!
Mam. Not I, the commonwealth has.
I will go mount a turnip-cart, and preach
The end o' the world, within these two months.
Surly, what! in a dream?
Sur. Must I needs cheat myself,
With that same foolish vice of honesty!
Come, let us go, and hearken out the rogues.
That Face I'll mark for mine, if I e'er meet him.
[*Exeunt.*
Face. If you get off the angry child, now, sir—

Enter KASTRIL.

Kas. Come on, you ewe, you have matched most sweetly, ha' you not? [*To his sister.*
Did I not say, I would never ha' you tupped
But by a dubbed boy, to make you a Lady-Tom?
'Slight, you are a mammet! Oh, I could touse you now!
Love. You lie, boy!
And I am before-hand with you.
Kas. Anon?
Love. Come, will you quarrel? I will seize you, sirrah.
Why do you not buckle to your tools!
Kas. God's light!
This is a fine old boy, as e'er I saw!
Love. What! do you change your copy now? Proceed.
Here stands my dove; stoop at her if you dare.
Kas. 'Slight, I must love him! I cannot chuse, i' faith!
An' I should be hanged for't. Suster, I protest,
I honour thee for this match.
Love. Oh, do you so, sir?
Kas. Yes, an' thou canst take tobacco, and drink, old boy,
I'll give her five hundred pounds more, to her marriage,
Than her own 'state.
Love. Fill a pipe-full, Jeremy.
Face. Yes, but go in, and take it, sir.
Love. We will.
I will be ruled by thee in any thing, Jeremy.
That master,
That had received such happiness by a servant,
In such a widow, and with so much wealth,
Were very ungrateful, if he would not be

A little indulgent to that servant's wit,
And help his fortune, though with some small strain
Of his own candour.
Speak for thyself, knave.
Face. So I will, sir. Gentlemen,
Though I am clean
Got off from Subtle, Surly, Mammon, Dol,
Hot Ananias, Dapper, Drugger, all
With whom I traded; yet I put myself
On you that are my country; and this pelf,
Which I have got, if you do quit me, rests
To feast you often, and invite new guests.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS.

BY

MASSINGER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

LOVELL, *an English lord.*
SIR GILES OVERREACH, *a cruel extortioner.*
WELLBORN, *a prodigal.*
ALLWORTH, *a young gentleman, page to* LORD LOVELL.
GREEDY, *a hungry justice of peace.*
MARRALL, *a term-driver, a creature of* SIR GILES OVERREACH.
ORDER, AMBLE, FURNACE, *servants to the* LADY ALLWORTH.
WELLDO, *a parson.*
TAPWELL, *an ale-house-keeper.*
Three creditors.

WOMEN.

LADY ALLWORTH, *a rich widow.*
MARGARET, *Overreach's daughter.*
FROTH, *Tapwell's wife.*

Scene.—A county in England.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The outside of a village ale-house.*

WELLBORN, TAPWELL, FROTH.

Well. No liquor! nor no credit?
Tap. None, sir;
Not the remainder of a single can,
Left by a drunken porter; all night palled, too.
Froth. Not the dropping of the tap for your morning's draught, sir.
'Tis verity, I assure you.
Well. Verity, you brach!
The devil turned precisian? Rogue, what am I?
Tap. Troth! durst I trust you with a looking-glass,
To let you see your trim shape, you would quit me,
And take the name yourself.
Well. How! dog!
Tap. Even so, sir.
And I must tell you, if you but advance your voice,
There dwells, and within call, if it please your worship,
A potent monarch called the constable,
That does command a citadel, called the stocks;
Such as, with great dexterity, will hale
Your poor tattered———
Well. Rascal! slave!
Froth. No rage, sir.
Tap. At his own peril! Do not put yourself
In too much heat, there being no water near
To quench your thirst; and sure, for other liquor,
As mighty ale, or beer, they are things, I take it,
You must no more remember; not in a dream, sir.
Well. Why, thou unthankful villain, dar'st thou talk thus?
Is not thy house, and all thou hast, my gift?
Tap. I find it not in chalk; and Timothy Tapwell
Does keep no other register.
Well. Am I not he
Whose riots fed and cloathed thee? Wert thou not
Born on my father's land, and proud to be
A drudge in his house?

Tap. What I was, sir, it skills not;
What you are, is apparent. Now for a farewell:
Since you talk of father, in my hope it will torment you,
I'll briefly tell your story. Your dead father,
My quondam master, was a man of worship;
Old sir John Wellborn, justice of peace and *quorum*;
And stood fair to be *custos rotulorum*;
Bare the whole sway of the shire; kept a good house;
Relieved the poor, and so forth; but he dying,
And the twelve hundred a-year coming to you,
Late Mr Francis, but now forlorn Wellborn——
Well. Slave, stop! or I shall lose myself.
Froth. Very hardly,
You cannot be out of your way.
Tap. But to my story; I shall proceed, sir:
You were then a lord of acres, the prime gallant,
And I your under-butler: note the change now.
You had a merry time of't. Hawks and hounds;
With choice of running horses: mistresses,
And other such extravagancies;
Which your uncle, sir Giles Overreach, observing,
Resolving not to lose so fair an opportunity,
On foolish mortgages, statutes, and bonds,
For awhile supplied your lavishness, and then left you.
Well. Some curate has penned this invective, mongrel,
And you have studied it.
Tap. I have not done yet.
Your lands gone, and your credit not worth a token,
You grew the common borrower; no man 'scaped
Your paper pellets, from the gentleman to the groom;
While I, honest Tim Tapwell, with a little stock,
Some forty pounds or so, bought a small cottage;
Humbled myself to marriage with my Froth here;
Gave entertainment——
Well. Yes, to whores and pickpockets.
Tap. True, but they brought in profit;
And had a gift to pay what they called for;
And stuck not like your mastership. The poor income
I gleaned from them hath made me in my parish
Thought worthy to be scavenger! and, in time,
May rise to be overseer of the poor;
Which, if I do, on your petition, Wellborn,
I may allow you thirteen pence a quarter;
And you shall thank my worship.
Well. Thus, you dog-bolt——
And thus—— [*Beats him.*
Tap. Cry out for help!
Well. Stir, and thou diest:
Your potent prince, the constable, shall not save you.
Hear me, ungrateful hell-hound! did not I
Make purses for you? then you licked my boots,
And thought your holiday cloak too coarse to clean them.
'Twas I, that when I heard thee swear, if ever
Thou could'st arrive at forty pounds, thou would'st
Live like an emperor: 'twas I that gave it,
In ready gold. Deny this, wretch!
Tap. I must, sir.
For, from the tavern to the tap-house, all,
On forfeiture of their licence, stand bound
Never to remember who the best guests were,
If they grow poor like you.
Well. They are well rewarded
That beggar themselves to make such rascals rich.
Thou viper, thankless viper!
But since you are grown forgetful, I will help
Your memory, and kick thee into remembrance;
Not leave one bone unbroken.
Tap. Oh!

Enter ALLWORTH.

Allw. Hold, for my sake, hold!
Deny me, Frank? they are not worth your anger.
Well. For once thou hast redeemed them from this sceptre: [*Shaking his cudgel.*
But let them vanish,
For if they grumble, I revoke my pardon.
Froth. This comes of your prating, husband; you presumed
On your ambling wit, and must use your glib tongue,
Though you are beaten lame for it.
Tap. Patience, Froth;
There is no law to cure our bruises.
[*They go off into the house.*
Well. Sent for to your mother?
Allw. My lady, Frank, my patroness! my all!
She's such a mourner for my father's death,
And, in her love to him, so favours me,
That I cannot pay too much observance to her.
There are few such stepdames.
Well. Tis a noble widow,
And keeps her reputation pure, and clear
From the least taint of infamy; her life,
With the splendour of her actions, leaves no tongue
To envy or detraction. Pr'ythee, tell me;
Has she no suitors?
Allw. Even the best of the shire, Frank,
My lord excepted: such as sue, and send,
And send, and sue again; but to no purpose.
Their frequent visits have not gained her presence;
Yet she's so far from sullenness and pride,
That I dare undertake you shall meet from her
A liberal entertainment. I can give you
A catalogue of her suitors' names.
Well. Forbear it,
While I give you good counsel. I am bound to it;
Thy father was my friend; and that affection
I bore to him, in right descends to thee:
Thou art a handsome and a hopeful youth,

Nor will I leave the least affront stick on thee,
If I with any dexterity can prevent it.
Allw. I thank your noble care; but, pray you, in what
Do I run the hazard?
Well. Art thou not in love?
Put it not off with wonder.
Allw. In love, at my years?
Well. You think you walk in clouds, but are transparent.
I have heard all, and the choice that you have made:
And, with my finger can point out the north star,
By which the load-stone of your folly's guided.
And, to confirm this true, what think you of
Fair Margaret, the only child and heir
Of cormorant Overreach? Dost blush and start,
To hear her only named? Blush at your want
Of wit and reason.
Allw. You are too bitter, sir.
Well. Wounds of this nature are not to be cured
With balms, but corrosives. I must be plain:
Art thou scarce manumized from the porter's lodge,
And yet sworn servant to the pantoffle,
And darest thou dream of marriage?
Allw. Howe'er you have discovered my intents,
You know my aims are lawful; and if ever
The queen of flowers, the glory of the spring,
The sweetest comfort to our smell, the rose,
Sprang from an envious briar, I may infer,
There's such disparity in their conditions
Between the goddess of my soul, the daughter,
And the base churl, her father.
Well. Grant this true,
As I believe it; canst thou ever hope
To enjoy a quiet bed with her, whose father
Ruined thy state?
Allw. And yours too.
Well. I confess it, Allworth.
I must tell you as a friend, and freely,
That, where impossibilities are apparent,
'Tis indiscretion to nourish hopes.
Canst thou imagine (let not self-love blind thee)
That sir Giles Overreach (that to make her great
In swelling titles, without touch of conscience,
Will cut his neighbour's throat, and I hope his own too)
Will e'er consent to make her thine? Give o'er,
And think of some course suitable to thy rank,
And prosper in it.
Allw. You have well advised me;
But, in the mean time, you, that are so studious
Of my affairs, wholly neglect your own.
Remember yourself, and in what plight you are.
Well. No matter, no matter.
Allw. Yes, 'tis much material:
You know my fortune, and my means; yet something
I can spare from myself, to help your wants.
Well. How's this?
Allw. Nay, be not angry. There's eight pieces,
To put you in better fashion.
Well. Money from thee?
From a boy, a stipendiary? one that lives
At the devotion of a step-mother,
And the uncertain favour of a lord?
I'll eat my arms first. Howsoe'er blind fortune
Hath spent the utmost of her malice on me;
Though I am vomited out of an alehouse,
And thus accoutred; know not where to eat,
Or drink, or sleep, but underneath this canopy;
Although I thank thee, I despise thy offer.
And as I, in my madness, broke my state
Without the assistance of another's brain,
In my right wits I'll piece it; at the worst,
Die thus, and be forgotten.
Allw. A strange humour! [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in Lady* ALLWORTH'S *House.*

Enter ORDER, AMBLE, FURNACE.

Order. Set all things right, or, as my name is Order,
Whoever misses in his function,
For one whole week makes forfeiture of his breakfast,
And privilege in the wine cellar.
Amble. You are merry.
Good master steward.
Furn. Let him; I'll be angry.
Amble. Why, fellow Furnace, 'tis not twelve o'clock yet,
Nor dinner taking up; then 'tis allowed
Cooks, by their places, may be choleric.
Furn. You think you have spoke wisely, good man Amble,
My lady's go-before.
Order. Nay, nay, no wrangling.
Furn. Twit me with the authority of the kitchen?
At all hours, and at all places, I'll be angry;
And, thus provoked, when I am at my prayers
I will be angry.
Amble. There was no hurt meant.
Furn. I am friends with thee, and yet I will be angry.
Order. With whom?
Furn. No matter whom: yet, now I think on't,
I am angry with my lady.
Amble. Heaven forbid, man!
Order. What cause has she given thee?
Furn. Cause enough, master steward:
I was entertained by her to please her palate,
And, till she forswore eating, I performed it.
Now, since our master, noble Allworth, died,
Though I crack my brains to find out tempting sauces,
When I am three parts roasted,

And the fourth part par-boiled, to prepare her viands.
She keeps her chamber, dines with a panada,
Or water-gruel; my skill never thought on.
Order. But your art is seen in the dining room.
Furn. By whom?
By such as pretend to love her; but come
To feed upon her. Yet, of all the harpies
That do devour her, I am out of charity
With none so much, as the thin-gutted squire,
That's stolen into commission.
Order. Justice Greedy?
Furn. The same, the same. Meat is cast away upon him:
It never thrives. He holds his paradox,
Who eats not well, can ne'er do justice well.
His stomach's as insatiate as the grave.
Amble. One knocks.
[ALLWORTH *knocks, and enters.*
Order. Our late young master.
Amble. Welcome, sir.
Furn. Your hand:
If you have a stomach, a cold bake-meat's ready.
Order. His father's picture in little.
Furn. We are all your servants.
Allw. At once, my thanks to all;
This is yet some comfort. Is my lady stirring?

Enter the Lady ALLWORTH.

Order. Her presence answers for us.
Lady. Sort those silks well.
I'll take the air alone.
And, as I gave directions, if this morning
I am visited by any, entertain them
As heretofore: but say, in my excuse,
I am indisposed.
Order. I shall, madam.
Lady. Do, and leave me.
[*Exeunt* ORDER, AMBLE, *and* FURNACE.
Nay, stay you, Allworth.
Allw. I shall gladly grow here,
To wait on your commands.
Lady. So soon turned courtier!
Allw. Stile not that courtship, madam, which is duty,
Purchased on your part.
Lady. Well, you shall o'ercome;
I'll not contend in words. How is it with
Your noble master?
Allw. Ever like himself;
No scruple lessened in the full weight of honour!
He did command me (pardon my presumption),
As his unworthy deputy, to kiss
Your ladyship's fair hands.
Lady. I am honoured in
His favour to me. Does he hold his purpose
For the Low Countries?
Allw. Constantly, good madam:
But he will, in person, first present his service.
Lady. And how approve you of his course? you are yet,
Like virgin parchment, capable of any
Inscription, vicious or honourable.
I will not force your will, but leave you free
To your own election.
Allw. Any form you please
I will put on: but, might I make my choice,
With humble emulation, I would follow
The path my lord marks to me.
Lady. 'Tis well answered,
And I commend your spirit: you had a father,
(Blessed be his memory) that some few hours
Before the will of Heaven took him from me,
Did commend you, by the dearest ties
Of perfect love between us, to my charge:
And, therefore, what I speak, you are bound to hear
With such respect, as if he lived in me.
Allw. I have found you,
Most honoured madam, the best mother tome;
And with my utmost strength of care and service,
Will labour that you never may repent
Your bounties showered upon me.
Lady. I much hope it.
These were your father's words: If e'er my son
Follow the war, tell him it is a school
Where all the principles, tending to honour,
Are taught, if truly followed: But for such
As repair thither, as a place in which
They do presume they may, with license, practise
Their lusts and riots, they shall never merit
The noble name of soldiers. To dare boldly
In a fair cause, and, for the country's safety,
To run upon the cannon's mouth undaunted;
To obey their leaders, and shun mutinies;
To bear, with patience, the winter's cold,
And summer's scorching heat,
Are the essential parts make up a soldier:
Not swearing, dice, or drinking.
Allw. There's no syllable
You speak, but it is to me an oracle;
Which but to doubt were impious.
Lady. To conclude;
Beware ill-company; for often men
Are like to those with whom they do converse:
And from one man I warn you, and that's Wellborn:
Not 'cause he's poor; that rather claims your pity;
But that he's in his manners so debauched,
And hath to vicious courses sold himself.
'Tis true, your father loved him, while he was
Worthy the loving; but, if he had lived
To have seen him as he is, he had cast him off,
As you must do.
Allw. I shall obey in all things.
Lady. Follow me to my chamber; you shall have gold
To furnish you like my son, and still supplied
As I hear from you.
Allw. I am still your creature.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A hall in Lady* ALLWORTH'S *House.*

Enter OVERREACH, GREEDY, ORDER, AMBLE, FURNACE, *and* MARRALL.

Greedy. Not to be seen?
Over. Still cloistered up? her reason,
I hope, assures her, though she makes herself
Close prisoner ever for her husband's loss
'Twill not recover him.
Order. Sir, it is her will:
Which we, that are her servants, ought to serve,
And not dispute. However, you are nobly welcome:
And, if you please to stay, that you may think so,
There came, not six days since, from Hull, a pipe
Of rich canary; which shall spend itself
For my lady's honour.
Greedy. Is it of the right race?
Order. Yes, Mr Greedy.
Amble. How his mouth runs over!
Furn. I'll make it run and run. Save your good worship!
Greedy. Honest Mr Cook, thy hand; again! How I love thee!
Are the good dishes still in being? speak, boy.
Furn. If you have a mind to feed, there is a chine
Of beef well seasoned.
Greedy. Good.
Furn. A pheasant, larded.
Greedy. That I might now give thanks for it!
Furn. Other kick-shaws.
Besides, there came last night, from the forest of Sherwood,
The fattest stag I ever cooked.
Greedy. A stag, man?
Furn. A stag, sir; part of it is prepared for dinner,
And baked in puff-paste.
Greedy. Puff-paste, too, Sir Giles!
A ponderous chine of beef! a pheasant larded!
And red deer, too, Sir Giles, and baked in puff-paste!
All business set aside, let us give thanks here.
Over. You know we cannot.
Mar. Your worships are to sit on a commission,
And if you fail to come, you lose the cause.
Greedy. Cause me no causes; I'll prove it, for such a dinner,
We may put off a commission; you shall find it
Heretic decimo quarto.
Over. Fie, Mr Greedy!
Will you lose me a thousand pounds for a dinner?
No more, for shame! We must forget the belly,
When we think o' profit.
Greedy. Well, you shall o'er-rule me.
I could even cry now. Do you hear me, Mr Cook?
Send but a corner of that immortal pasty;
And I, in thankfulness, will, by your boy,
Send you a brace of three-pences.
Furn. Will you be so prodigal?
Over. Remember me to your lady.

Enter WELLBORN.

Who have we here?
Well. Don't you know me?
Over. I did once, but now I will not;
Thou art no blood of mine. Avaunt, thou beggar!
If ever thou presume to own me more,
I'll have thee caged and whipped.
Greedy. I'll grant the warrant.
I do love thee, Furnace,
E'en as I do malmsey in a morning.
Think of pye-corner, Furnace!
[*Exeunt* OVERREACH, GREEDY, *and* MARRALL.
Amble. Will you out, sir?
I wonder how you durst creep in.
Order. This is rudeness
And saucy impudence.
Amble. Cannot you stay
To be served among your fellows from the basket,
But you must press into the hall?
Furn. Prithee, vanish
Into some out-house, though it be the pig-sty;
My scullion shall come to thee.

Enter ALLWORTH.

Well. This is rare:
Oh, here is Tom Allworth! Tom!
Allw. We must be strangers;
Nor would I have seen you here for a million.
[*Exit.*
Well. Better and better. He contemns me, too.
Furn. Will you know your way?
Amble. Or shall we teach it you,
By the head and shoulders?
Well. No; I will not stir:
Do you mark, I will not. Let me see the wretch
That dares attempt to force me. Why, you slaves,
Created only to make legs, and cringe;
To carry in a dish and shift a trencher;
That have not souls only to hope a blessing
Beyond your master's leavings; you that were born
Only to consume meat and drink, and batten
Upon reversions; Who advances? who
Shews me the way?
Order. Here comes my lady.

Enter LADY.

Lady. What noise is this?
Well. Madam, my designs bear me to you.
Lady. To me?
Well. And though I have met with
But ragged entertainment from your grooms here,
I hope from you to receive that noble usage,

As may become the true friend of your husband;
And then I shall forget these.
Lady. I am amazed,
To see and hear this rudeness. Dar'st thou think,
Though sworn, that it can ever find belief;
That I, who to the best men of this country
Denied my presence since my husband's death,
Can fall so low as to change words with thee?
Well. Scorn me not, good lady;
But as, in form, you are angelical,
Imitate the heavenly natures, and vouchsafe
At least a while to hear me. You will grant,
The blood, that runs in this arm, is as noble
As that which fills your veins. Your swelling titles,
Equipage, and fortune; your mens' observance,
And women's flattery, are in you no virtues;
Nor these rags, with my poverty, in me vices.
You have a fair fame, and, I know, deserve it;
Yet, lady, I must say, in nothing more,
Than in the pious sorrow you have shewn
For your late noble husband.
Order. How she starts!
Well. That husband, madam, was once, in his fortune,
Almost as low as I. Want, debts, and quarrels,
Lay heavy on him: let it not be thought
A boast in me, though I say, I relieved him.
'Twas I, that gave him fashion; mine, the sword
That did, on all occasions, second his;
I brought him on and off, with honour, lady:
And, when in all men's judgments, he was sunk,
And in his own hopes not to be buoyed up,
I stepped unto him, took him by the hand,
And brought him to the shore.
Furn. Are not we base rogues,
That could forget this?
Well. I confess, you made him
Master of your estate; nor could your friends,
Though he brought no wealth with him, blame you for it:
For he had a shape, and to that shape a mind,
Made up of all parts, either great or noble,
So winning a behaviour, not to be
Resisted, madam.
Lady. 'Tis most true, he had.
Well. For his sake, then, in that I was his friend,
Do not contemn me.
Lady. For what's past excuse me;
I will redeem it. [*Offers him her pocket-book.*
Well. Madam, on no terms:
I will not beg nor borrow sixpence of you;
But be supplied elsewhere, or want thus ever.
Only one suit I make, which you deny not
To strangers; and 'tis this: pray, give me leave.
[*Whispers to her.*
Lady. Fie! nothing else?
Well. Nothing; unless you please to charge your servants
To throw away a little respect upon me.
Lady. What you demand is yours.
Well. I thank you, lady. [*Exit* LADY.
Now, what can be wrought out of such a suit,
Is yet in supposition—[*Servants bow.*]—Nay, all's forgotten,
And for a lucky omen to my project,
Shake hands, and end all quarrels in the cellar.
Order. Agreed, agreed.
Furn. Still merry, Mr Well-born?
[*Exeunt Servants.*
Well. Well, faith, a right worthy, and a liberal lady,
Who can, at once, so kindly meet my purposes,
And brave the flouts of censure, to redeem
Her husband's friend! When by this honest plot
The world believes she means to heal my wants
With her extensive wealth, each noisy creditor
Will be struck mute, and I be left, at large,
To practise on my uncle Overreach;
Whose foul, rapacious spirit, (on the hearing
Of my encouragement from this rich lady)
Again will court me to his house of patronage.
Here, I may work the measure to redeem
My mortgaged fortune, which he stripped me of,
When youth and dissipation quelled my reason.
The fancy pleases—if the plot succeed,
'Tis a new way to pay old debts, indeed.
[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A landscape.*

Enter OVERREACH *and* MARRALL.

Over. He's gone, I warrant thee; this commission crushed him.
Mar. Your worship has the way on't, and ne'er miss
To squeeze these unthrifts into air; and yet
The chap-fallen justice did his part, returning
For your advantage the certificate,
Against his conscience and his knowledge, too;
(With your good favour) to the utter ruin
Of the poor farmer.
Over. 'Twas for these good ends
I made him a justice. He, that bribes his belly,
Is certain to command his soul.
Mar. I wonder
(Still with your licence) why, your worship having
The power to put this thin gut in commission,
You are not in't yourself.
Over. Thou art a fool:
In being out of office, I am out of danger;
Where, if I were a justice, besides the trouble,

I might, or out of wilfulness or error,
Run myself finely into a premunire,
And so become a prey to the informer.
No, I'll have none of it; 'tis enough I keep
Greedy at my devotion: so he serve
My purposes, let him hang, or damn, I care not;
Friendship is but a word.

Mar. You are all wisdom.

Over. I would be worldly wise; for the other wisdom,
That does prescribe us a well governed life,
And to do right to others as ourselves,
I value not an atom.

Mar. What course take you,
(With your good patience) to hedge in the manor
Of your good neighbour, Mr Frugal? As 'tis said,
He will not sell, nor borrow, nor exchange;
And his land, laying in the midst of your many lordships,
Is a foul blemish.

Over. I have thought on't, Marrall;
And it shall take. I must have all men sellers,
And I the only purchaser.

Mar. 'Tis most fit, sir.

Over. I'll therefore buy some cottage near his manor;
Which done, I'll make my men break ope his fences,
Ride o'er his standing corn, and in the night
Set fire to his barns, or break his cattle's legs.
These trespasses draw on suits, and suits expences;
Which I can spare, but will soon beggar him.
When I have harried him thus two or three years,
Though he sue *forma pauperis*, in spite
Of all his thrift and care, he'll grow behindhand.

Mar. The best I ever heard; I could adore you.

Over. Then, with the favour of my man of law,
I will pretend some title; want will force him
To put it to arbitrement; then, if he sell
For half the value, he shall have ready money,
And I possess the land.

Mar. 'Tis above wonder.
Wellborn was apt to sell, and needed not
These fine arts, sir, to hook him in.

Over. Well thought on.
This varlet, Wellborn, lives too long to upbraid me
With my close cheat put upon him. Will nor cold
Nor hunger kill him?

Mar. I know not what to think on't.
I have used all means; and the last night I caused
His host, the tapster, to turn him out of doors;
And have been since with all your friends and tenants,
And, on the forfeit of your favour, charged them,
Though a crust of mouldy bread would keep him from starving,
Yet they should not relieve him. This is done, sir.

Over. That was something, Marrall; but thou must go farther;
And suddenly, Marrall.

Mar. Where and when you please, sir.

Over. I would have thee seek him out; and, if thou canst,
Persuade him, that 'tis better steal than beg:
Then, if I prove he has but robbed a hen-roost,
Not all the world shall save him from the gallows.
Do any thing to work him to despair,
And 'tis thy master-piece.

Mar. I will do my best, sir.

Over. I am now on my main work, with the lord Lovell;
The gallant-minded, popular lord Lovell,
The minion of the people's love. I hear
He's come into the country; and my aims are,
To insinuate myself into his knowledge,
And then invite him to my house.

Mar. I have you.
This points at my young mistress.

Over. She must part with
That humble title, and write honourable;
Right honourable, Marrall; my right honourable daughter;
If all I have, or e'er shall get, will do it.
I will have her well attended; there are ladies
Of errant knights decayed, and brought so low,
That, for cast clothes, and meat, will gladly serve her;
And 'tis my glory, though I came from the city,
To have their issue, whom I have undone,
To kneel to mine, as bond slaves.

Mar. 'Tis fit state, sir.

Over. And therefore, I'll not have a chambermaid
That ties her shoes, or any meaner office,
But such whose fathers were right worshipful.
'Tis a rich man's pride! there having ever been
More than a feud, a strange antipathy
Between us and true gentry.

Enter WELLBORN.

Mar. See, who's here, sir!

Over. Hence, monster, prodigy!

Well. Call me what you will; I am your nephew, sir.

Over. Avoid my sight, thy breath's infectious, rogue!
I shun thee as a leprosy, or the plague.
Come hither, Marrall; this is the time to work him.

[*Exit* OVERREACH.

Mar. I warrant you, sir.
Well. By this light, I think he's mad.
Mar. Mad! had you took compassion on yourself,
You long since had been mad.
Well. You have took a course,
Between you and my venerable uncle,
To make me so.
Mar. The more pale-spirited you,
That would not be instructed. I swear deeply.
Well. By what?
Mar. By my religion.
Well. Thy religion!
The devil's creed; but what would you have done?
Mar. Had there been but one tree in all the shire,
Nor any hope to compass a penny halter,
Before, like you, I had outlived my fortunes,
A with had served my turn to hang myself.
I am zealous in your cause: pray you, hang yourself;
And presently, as you love your credit.
Well. I thank you.
Mar. Will you stay till you die in a ditch?
Or, if you dare not do the fate yourself,
But that you'll put the state to charge and trouble,
Is there no purse to be cut? house to be broken?
Or market-woman with eggs that you may murder,
And so dispatch the business?
Well. Here's variety,
I must confess; but I'll accept of none
Of all your gentle offers, I assure you.
Mar. Why, have you hope ever to eat again?
Or drink? or be the master of three farthings?
If you like not hanging, drown yourself; take some course
For your reputation.
Well. 'Twill not do, dear tempter,
With all the rhetoric the fiend hath taught you.
I am as far as thou art from despair.
Nay, I have confidence, which is more than hope,
To live, and suddenly, better than ever.
Mar. Ha! ha! these castles you build in the air,
Will not persuade me, or to give or lend
A token to you.
Well. I'll be more kind to thee.
Come, thou shalt dine with me.
Mar. With you?
Well. Nay, more, dine *gratis*.
Mar. Under what hedge, I pray you? or at whose cost?
Are they padders, or gypsies, that are your consorts?
Well. Thou art incredulous; but thou shalt dine,
Not alone at her house, but with a gallant lady;
With me, and with a lady.
Mar. Lady! what lady!
With the lady of the lake, or queen of fairies?
For I know it must be an enchanted dinner.
Well. With the lady Allworth, knave.
Mar. Now there's hope
Thy brain is cracked.
Well. Mark thee, with what respect
I am entertained.
Mar. With choice, no doubt, of dog-whips.
Why, dost thou ever hope to pass her porter?
Well. 'Tis not far off; go with me: trust thine own eyes.
Mar. Troth, in my hope, or my assurance, rather,
To see thee curvet, and mount like a dog in a blanket,
If ever thou presume to pass her threshold,
I will endure thy company.
Well. Come along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A hall in* LADY ALLWORTH'S *house.*

Enter ALLWORTH, ORDER, AMBLE, *and* FURNACE.

Allw. Your courtesies o'erwhelm me: I much grieve
To part from such true friends, and yet I find comfort;
My attendance on my honourable lord
Will speedily bring me back.
[*Knocking at the gate.* MARRALL *and* WELLBORN *within.*
Mar. Dar'st thou venture farther?
Well. Yes, yes, and knock again.
Order. 'Tis he; disperse.
Amb. Perform it bravely. [*Exit.*
Furn. I know my cue, ne'er doubt me. [*Exit.*

Enter MARRALL *and* WELLBORN.

Order. Most welcome;
You were long since expected.
Well. Say so much
To my friend, I pray you.
Order. For your sake I will, sir. [*Exit.*
Mar. For his sake!
Well. Mum; this is nothing.
Mar. More than ever
I would have believed, though I had found it in my primmer.
Allw. When I have given you reasons for my late harshness,
You'll pardon and excuse me: for, believe me,
Though now I part abruptly in my service,
I will deserve it.
Mar. Service! with a vengeance!
Well. I am satisfied; farewell, Tom!
Allw. All joy stay with you.
[*Exit* ALLWORTH.

Enter AMBLE.

Amble. You are happily encountered: I never yet
Presented one so welcome, as I know
You will be, to my lady.
Mar. This is some vision;
Or sure these men are mad, to worship a dunghill;
It cannot be a truth.
Well. Be still a pagan,
An unbelieving infidel; be so, miscreant!
And meditate on blankets, and on dog-whips.

Enter FURNACE.

Furn. I am glad you are come; until I know your pleasure,
I knew not how to serve up my lady's dinner.
Mar. His pleasure! is it possible? [*Aside.*
Well. What's thy will?
Furn. Marry, sir, I have some growse and turkey chicken,
Some rails and quails; and my lady willed me to ask you
What kind of sauces best affect your palate,
That I may use my utmost skill to please it.
Mar. The devil's entered this cook: sauce for his palate!
That, on my knowledge, for almost this twelvemonth,
Durst wish but cheese-parings, and brown bread on Sundays!
Well. That way I like them best.
Furn. It shall be done, sir. [*Exit* FURNACE.
Well. What think you of the hedge we shall dine under?
Shall we feed *gratis?*
Mar. I know not what to think:
Pray you, make me not mad.

Enter ORDER.

Order. This place becomes you not;
Pray you, walk, sir, to the dining-room.
Well. I am well here,
Till her ladyship quits her chamber.
Mar. Well, here, say you?
'Tis a rare change! but yesterday you thought
Yourself well in a barn, wrapped up in pease straw.
Order. Sir, my lady. [*Exit* ORDER.

Enter Lady.

Lady. I come to meet you, and languished till I saw you.
This first kiss for form; I allow a second,
As token of my friendship.
Well. I am wholly yours; yet, madam, if you please
To grace this gentleman with a salute——
Mar. Salute me at his bidding!
Well. I shall receive it
As a most high favour.
Lady. Sir, your friends are welcome to me.
Well. Run backward from a lady! and such a lady!
Mar. To kiss her foot, is, to poor me, a favour
I am unworthy of—— [*Offers to kiss her foot.*
Lady. Nay, pray you, rise;
And, since you are so humble, I'll exalt you;
You shall dine with me to-day, at mine own table.
Mar. Your ladyship's table! I am not good enough
To sit at your steward's board.
Lady. You are too modest;
I will not be denied.

Enter ORDER.

Order. Dinner is ready for your ladyship.
Lady. Your arm, Mr Wellborn:
Nay, keep us company.
Mar. I was never so graced. Mercy on me!
[*Exeunt* WELLBORN, LADY, AMBLE, *and* MARRALL.]

Enter FURNACE.

Order. So, we have played our parts, and are come off well.
But if I know the mystery, why my lady
Consented to it, or why Mr Wellborn
Desired it, may I perish!
Furn. Would I had
The roasting of his heart, that cheated him,
And forces the poor gentleman to these shifts.
By fire! (for cooks are Persians, and swear by it)
Of all the griping and extorting tyrants
I ever heard or read of, I never met
A match to sir Giles Overreach.
Order. What will you take
To tell him so, fellow Furnace?
Furn. Just as much
As my throat is worth; for that would be the price on't.
To have a usurer that starves himself,
And wears a cloak of one and twenty years
On a suit of fourteen groats, bought of the hangman,
To grow rich, is too common:
But this sir Giles feeds high, keeps many servants,
Who must, at his command, do any outrage;
Rich in his habit; vast in his expences;
Yet he to admiration still increases
In wealth and lordships.
Order. He frights men out of their estates,
And breaks through all law-nets, made to curb ill men,
As they were cobwebs. No man dares reprove him.
Such a spirit to dare, and power to do, were never
Lodged so unluckily.

Enter AMBLE.

Amble. Ha! ha! I shall burst.
Order. Contain thyself, man.
Furn. Or make us partakers
Of your sudden mirth.
Amble. Ha! ha! my lady has got
Such a guest at her table! this term-driver, Marrall;
This snip of an attorney.
Furn. What of him, man?
Amble. The knave feeds so slovenly!
Furn. Is this all?
Amble. My lady
Drank to him for fashion's sake, or to please Mr Wellborn.
As I live, he rises and takes up a dish,
In which there were some remnants of a boiled capon,
And pledges her in white broth.
Furn. Nay, 'tis like
The rest of his tribe.
Amble. And when I brought him wine,
He leaves his chair, and after a leg or two
Most humbly thanks my worship.
Order. Ros! already!
Amble. I shall be chid.

Enter LADY, WELLBORN, *and* MARRALL.

Furn. My lady frowns.
Lady. You attended us well!
Let me have no more of this, I observed your leering.
Sirrah, I'll have you know, whom I think worthy
To sit at my table, be he never so mean,
When I am present, is not your companion.
Order. Nay, she'll preserve what's due to her.
Furn. This refreshing
Follows your flux of laughter.
Lady. You are master
Of your own will. I know so much of manners
As not to enquire your purposes; in a word,
To me you are ever welcome, as to a house
That is your own.
Well. Mark that.
Mar. With reverence, sir,
And it like your worship.
Well. Trouble yourself no farther,
Dear madam; my heart's full of zeal and service,
However, in my language I am sparing.
Come, Mr Marrall.
Mar. I attend your worship.
[*Exit* WELLBORN, MARRALL, *and* AMBLE.
Lady. I see in your looks you are sorry, and you know me
An easy mistress: be merry: I have forgot all.
Order and Furnace, come with me; I must give you
Farther directions.
Order. What you please.
Furn. We are ready. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Country.*

Enter WELLBORN *and* MARRALL.

Well. I think I am in a good way.
Mar. Good, sir! the best way;
The certain best way.
Well. There are casualties,
That men are subject to.
Mar. You are above them.
As you are already worshipful,
I hope ere long you will increase in worship,
And be right worshipful.
Well. Pr'ythee do not flout me.
What I shall be, I shall be. Is't for your ease,
You keep your hat off?
Mar. Ease, and it like your worship!
I hope Jack Marrall shall not live so long,
To prove himself such an unmannerly beast,
Though it hail hazel nuts, as to be covered,
When your worship's present.
Well. Is not this a true rogue, [*Aside.*
That, out of mere hope of a future cozenage,
Can turn thus suddenly? 'tis rank already.
Mar. I know your worship's wise, and needs no counsel;
Yet if, in my desire to do you service,
I humbly offer my advice (but still
Under correction) I hope I shall not
Incur your high displeasure.
Well. No; speak freely.
Mar. Then, in my judgment, sir, my simple judgment,
(Still with your worship's favour) I could wish you
A better habit; for this cannot be
But much distasteful to the noble lady
That loves you: I have twenty pounds here,
Which, out of my true love, I presently
Lay down at your worship's feet; 'twill serve to buy you
A riding suit.
Well. But where's the horse?
Mar. My gelding
Is at your service: nay, you shall ride me,
Before your worship shall be put to the trouble
To walk a-foot. Alas! when you are lord
Of this lady's manor, (as I know you will be)
You may with the lease of glebe-land, called Knave's Acre,
A place I would manure, requite your vassal.
Well. I thank thy love; but must make no use of it.
What's twenty pounds?
Mar. 'Tis all that I can make, sir.
Well. Dost thou think, though I want clothes, I could not have them,
For one word to my lady?
Mar. As I know not that—
Well. Come, I'll tell thee a secret, and so leave thee.
I'll not give her the advantage, though she be
A gallant-minded lady, after we are married,
To hit me in the teeth, and say she was forced

To buy my wedding clothes.
No, I'll be furnished something like myself.
And so farewell; for thy suit, touching Knave's Acre,
When it is mine, 'tis thine.
Mar. I thank your worship.
[*Exit* WELLBORN.
How was I cozened in the calculation
Of this man's fortune? my master cozened, too,
Whose pupil I am in the art of undoing men;
For that is our profession. Well, well, Mr Wellborn,
You are of a sweet nature, and fit again to be cheated:
Which, if the fates please, when you are possessed
Of the land and lady, you *sans question* shall be.
I'll presently think of the means.
[*Walks by, musing.*

Enter OVERREACH.

Over. Sirrah, order my carriage round;
I'll walk to get me an appetite. 'Tis but a mile;
And exercise will keep me from being pursey.
Ha! Marrall! is he conjuring? Perhaps
The knave has wrought the prodigal to do
Some outrage on himself, and now he feels
Compunction in his conscience for't: no matter,
So it be done. Marrall!
Mar. Sir.
Over. How succeed we
In our plot on Wellborn?
Mar. Never better, sir.
Over. Has he hanged or drowned himself?
Mar. No, sir, he lives—
Lives once more to be made a prey to you;
And greater prey than ever.
Over. Art thou in thy wits?
If thou art, reveal this miracle, and briefly.
Mar. A lady, sir, is fallen in love with him.
Over. With him! What lady?
Mar. The rich lady Allworth.
Over. Thou dolt! how darest thou speak this?
Mar. I speak truth;
And I do so but once a year; unless
It be to you, sir. We dined with her ladyship;
I thank his worship.
Over. His worship!
Mar. As I live, sir,
I dined with him, at the great lady's table,
Simple as I stand here: and saw when she kissed him;
And would, at his request, have kissed me too.
Over. Why, thou rascal,
To tell me these impossibilities!
Dine at her table! and kiss him! or thee!
Impudent varlet! Have not I myself,
To whom great countesses' doors have oft flown open,
Ten times attempted, since her husband's death,
In vain to see her, though I came—a suitor?
And yet your good solicitorship, and rogue Wellborn,
Were brought into her presence, feasted with her.
But that I know thee a dog that cannot blush,
This most incredible lie would call up one
On thy butter-milk cheeks.
Mar. Shall I not trust my eyes, sir?
Or taste? I feel her good cheer in my belly.
Over. You shall feel me, if you give not over, sirrah;
Recover your brains again, and be no more gulled
With a beggar's plot, assisted by the aids
Of serving men, and chambermaids; for, beyond these,
Thou never saw'st a woman; or I'll quit you
From my employments.
Mar. Will you credit this, yet?
On my confidence of their marriage, I offered Wellborn
(I would give a crown, now, I durst say his worship) [*Aside.*
My nag, and twenty pounds.
Over. Did you so? [*Strikes him down.*
Was this the way to work him to despair,
Or rather to cross me?
Mar. Will your worship kill me?
Over. No, no; but drive the lying spirit out of you.
Mar. He's gone.
Over. I have done, then. Now, forgetting
Your late imaginary feast and lady,
Know, my lord Lovell dines with me to-morrow.
Be careful not be wanting to receive him;
And bid my daughter's women trim her up,
Though they paint her, so she catch the lord; I'll thank them.
There's a piece, for my late blows.
Mar. I must yet suffer:
But there may be a time—— [*Aside.*
Over. Do you grumble?
Mar. No, sir. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*continued.*

Enter LOVELL *and* ALLWORTH.

Lov. DRIVE the carriage down the hill; something in private
I must impart to Allworth.
Allw. O, my lord!
What danger, though in ne'er so horrid shapes,
Nay, death itself, though I should run to meet it,
Can I, and with a thankful willingness, suffer!
But still the retribution will fall short
Of your bounties showered upon me.
Lov. Loving youth,
'Till what I purpose be put into act,
Do not o'er prize it; since you have trusted me
With your soul's nearest, nay, her dearest secret,
Rest confident, 'tis in a cabinet locked,
Treachery shall never open. I have found you
More zealous in your love and service to me,
Than I have been in my rewards.
Allw. Still great ones,
Above my merit. You have been
More like a father to me than a master.
Pray you, pardon the comparison.
Lov. I allow it;
And give you assurance I'm pleased in it.
My carriage and demeanour to your mistress,
Fair Margaret, shall truly witness for me,
I can command my passion.
Allw. 'Tis a conquest
Few lords can boast of, when they are tempted—Oh!
Lov. Why do you sigh? can you be doubtful of me?
By that fair name I in the wars have purchased,
And all my actions hitherto untainted,
I will not be more true to mine own honour,
Than to my Allworth.
Allw. As you are the brave lord Lovell,
Your bare word only given, is an assurance
Of more validity and weight to me,
Than all the oaths, bound up with imprecations,
Which, when they would deceive, most courtiers practise;
Yet being a man—for, sure, to stile you more,
Would relish of gross flattery—I am forced,
Against my confidence of your worth and virtues,
To doubt, nay, more, to fear.
Lov. So young, and jealous!
Allw. Were you to encounter with a single foe,
The victory were certain: but to stand
The charge of two such potent enemies,
At once assaulting you, as wealth and beauty,
And those two seconded with power, is odds
Too great for Hercules.
Lov. Speak your doubts and fears,
Since you will nourish them, in plainer language,
That I may understand them.
Allw. What's your will,
Though I lend arms against myself, provided
They may advantage you, must be obeyed.
My much-loved lord, were Margaret only fair,
You might command your passion;
But when you feel her touch, or hear her talk!
Hippolytus himself would leave Diana,
To follow such a Venus.
Lov. Love hath made you
Poetical, Allworth.
Allw. Grant all these beat off,
Which, if it be in man to do, you'll do it,
Mammon, in sir Giles Overreach, steps in
With heaps of ill-got gold, and so much land,
To make her more remarkable, as would tire
A falcon's wings in one day to fly over.
I here release your trust;
'Tis happiness enough for me to serve you;
And sometimes, with chaste eyes, to look on her.
Lov. Why, shall I swear?
Allw. Oh, by no means, my lord!
Lov. Suspend
Your judgment till the trial. How far is it
To Overreach's house?
Allw. At the most, some half hour's riding;
You'll soon be there.
Lov. And you the sooner freed
From your jealous fears.
Allw. Oh, that I durst but hope it! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A hall in* SIR GILES'S *house.*

Enter OVERREACH, GREEDY, *and* MARRALL.

Over. Spare for no cost, let my dressers crack with the weight
Of curious viands.
Greedy. Store, indeed, is no sore, sir.
Over. That proverb fits your stomach, Mr Greedy.
Greedy. It does, indeed, sir Giles.
I do not like to see a table ill spread,
Poor, meagre, just sprinkled o'er with sallads,
Sliced beef, giblets, and pig's pettitoes.
But the substantials—Oh! sir Giles, the substantials!
The state of a fat turkey, now,
The decorum, the grandeur he marches in with.
O, I declare, I do much honour a chine of beef!
O, Lord! I do reverence a loin of veal!
Over. And let no plate be seen but what's pure gold,
Or such, whose workmanship exceeds the matter
That it is made of; let my choicest linen
Perfume the room; and when we wash, the water
With precious powders mix, to please my lord,
That he may, with envy, wish to bathe so ever.
Mar. 'Twill be very chargeable.
Over. Avaunt, you drudge!
Now all my laboured ends are at the stake,
Is it time to think of thrift? Call in my daughter.
[*Exit* MARRALL.

And, master justice, since you love choice dishes,
And plenty of them———
Greedy. As I do, indeed, sir,
Almost as much as to give thanks for them——
Over. I do confer that province, with my power
Of absolute command to have abundance,
To your best care.
Greedy. I'll punctually discharge it,
And give the best direction.—[OVERREACH *retires.*]—Now am I,
In mine own conceit, a monarch: at the least
Arch-president of the boiled, the roast, the baked;
I would not change my empire for the great Mogul's.
I will eat often, and give thanks,
When my belly's braced up like a drum, and that's pure justice. [*Exit.*
Over. It must be so. Should the foolish girl prove modest,
She may spoil all: she had it not from me,
But from her mother: I was ever forward,
As she must be, and therefore I'll prepare her.

Enter MARGARET *and* MARRALL.

Alone, and let your women wait without, Margaret. [*Exit* MARRALL.
Marg. Your pleasure, sir?
Over. Ha, this is a neat dressing!
These orient pearls, and diamonds well placed, too!
The gown affects me not; it should have been
Embroidered o'er and o'er with flowers of gold;
But these rich jewels and quaint fashion help it.
How like you your new woman, the lady Downfallen?
Marg. Well, for a companion:
Not as a servant.
Over. Is she humble, Meg,
And careful, too? her ladyship forgotten?
Marg. I pity her fortune.
Over. Pity her, trample on her.
I took her up in an old tattered gown,
E'en starved for want of food, to serve thee;
And, if I understand she but repines
To do thee any duty, though ne'er so servile,
I'll pack her to her knight, where I have lodged him,
Into the counter; and there let them howl together.
Marg. You know your own ways: but, for me, I blush
When I command her, that was once attended
With persons not inferior to myself
In birth.
Over. In birth! Why, art thou not my daughter,
The blest child of my industry and wealth?
Why, foolish girl, was't not to make thee great,
That I have run, and still pursue those ways,
That hale down curses on me, which I mind not?
Part with these humble thoughts, and apt thyself
To the noble state I labour to advance thee:
Or, by my hopes to see thee honourable,
I will adopt a stranger to my heir,
And throw thee from my care; do not provoke me.
Marg. I will not, sir; mould me which way you please.

Enter GREEDY.

Over. How, interrupted?
Greedy. 'Tis matter of importance.
The cook, sir, is self-willed, and will not learn
From my experience. There's a fawn brought in, sir,
And for my life, I cannot make him roast it
With a Norfolk dumpling in the belly of it:
And, sir, we wise men know, without the dumpling
'Tis not worth three pence.
Over. Would it were whole in thy belly,
To stuff it out! cook it any way; prithee, leave me.
Greedy. Without order for the dumpling?
Over. Let it be dumpled
Which way thou wilt; or, tell him, I will scald him
In his own cauldron.
Greedy. I had lost my stomach,
Had I lost my mistress's dumpling; I'll give ye thanks for't. [*Exit.*
Over. But to our business, Meg; you have heard who dines here?
Marg. I have, sir.
Over. 'Tis an honourable man.
A lord, Meg, and commands a regiment
Of soldiers; and, what's rare, is one himself;
A bold and understanding one; and to be
A lord, and a good leader, in one volume,
Is granted unto few, but such as rise up,
The kingdom's glory.

Enter GREEDY.

Greedy. I'll resign my office,
If I be not better obeyed.
Over. 'Slight, art thou frantic?
Greedy. Frantic! 'twould make me frantic, and stark mad,
Were I not a justice of peace and quorum, too,
Which this rebellious cook cares not a straw for;
There are a dozen of woodcocks,
For which he has found out
A new device for sauce, and will not dish them
With toast and butter.
Over. Cook, rogue, obey him.
I have given the word; pray you, now, remove yourself
To a collar of brawn, and trouble me no farther.
Greedy. I will, and meditate what to eat for dinner. [*Exit* GREEDY.
Over. And, as I said, Meg, when this gull disturbed us,
This honourable lord, this colonel,
I would have thy husband.

Marg. There's too much disparity
Between his quality and mine to hope it.
Over. I more than hope it, and doubt not to effect it.
Be thou no enemy to thyself; my wealth
Shall weigh his titles down, and make you equals.
Now for the means to assure him thine, observe me;
Remember he's a courtier and a soldier,
And not to be trifled with; and therefore, when
He comes to woo you, see you do not coy it.
This mincing modesty hath spoiled many a match
By a first refusal, in vain after hoped for.
Marg. You'll have me, sir, preserve the distance that
Confines a virgin?
Over. Virgin me no virgins.
I will have you lose that name, or you lose me;
I will have you private; start not, I say private;
If you are my true daughter, not a bastard,
Thou wilt venture alone with one man, though he came
Like Jupiter to Semele, and come off too.
Marg. I have heard this is the wanton's fashion, sir,
Which I must never learn.
Over. Learn any thing,
And from any creature, to make thee great;
From the devil himself.
Stand not on for form:
Words are no substances.
Marg. Though you can dispense
With your honour, I must guard my own.
This is not the way to make me his wife.
My maiden honour yielded up so soon,
Nay, prostituted, cannot but assure him,
I, that am light to him, will not hold weight
When tempted by others: so, in judgment,
When to his will I have given up my honour,
He must and will forsake me.
Over. How! forsake thee?
Do I wear a sword for fashion? or is this arm
Shrunk up, or withered? does there live a man
Of that large list I have encountered with,
Can truly say I e'er gave inch of ground,
Not purchased with his blood, that did oppose me?
Forsake thee when the thing is done! he dares not.
Give me but proof he has enjoyed thy person,
Though all his captains, echoes to his will,
Stood armed by his side to justify his wrong,
And he himself in the head of his bold troop,
Spite of his lordship, I will make him render
A bloody and a strict account, and force him,
By marrying thee, to cure thy wounded honour.
I have said it.

Enter MARRALL.

Mar. Sir, the man of honour's come,
Newly alighted.

Over. In, without reply,
And do as I command, or thou art lost.
[*Exit* MARG.
Is the loud music I gave order for,
Ready to receive him?
Mar. 'Tis, sir.
Over. Let them sound
A princely welcome——[*Exit* MARRALL.]——
Roughness awhile leave me;
For fawning, now, a stranger to my nature,
Must make way for me. [*Loud music.*

Enter LOVELL, ALLWORTH, *and* MARRALL.

Lov. Sir, you meet your trouble.
Over. What you are pleased to style so, is an honour
Above my worth and fortunes.
Allw. Strange! so humble!

Enter GREEDY.

Over. A justice of peace, my lord.
[*Presents* GREEDY *to him.*
Lov. Your hand, good sir.
Greedy. This is a lord; and some think this a favour;
But I had rather have my hand in my dumpling.
[*Aside.*
Over. Room for my lord.
Lov. I miss, sir, your fair daughter
To crown my welcome.
Over. May it please my lord
To taste a glass of Greek wine first; and suddenly
She shall attend, my lord.
Lov. You'll be obeyed, sir.
[*Exeunt omnes, præter* OVER.
Over. 'Tis to my wish; as soon as come, ask for her!
Why Meg! Meg Overreach!

Enter MARGARET.

How! tears in your eyes?
Hah! dry them quickly, or I'll dig them out.
Is this a time to whimper? Meet that greatness
That flies into thy bosom; think what 'tis
For me to say, my honourable daughter:
No more, but be instructed, or expect——
He comes.

Enter LOVELL, GREEDY, MARRALL, *and* ALLWORTH.

A black-browed girl, my lord.
Lov. As I live, a rare one!
Allw. He's took already: I am lost.
Over. That kiss
Came twanging off, I like it; quit the room.
[*Exeunt* ALLWORTH, MARRALL, *and* GREEDY.]
A little bashful, my good lord; but you,
I hope, will teach her boldness.
Lov. I am happy
In such a scholar: but——

Over. I am past learning,
And therefore leave you to yourselves; remember— [*To his daughter.* *Exit* OVERREACH.
Lov. You see, fair lady, your father is solicitous
To have you change the barren name of virgin
Into a hopeful wife.
Marg. His haste, my lord,
Holds no power o'er my will.
Lov. But o'er your duty——
Marg. Which, forced too much, may break.
Lov. Bend, rather, sweetest:
Think of your years.
Marg. Too few to match with yours:
And choicest fruits, too soon plucked, rot and wither.
Lov. Do you think I am old?
Marg. I am sure I am too young.
Lov. I can advance you.
Marg. To a hill of sorrow;
Where every hour I may expect to fall,
But never hope firm footing. You are noble;
I of low descent, however rich.
O my good lord, I could say more, but that
I dare not trust these walls.
Lov. Pray you, trust my ear then.

Enter OVERREACH *listening.*

Over. Close at it! whispering! this is excellent!
And, by their postures, a consent on both parts.

Enter GREEDY.

Greedy. Sir Giles! Sir Giles!
Over. The great fiend stop that clapper!
Greedy. It must ring out, sir, when my belly rings noon.
The baked meats are ran out, the roast turned powder.
Over. Stop your insatiate jaws, or
I shall powder you.
Greedy. Beat me to dust, I care not;
In such a cause as this, I'll die a martyr.
Over. Disturb my lord, when he is in discourse?
Greedy. Is it a time to talk,
When we should be munching?
Over. Peace, villain! peace! shall we break a bargain
Almost made up? Vanish, I say.
[*Thrusts* GREEDY *off.*
Lov. Lady, I understand you:
And rest most happy in your choice. Believe it,
I'll be a careful pilot to direct
Your yet uncertain bark to a port of safety.
Marg. So shall your honour save two lives, and bind us
Your slaves for ever.
Lov. I am in the act rewarded,
Since it is good; how'er you must put on
An amorous carriage towards me, to delude
Your subtle father.
Marg. I am bound to that.
Lov. Now break off our conference. Sir Giles!
Where is sir Giles?

Enter OVERREACH, GREEDY, ALLWORTH, *and* MARRALL.

Over. My noble lord! and how
Does your lordship find her?
Lov. Apt, sir Giles, and coming,
And I like her the better.
Over. So do I, too.
Lov. Yet, should we take forts at the first assault,
'Twere poor in the defendant. I must confirm her
With a love-letter or two, which I must have
Delivered by my page, and you give way to it.
Over. With all my soul. A towardly gentleman!
Your hand, good Mr Allworth; know, my house
Is ever open to you.
Allw. 'Twas still shut till now. [*Aside.*
Over. Well done, well done, my honourable daughter!
Thou art so already: know this gentle youth,
And cherish him, my honourable daughter.
Marg. I shall, with my best care.
[*Noise of a coach.*
Over. What noise?
Greedy. More stops
Before we go to dinner! O my guts!

Enter LADY *and* WELLBORN.

Lady. If I find welcome,
You share in it; if not, I'll back again,
Now I know your ends; for I come armed for all
Can be objected.
Lov. How! the lady Allworth?
Over. And thus attended!
Mar. No, I am a dolt;
The spirit of lies had entered me.
[LOVELL *salutes the Lady, who salutes* MARGARET.
Over. Peace, patch!
'Tis more than wonder, an astonishment
That does possess me wholly.
Lov. Noble lady,
This is a favour to prevent my visit,
The service of my life can never equal.
Lady. My lord, I laid wait for you, and much hoped
You would have made my poor house your first inn:
And, therefore, doubting that you might forget me,
Or too long dwell here, having such ample cause,
In this unequalled beauty, for your stay;
And fearing to trust any but myself
With the relation of my service to you,
I borrowed so much from my long restraint,
And took the air in person to invite you.
Lov. Your bounties are so great, they rob me, madam,

Of words to give you thanks.
Lady. Good sir Giles Overreach! [*Salutes him.*
How dost thou, Marrall? Liked you my meat so ill,
You'll dine no more with me?
Greedy. I will when you please,
And it like your ladyship.
Lady. When you please, Mr Greedy;
If meat can do it, you shall be satisfied:
And now, my lord, pray take into your knowledge
This gentleman; howe'er his outside's coarse,
[*Presents* WELLBORN.
His inward linings are as fine and fair
As any man's. Wonder not I speak at large:
And howsoe'er his humour carries him
To be thus accoutred; or what taint soe'er
For his wild life have struck upon his fame;
He may, ere long, with boldness, rank himself
With some that have condemned him. Sir Giles Overreach,
If I am welcome, bid him so.
Over. My nephew!
He hath been too long a stranger: 'faith you have.
Pray, let it be mended.
[LOVELL *conferring with* WELLBORN.
Mar. Why, sir, what do you mean?
This is rogue Wellborn, monster, prodigy,
That should hang, or drown himself, no man of worship,
Much less your nephew.
Over. Well, sirrah, we shall reckon
For this hereafter.
Mar. I'll not lose my jeer,
Though I be beaten dead for it.
Well. Let my silence plead
In my excuse, my lord, till better leisure
Offer itself to hear a full relation
Of my poor fortunes.
Lov. I would hear and help them.
[*Bell rings.*
Over. Your dinner waits you.
Lov. Pray you lead, we follow.
Lady. Nay, you are my guest; come, dear Mr Well-born. [*Exeunt. Manet* GREEDY.
Greedy. Dear Mr Wellborn! so she said; Heaven! Heaven!
If my belly would give me leave, I could ruminate
All day on this: I have granted warrants
To have him committed, from all prisons in the shire,
To Nottingham jail! and now, dear Mr Wellborn!
And my good nephew! But I play the fool
To stand here prating, and forget my dinner.

Enter MARRALL.

Are they set, Marrall?
Mar. Long since; pray, you a word, sir.
Greedy. No wording now.
Mar. In troth, I must: my master,
Knowing you are his good friend, makes bold with you,
And does intreat you, more guests being come in
Than he expected, especially his nephew,
The table being too full, you would excuse him,
And sup with him on the cold meat.
Greedy. How! no dinner
After all my care?
Mar. 'Tis but a penance for
A meal; besides, you have broke your fast.
Greedy. That was
But a bit to stay my stomach. A man in commission
Give place to a tatterdemallion!
Mar. No big words, sir;
Should his worship hear you——
Greedy. Lose my dumpling too?
And buttered toasts and woodcocks?
Mar. Come, have patience;
If you will dispense a little with your justiceship,
And sit with the waiting-women, you'll have dumpling,
Woodcock, and buttered toasts, too.
Greedy. This revives me:
I will gorge there sufficiently.
Mar. This is the way, sir. [*Exeunt.*

Enter OVERREACH, *as from dinner.*

Over. She's caught! O woman! she neglects my lord,
And all her compliments apply to Wellborn!
The garments of her widowhood laid by,
She now appears as glorious as the spring.
Her eyes fixed on him; in the wine she drinks,
He being her pledge, she sends him burning kisses,
And sits on thorns till she be private with him.
She leaves my meat to feed upon his looks;
And, if in our discourse he be but named,
From her a deep sigh follows. But why grieve I
At this? It makes for me; if she prove his,
All that is hers is mine, as I will work him.

Enter MARRALL.

Mar. Sir, the whole board is troubled at your rising.
Over. No matter, I'll excuse it; prithee, Marrall,
Watch an occasion to invite my nephew
To speak with me in private.
Mar. Who? the rogue,
The lady scorned to look on?
Over. You are a wag.

Enter LADY *and* WELLBORN.

Mar. See, sir, she comes, and cannot be without him.
Lady. With your favour, sir,
I shall make bold to walk a turn or two
In your rare garden.
Over. There's another arbour, too,

If your ladyship please to use it.
Lady. Come, Mr Wellborn.
[*Exit* LADY *and* WELLBORN.
Over. Grosser and grosser! My good lord,
Excuse my manners.

Enter LOVELL, MARGARET *and* ALLWORTH.

Lov. There needs none, Sir Giles;
I may, ere long, say father, when it please
My dearest mistress to give warrant to it.
Over. She shall seal to it, my lord, and make me happy.
Marg. My lady is returned.

Enter WELLBORN *and* LADY.

Lady. Provide my coach,
I'll instantly away: my thanks, sir Giles,
For my entertainment.
Over. 'Tis your nobleness
To think it such.
Lady. I must do you a farther wrong,
In taking away your honourable guest.
Lov. I wait on you, madam: fare well, good sir Giles.
Lady. Nay, come, Mr Wellborn,
I must not leave you behind, in sooth, I must not.
Over. Rob me not, madam, of all joys at once.
Let my nephew stay behind: he shall have my coach,
And, after some small conference between us,
Soon overtake your ladyship.
Lady. Stay not long, sir.
Lov. This parting kiss. You shall every day hear from me,
By my faithful page. [*To* MARGARET.
Allw. 'Tis a service I am proud of.
[*Exeunt* LOVELL, LADY, ALLWORTH, *and* MARRALL.
Over. Daughter, to your chamber.
[*Exit* MARGARET.
You may wonder, nephew,
After so long an enmity between us,
I shall desire your friendship.
Well. So I do, sir;
'Tis strange to me.
Over. But I'll make it no wonder;
And, what is more, unfold my nature to you.
We worldly men, when we see friends and kinsmen
Past hope, sunk in their fortunes, lend no hand
To lift them up, but rather set our feet
Upon their heads, to press them to the bottom;
As, I must yield, with you I practised it:
But now I see you in a way to rise,
I can and will assist you. This rich lady
(And I am glad of it) is enamoured of you.
Well. No such thing:
Compassion rather, sir.
Over. Well, in a word,
Because your stay is short, I'll have you seen
No more in this base shape; nor shall she say,
She married you like a beggar, or in debt.
Well. He'll run into the noose, and save my labour. [*Aside.*
Over. You have a trunk of rich clothes, not far hence,
In pawn; I will redeem them: and, that no clamour
May taint your credit for your debts,
You shall have a thousand pounds to cut them off,
And go a freeman to the wealthy lady.
Well. This done, sir, out of love, and no ends else——
Over. As it is, nephew.
Well. Binds me still your servant.
Over. No compliments: you are staid for:—ere you've supped,
You shall hear from me. My coach, knaves, for my nephew!
To-morrow I will visit you.
Well. Here's an uncle
In a man's extremes! how much do they belie you,
That say you are hard-hearted!
Over. My deeds, nephew,
Shall speak my love; what men report, I weigh not. [*Exeunt*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A chamber in* LADY ALLWORTH'S *house.*

LOVELL *and* ALLWORTH *discovered.*

Lov. 'Tis well. Give me my hat: I now discharge you
From farther service. Mind your own affairs;
I hope they will prove successful.
Allw. What is blest
With your good wish, my lord, cannot but prosper.
Let after-times report, and to your honour,
How much I stand engaged; for I want language
To speak my debt: yet if a tear or two
Of joy, for your much goodness, can supply
My tongue's defects, I could——
Lov. Nay, do not melt:
This ceremonial of thanks to me is superfluous.
Over. [*Within.*] Is my lord stirring?
Lov. 'Tis he! Oh, here's your letter! let him in.

Enter OVERREACH, GREEDY, *and* MARRALL.

Over. A good day to my lord.
Lov. You are an early riser,
Sir Giles.
Over. And reason, to attend your lordship.
Lov. And you too, Mr Greedy, up so soon!

Greedy. In troth, my lord, after the sun is up
I cannot sleep; for I have a foolish stomach,
That croaks for breakfast. With your lordship's favour,
I have a serious question to demand
Of my worthy friend, sir Giles.
Lov. Pray you, use your pleasure.
Greedy. How far, sir Giles—and, pray you, answer me
Upon your credit—hold you it to be
From your manor-house to this of my lady Allworth's?
Over. Why, some four miles.
Greedy. How! four miles, good Sir Giles?
Upon your reputation think better;
For four miles riding
Could not have raised so huge an appetite
As I feel gnawing on me.
Mar. Whether you ride,
Or go a-foot, you are that way still provided,
And it please your worship.
Over. How now, sirrah! prating
Before my lord? no deference? Go to my nephew;
See all his debts discharged, and help his worship
To fit on his rich suit.
Mar. I may fit you, too. [*Exit* MARRALL.
Lov. I have writ this morning
A few lines to my mistress, your fair daughter.
Over. 'Twill fire her, for she's wholly yours already.
Sweet Mr Allworth, take my ring; 'twill carry
To her presence, I dare warrant you; and there plead
For my good lord, if you shall find occasion.
That done, pray ride to Nottingham; get a licence,
Still by this token. I'll have it dispatched,
And suddenly, my lord: that I may say
My honourable, nay, right honourable daughter.
Greedy. Take my advice, young gentleman; get your breakfast.
'Tis unwholesome to ride fasting. I'll eat with you,
And that abundantly.
Over. Some fury's in that gut:
Hungry again? Did you not devour, this morning,
A shield of brawn, and a barrel of Colchester oysters?
Greedy. Why, that was, sir, only to scour my stomach,
A kind of preparative. Come, gentlemen,
I will not have you feed alone, while I am here.
Lov. Haste your return.
Allw. I will not fail, my lord.
Greedy. Nor I, to line
My Christmas coffer.
[*Exeunt* GREEDY *and* ALLWORTH.
Over. To my wish, we're private.
I come not to make offer with my daughter
A certain portion; that were poor and trivial:
In one word, I pronounce all that is mine,
In lands, or leases, ready coin, or goods,
With her, my lord, comes to you; nor shall you have
One motive to induce you to believe
I live too long, since every year I'll add
Something unto the heap, which shall be yours too.
Lov. You are a right kind father.
Over. You shall have reason
To think me such. How do you like this seat?
It is well wooded and well watered, the acres
Fertile and rich; would it serve for change
To entertain your friends in a summer's progress?
What thinks my noble lord?
Lov. 'Tis a wholesome air,
And well built; and she, that's mistress of it,
Worthy the large revenue.
Over. She the mistress?
It may be so for a time; but let my lord
Say only, that he but like it, and would have it,
I say, ere long 'tis his.
Lov. Impossible.
Over. You do conclude too fast, not knowing me,
Nor the engines that I work by. 'Tis not alone
The lady Allworth's lands; for those, once Well-born's,
(As, by her dotage on him, I know they will be)
Shall soon be mine. But point out any man's
In all the shire, and say they lie convenient
And useful for your lordship, and once more
I say aloud, they are yours.
Lov. I dare not own
What's by unjust and cruel means extorted:
My fame and credit are more dear to me,
Than to expose them to be censured by
The public voice.
Over. You run, my lord, no hazard;
Your reputation shall stand as fair,
In all good mens' opinions, as now:
Nor can my actions, though condemned for ill,
Cast any foul aspersion upon yours.
For though I do contemn report myself,
As a mere sound, I still will be so tender
Of what concerns you in all points of honour,
That the immaculate whiteness of your fame,
Nor your unquestioned integrity,
Shall ere be sullied with one taint or spot,
That may take from your innocence and candour.
All my ambition is, to have my daughter
Right honourable; which my lord can make her:
And might I live to dance upon my knee
A young lord Lovell, born by her unto you,
I write *nil ultra* to my proudest hopes.
As for possessions, and annual rents,
Equivalent to maintain you in the port
Your noble birth and present state require,
I do remove that burden from your shoulders,
And take it on mine own; for though I ruin
The country, to supply your riotous waste,
The scourge of prodigals, want, shall never find you.
Lov. Are you not moved with the imprecations

And curses of whole families, made wretched
By these practices?
Over. Yes, as rocks are,
When foamy billows split themselves against
Their flinty ribs; or as the moon is moved,
When wolves, with hunger pined, howl at her brightness.
I am of a solid temper, and, like these,
Steer on a constant course: with mine own sword,
If called into the field, I can make that right,
Which fearful enemies murmured at as wrong.
Now, for those other piddling complaints,
Breathed out in bitterness; as when they call me
Extortioner, tyrant, cormorant, or intruder
On my poor neighbour's right, or grand incloser,
Of what was common, to my private use;
Nay, when my ears are pierced with widows' cries,
And undone orphans wash with tears my threshold,
I only think what 'tis to have my daughter
Right honourable; and 'tis a powerful charm!
Makes me insensible of remorse, or pity,
Or the least sting of conscience.
Lov. I admire
The toughness of your nature.
Over. 'Tis for you,
My lord, and for my daughter, I am marble;
Nay, more, if you will have my character
In little, I enjoy more true delight
In my arrival to my wealth these dark
And crooked ways, than you shall e'er take pleasure
In spending what my industry hath compassed.
My haste commands me hence: in one word, therefore,
Is it a match, my lord?
Lov. I hope that is past doubt, now.
Over. Then rest secure; not the hate of all mankind here,
Not fear of what can fall on me hereafter,
Shall make me study aught but your advancement
One story higher. An earl! If gold can do it.
Dispute not my religion, nor my faith,
Though I am borne thus headlong by my will;
You may make choice of what belief you please;
To me they are equal. So, my lord, good morrow. [*Exit.*
Lov. He's gone; I wonder how the earth can bear
Such a portent! I, that have lived a soldier,
And stood the enemy's violent charge undaunted,
To hear this horrid beast, I'm bathed all over
In a cold sweat; yet, like a mountain, he
Is no more shaken, than Olympus is,
When angry Boreas loads his double head
With sudden drifts of snow.

Enter LADY.

Lady. Save you, my lord!
Disturb I not your privacy?
Lov. No, good madam;
For your own sake I am glad you came no sooner,
Since this bold, bad man, sir Giles Overreach,
Made such a plain discovery of himself,
And read this morning such devilish matins,
That I should think a sin, next to his,
But to repeat it——
Lady. I ne'er pressed, my lord,
On other's privacies; yet, against my will,
Walking, for health's sake, in the gallery
Adjoining to our lodgings, I was made
(So loud and vehement he was) partaker
Of his tempting offers. But,
My good lord, if I may use my freedom,
As to an honoured friend——
Lov. You lessen else
Your favour to me.
Lady. I dare, then, say thus:
(However common men
Make sordid wealth the object and sole end
Of their industrious aims) 'twill not agree
With those of noble blood, of fame and honour.
Love. Madam, 'tis confessed;
But what infer you from it?
Lady. This, my lord: I allow
The heir of sir Giles Overreach, Margaret,
A maid well qualified, and the richest match
Our north part can boast of; yet she cannot,
With all that she brings with her, fill their mouths,
That never will forget who was her father;
Or that my husband Allworth's lands, and Wellborn's,
(How wrung from both needs no repetition)
Were real motives, that more worked your lordship
To join your families, than her form and virtues.
You may conceive the rest.
Lov. I do, sweet madam;
And long since have considered it.
And this my resolution, mark me, madam;
Were Overreach's states thrice centupled, his daughter
Millions of degrees much fairer than she is,
I would not so adulterate my blood,
By marrying Margaret. In my own tomb
I will inter my name first.
Lady. I am glad to hear this. [*Aside.*
Why, then, my lord, pretend you marriage to her?
Dissimulation but ties false knots
On that straight line, by which you hitherto
Have measured all your actions.
Lov. I make answer,
And aptly, with a question. Wherefore have you,
That, since your husband's death, have lived a strict
And chaste nun's life, on the sudden given yourself
To visits and entertainments? Think you, madam,
'Tis not grown public conference? or the favours,
Which you too prodigally have thrown on Wellborn,
Incur not censure?

Lady. I am innocent here, and, on my life, I swear
My ends are good.
Lov. On my soul, so are mine
To Margaret; but leave both to the event:
And since this friendly privacy doth serve
But as an offered means unto ourselves
To search each other farther; you have shewn
Your care of me, I my respect to you.
Deny me not, but still in chaste words, madam,
An afternoon's discourse.
Lady. Affected modesty might deny your suit;
But, such your honour, I accept it, lord.
My tongue unworthy can't belie my heart.
I shall attend your lordship. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A landscape.*

Enter TAPWELL *and* FROTH.

Tap. Undone! undone! this was your counsel, Froth.
Froth. Mine! I defy thee: did not Master Marrall
(He has marred all, I am sure) strictly command us
(On pain of Sir Giles Overreach's displeasure)
To turn the gentleman out of doors?
Tap. 'Tis true;
But now he's his uncle's darling, and has got
Master Justice Greedy (since he filled his belly)
At his commandment to do any thing;
Woe, woe to us!
Froth. He may prove merciful.
Tap. Troth, we do not deserve it at his hands:
Though he knew all the passages of our house,
As the receiving of stolen goods,
When he was rogue Wellborn, no man would believe him,
And then his information could not hurt us:
But now he is right worshipful again,
Who dares but doubt his testimony? Methinks
I see thee, Froth, already in a cart,
And my hand hissing (if I 'scape the halter)
With the letter R printed upon it.
Froth. Would that were the worst!
That were but nine days wonder: as for credit,
We have none to lose; but we shall lose the money
He owes us, and his custom; there's the hell on't.
Tap. He has summoned all his creditors by the drum,
And they swarm about him like so many soldiers
On the pay day; and has found such a new way
To pay his old debts, as, 'tis very likely,
He shall be chronicled for it.
Froth. He deserves it
More than ten pageants. But are you sure his worship
Comes this way to my lady's?
[*A cry within, brave* MR WELLBORN!
Tap. Yes, I hear him.
Froth. Be ready with your petition, and present it
To his good grace.

Enter WELLBORN, *in a rich habit,* GREEDY, MARRALL, AMBLE, ORDER, FURNACE, *and three creditors;* TAPWELL, *kneeling, delivers his bill of debt.*

Well. How's this! petitioned too!
But note what miracles the payment of
A little trash, and a rich suit of clothes,
Can work upon these rascals! I shall be,
I think, prince Wellborn.
Mar. When your worship's married,
You may be——I know not what I hope to see you.
Well. Then look thou for advancement.
Mar. To be known
Your worship's bailiff, is the mark I shoot at.
Well. And thou shalt hit it.
Mar. Pray you, sir, dispatch
These needy followers, and for my admittance,
[*In this interim,* TAPWELL *and* FROTH *flattering and bribing Justice* GREEDY.]
(Provided you'll defend me from sir Giles,
Whose service I am weary of) I'll say something
You shall give thanks for.
Well. Fear him not.
Greedy. Who, Tapwell? I remember thy wife brought me,
Last new year's tide, a couple of fat turkies.
Tap. And shall do every Christmas, let your worship
But stand my friend now.
Greedy. How! with Mr Wellborn?
I can do any thing with him, on such terms——
See you this honest couple? they are good souls
As ever drew out spigot; have they not
A pair of honest faces?
Well. I o'erheard you,
And the bribe he promised; you are cozened in them;
For of all the scum, that grew rich by my riots,
This, for a most unthankful knave, and this,
For a base bawd and whore, have worst deserved;
And therefore speak not for them. By your place,
You are rather to do me justice; lend me your ear,
Forget his turkeys, and call in his licence,
And, at the next fair, I'll give you a yoke of oxen
Worth all his poultry.
Greedy. I am changed on the sudden,
In my opinion——Mum! my passion is great!
I fry like a burnt marrow-bone——Come nearer, rascal!
And now I view him better, did you e'er see
One look so like an arch-knave? his very countenance,
Should an understanding judge but look on him,
Would hang him, though he were innocent.

Tap. and Froth. Worshipful sir!
Greedy. No; though the Great Turk came instead of turkies,
To beg my favour, I am inexorable:
Thou hast an ill-name; for, except thy musty ale,
That hath destroyed many of the king's liege people,
Thou never hadst in thy house, to stay men's stomaches,
A piece of Suffolk cheese, or gammon of bacon,
Or any esculent, as the learned call it,
For their encouragement, but sheer drink only.
For which gross fault, I here do damn thy licence,
Forbidding thee ever to tap or draw;
For instantly I will, in mine own person,
Command the constable to pull down thy sign;
And do it before I eat.
Froth. No mercy?
Greedy. Vanish.
If I shew any, may my promised oxen gore me!
Tap. Unthankful knaves are ever so rewarded.
[*Exeunt* TAPWELL *and* FROTH.
Well. Speak; what are you?
1 *Cred.* A decayed vintner, sir,
That might have thrived, but that your worship broke me,
With trusting you with muscadine and eggs,
And five pound suppers, with your after-drinkings,
When you lodged upon the bankside.
Well. I remember.
1 *Cred.* I have not been hasty, nor e'er laid to arrest you;
And therefore, sir——
Well. Thou art an honest fellow:
I'll set you up again; see this bill paid.
What are you?
2*d Cred.* A taylor once, but now mere botcher.
I gave you credit for a suit of cloaths,
Which was all my stock; but you failing in payment,
I was removed from the shop-board, and confined
Under a stall.
Well. See him paid; and botch no more.
2*d Cred.* I ask no interest, sir.
Well. Such taylors need not;
If their bills are paid in one and twenty years,
They are seldom losers—O, I know thy face;
Thou wert my surgeon;
I will pay you in private.
See all men else discharged;
And, since old debts are cleared by a new way,
A little bounty will not misbecome me;
There is something, honest cook, for thy good breakfasts,
And this for your respect; take it, 'tis good gold,
And I am able to spare it.
Order. You are too munificent,
Fern. He was ever so.
Well. Pray you, on before;
I'll attend you at dinner.
Greedy. For Heaven's sake don't stay long;
It is almost ready. [*Exit* GREEDY.
Mar. At four o'clock the rest know where to meet me.
[*Exeunt* ORDER, FURNACE, AMBLE, *and Creditors.*]
Well. Now, Mr Marrall, what's the weighty secret
You promised to impart?
Mar. Sir, time nor place
Allow me to relate each circumstance;
This, only, in a word: I know sir Giles
Will come upon you for security,
For his thousand pounds; which you must not consent to.
As he grows in heat (as I am sure he will),
Be you but rough, and say, he's in your debt,
Ten times the sum, upon sale of your land:
I had a hand in't, (I speak it to my shame)
When you were defeated of it.
Well. That's forgiven.
Mar. I shall deserve it, then. Then urge him to produce
The deed, in which you passed it over to him,
Which I know he'll have about him, to deliver
To the lord Lovell, with many other writings,
And present monies. I'll instruct you farther,
As I wait on your worship. If I play not my part
To your full content, and your uncle's much vexation,
Hang up Jack Marrall.
Well. I rely upon thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A chamber in* SIR GILES'S *house.*

Enter ALLWORTH *and* MARGARET.

Allw. Whether to yield the first praise to my lord's
Unequalled temperance, or your constant sweetness,
I yet rest doubtful.
Marg. Give it to lord Lovell;
For what in him was bounty, in me is duty.
I make but payment of a debt, to which
My vows, in that high office registered,
Are faithful witnesses.
Allw. 'Tis true, my dearest;
Yet, when I call to mind, how many fair ones
Make wilful shipwreck of their faiths and oaths
To God and man, to fill the arms of greatness;
And you, with matchless virtue, thus to hold out,
Against the stern authority of a father,
And spurn at honour, when it comes to court you;
I am so tender of your good, that I can hardly
Wish myself that right, you are pleased to do me.
Marg. To me, what's title, when content is wanting?
Or wealth, when the heart pines

In being dispossest of what it longs for?
Or the smooth brow
Of a pleased sire, that slaves me to his will?
And, so his ravenous humour may be feasted
By my obedience, and he see me great,
Leaves to my soul nor faculties nor power
To make her own election.
Allw. But the dangers,
That follow the repulse!
Marg. To me they are nothing:
Let Allworth love, I cannot be unhappy.
Suppose the worst; that, in his rage, he kill me;
A tear or two by you dropt on my hearse,
In sorrow for my fate, will call back life
So far as but to say, that I die your's.
I then shall rest in peace.
Allw. Heaven avert
Such trials of your true affection to me!
Nor will it unto you, that are all mercy,
Shew so much rigour. But since we must run
Such desperate hazards, let us do our best
To steer between them.
Marg. Lord Lovell is your friend;
And, though but a young actor, second me,
In doing to the life what he has plotted.

Enter OVERREACH.

The end may yet prove happy: now, my Allworth!
Allw. To your letter, and put on a seeming anger. [*Aside.*]
Marg. I'll pay my lord all debts due to his title;
And, when with terms not taking from his honour,
He does solicit me, I shall gladly hear him:
But in this peremptory, nay, commanding way,
To appoint a meeting, and without my knowledge;
A priest to tye the knot, can ne'er be undone,
Till death unloose it, is a confidence
In his lordship, that will deceive him.
Allw. I hope better, good lady.
Marg. Hope, sir, what you please: for me,
I must take a safe and secure course; I have
A father, and, without his full consent,
Though all lords of the land kneeled for my favour,
I can grant nothing.
Over. I like this obedience.
But whatsoever my lord writes, must, and shall be
Accepted and embraced.—[*Aside.*]—Sweet Mr Allworth,
You shew yourself a true and faithful servant
To your good lord; he has a jewel of you.
How! frowning, Meg! are these looks to receive
A messenger from my lord? What's this? give me it.
Marg. A piece of arrogant paper, like the inscription.

[OVERREACH *reads the letter.*
'Fair mistress, from your servant learn, all joys,
'That we can hope for, if deferred, prove toys;
'Therefore, this instant, and in private, meet
'A husband, that will gladly, at your feet,
'Lay down his honours, tendering them to you
'With all content, the church being paid her due.'
Over. Is this the arrogant piece of paper? fool!
Will you still be one? In the name of madness, what
Could his good honour write more to content you?
Is there aught else to be wished after these two,
That are already offered? Marriage first,
And lawful pleasure after: What would you more?
Marg. Why, sir, I would be married like your daughter,
Not hurried away in the night I know not whither,
Without all ceremony; no friends invited,
To honour the solemnity.
Allw. An't please your honour,
For so before to-morrow I must stile you,
My lord desires this privacy, in respect
His honourable kinsmen are far off;
And his desires to have it done, brook not
So long delay as to expect their coming;
And yet he stands resolved, with all due pomp,
To have his marriage at court celebrated,
When he has brought your honour up to London.
Over. He tells you true; 'tis the fashion, on my knowledge:
Yet the good lord, to please your peevishness,
Must put it off, forsooth.
Marg. I could be contented,
Were you but by to do a father's part,
And give me in the church.
Over. So my lord have you,
What do I care who gives you? since my lord
Does propose to be private, I'll not cross him.
I know not, Mr Allworth, how my lord
May be provided, and therefore, there's a purse
Of gold: 'twill serve this night's expence: to-morrow
I'll furnish him with any sums. In the mean time,
Use my ring to my chaplain; he is beneficed
At my manor of Gotham, and called parson Welldo:
'Tis no matter for a licence; I'll bear him out in't.
Marg. With your favour, sir, what warrant is your ring?
He may suppose I got that twenty ways
Without your knowledge; and, then, to be refused,
Were such a stain upon me—if you please, sir,
Your presence would do better.
Over. Still perverse!
I say again, I will not cross my lord,
Yet I'll pervent you, too—Paper and ink there.
Allw. I can furnish you.

Over. I thank you, I can write then.
[*Writes on his book.*
Alla. You may, if you please, leave out the name of my lord,
In respect he comes disguised, and only write,
Marry her to this gentleman.
Over. Well advised. [MARGARET *kneels.*
'Tis done; away—my blessing, girl? thou hast it.
Nay, no reply—be gone, good Mr Allworth;
This shall be the best night's work you ever made.
Alla. I hope so, sir.
[*Exeunt* ALLWORTH *and* MARGARET.
Over. Farewell! Now all's sure.
Methinks, I hear already knights and ladies
Say, sir Giles Overreach, how is it with
Your honourable daughter? has her honour
Slept well to-night? or, will her honour please
To accept this monkey, dog, or paroquet?
(This is state in ladies) or my eldest son
To be her page, and wait upon her trencher?—
My ends, my ends are compassed!—then for Wellborn
And the lands; were he once married to the widow—
I have him here—I can scarce contain myself,
I am so full of joy! nay, joy all over! [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A chamber in* LADY ALLWORTH'S *house.*

Enter LOVELL *and* LADY.

Lady. By this, you know how strong the motives were,
That did, my lord, induce me to dispense
A little with my gravity, to advance
The plots and projects of the down-trod Wellborn.
Lov. What you intended, madam,
For the poor gentleman, hath found good success;
For, as I understand, his debts are paid,
And he once more furnished for fair employment:
But all the arts, that I have used to raise
The fortunes of your joy and mine, young Allworth,
Stand yet in supposition, though I hope well.
For the young lovers are in wit more pregnant
Than their years can promise; and for their desires,
On my knowledge they equal.
Lady. Though my wishes
Are with yours, my lord, yet give me leave to fear
The building, though well grounded. To deceive
Sir Giles, that's both a lion and a fox
In his proceedings, were a work beyond
The strongest undertakers; not the trial
Of two weak innocents.
Lov. Despair not, madam:
Hard things are compassed oft by easy means.
The cunning statesman, that believes he fathoms
The counsels of all kingdoms on the earth,
Is, by simplicity, oft overreached.
Lady. May be so.
The young ones have my warmest wishes.
Lov. O, gentle lady, let them prove kind to me!
You've kindly heard—now grant my suit.
What say you, lady?
Lady. Troth, my lord,
My own unworthiness may answer for me;
For had you, when I was in my prime,
Presented me with this great favour,
I could not but have thought it as a blessing,
Far, far beyond my merit.
Lov. You are too modest,
And undervalue that, which is above
My title, or whatever I call mine. In a word,
Our years, our states, our births, are not unequal.
If, then, you may be won to make me happy,
But join your hand to mine, and that shall be
A solemn contract.
Lady. I were blind to my own good,
Should I refuse it; yet, my lord, receive me
As such a one, the study of whose life
Shall know no other object but to please you.
Lov. If I return not, with all tenderness,
Equal respect to you, may I die wretched!
Lady. There needs no protestation, my lord,
To her, that cannot doubt—You are welcome, sir.

Enter WELLBORN.

Now, you look like yourself.
Well. And will continue
Such in my free acknowledgement, that I am
Your creature, madam, and will never hold
My life mine own, when you please to demand it.
Lov. It is a thankfulness, that well becomes you;
You could not make choice of a better shape
To dress your mind in.
Lady. For me, I am happy,
That my endeavours prospered. Saw you, of late,
Sir Giles, your uncle?
Well. I heard of him, madam,
By his minister, Marrall: he's grown into strange passions
About his daughter. This last night he looked for
Your lordship at his house; but, missing you,
And she not yet appearing, his wise head
Is much perplexed and troubled.
Lov. I hope my project took.

Enter OVERREACH, *with distracted looks, driving in* MARRALL *before him.*

Lady. I strongly hope.
Over. Ha! find her, booby; thou huge lump of nothing,

I'll bore thine eyes out else.
Well. May it please your lordship,
For some ends of my own, but to withdraw
A little out of sight, though not of hearing;
You may, perhaps, have sport.
Lov. You shall direct me. [*Steps aside.*
Over. I shall sol fa you, rogue!
Mar. Sir, for what cause
Do you use me thus?
Over. Cause, slave! why, I am angry,
And thou a subject only fit for beating;
And so to cool my choler. Look to the writing;
Let but the seal be broke upon the box,
That has slept in my cabinet these three years,
I'll rack thy soul for it.
Mar. I may yet cry quittance;
Though now I suffer, and dare not resist. [*Aside.*
Over. Lady, by your leave, did you see my daughter, lady?
And the lord her husband? Are they in your house?
If they are, discover, that I may bid them joy;
And, as an entrance to her place of honour,
See your ladyship on her left hand, and make curt'sies
When she nods on you; which you must receive
As a special favour.
Lady. When I know, sir Giles,
Her state requires such ceremony, I shall pay it;
But, in the mean time,
I give you to understand, I neither know
Nor care where her honour is.
Over. When you once see her
Supported, and led by the lord her husband,
You'll be taught better——Nephew!
Well. Well!
Over. No more!
Well. 'Tis all I owe you.
Over. Have your redeemed rags
Made you thus insolent?
Well. Insolent to you! [*In scorn.*
Why, what are you, sir, more than myself?
Over. His fortune swells him:
'Tis rank, he is married.
Lady. This is excellent!
Over. Sir, in calm language (though I seldom use it),
I am familiar with the cause, that makes you
Bear up thus bravely; there's a certain buz
Of a stolen marriage; Do you hear? of a stolen marriage;
In which, 'tis said, there's somebody hath been cozened.
I name no parties. [*Lady turns away.*
Well. Well, sir, what follows?
Over. Marry this, since you are peremptory, remember,
Upon mere hope of your great match, I lent you
A thousand pounds; put me in good security,
And suddenly, by mortgage or by statute,
Of some of your new possessions, or I'll have you
Dragged in your lavender robe, to the jail; you know me,
And therefore do not trifle.
Well. Can you be
So cruel to your nephew, now he is in
The way to rise? Was this your courtesy
You did me in pure love, and no ends else?
Over. End me no ends; engage the whole estate,
And force your spouse to sign it: you shall have
Three or four thousand more to roar and swagger,
And revel in bawdy taverns.
Well. And beg after:
Mean you not so?
Over. My thoughts are mine, and free.
Shall I have security?
Well. No, indeed, you shall not:
Nor bond, nor bill, nor bare acknowledgment:
Your great looks fright not me.
Over. But my deeds shall——
Out-braved! [*They both draw.*

Enter AMBLE, ORDER, *and* FURNACE.

Lady. Help, murder! murder!
Well. Let him come on,
With all his wrongs and injuries about him,
Armed with his cut-throat practices to guard him;
The right I bring with me will defend me,
And punish his extortion.
Over. That I had thee
But single in the field!
Lady. You may; but make not
My house your quarrelling scene.
Over. Were it in a church,
By Heaven and hell, I'll do it!
Mar. Now, put him to
The shewing of the deed.
Well. This rage is vain, sir;
For fighting, fear not, you shall have your hands full
Upon the least incitement; and whereas
You charge me with a debt of a thousand pounds;
If there be law (howe'er you have no conscience)
Either restore my land, or I'll recover
A debt, that is truly due to me from you,
In value ten times more than what you challenge.
Over. I in thy debt! oh impudence! Did I not purchase
The land left by thy father? that rich land,
That had continued in Wellborn's name
Twenty descents; which, like a riotous fool,

Enter Servant, with a box.

Thou didst make sale of? Is not here inclosed
The deed, that does confirm it mine?
Mar. Now, now.
Well. I do acknowledge none; I ne'er passed o'er
Such land; I grant, for a year or two,
You had it in trust; which, if you do discharge.

Surrendering the possession, you shall ease
Yourself and me, of chargeable suits in law;
Which, if you prove not honest (as I doubt it),
Must, of necessity, follow.
Lady. In my judgment,
He does advise you well.
Over. Good, good! conspire
With your new husband, lady; second him
In his dishonest practices; but, when
This manor is extended to my use,
You'll speak in an humble key, and sue for favour.
Lady. Never: do not hope it.
Well. Let despair first seize me.
Over. Yet, to shut up thy mouth, and make thee give
Thyself the lie, the loud lie! I draw out
The precious evidence: If thou canst forswear
Thy hand and seal, and make a forfeit of
[*Opens the box.*
Thy ears to the pillory; see, here's that, will make
My interest clear——Ha!
Lady. A fair skin of parchment!
Well. Indented, I confess, and labels, too;
But neither wax nor words. How! thunderstruck!
Not a syllable to insult with? my wise uncle,
Is this your precious evidence? Is this, that makes
Your interest clear?
Over. I am o'erwhelmed with wonder!
What prodigy is this? What subtle devil
Hath razed out the inscription? the wax
Turned into dust, the rest of my deeds whole
As when they were deliver'd; and this only
Made nothing! do you deal with witches, rascal?
There's a statute for you, which will bring
Your neck in a hempen circle; yes, there is;
And now 'tis better thought; for, cheater, know
This juggling shall not save you.
Well. To save thee,
Would beggar the stock of mercy.
Over. Marrall.
Mar. Sir.
Over. Tho' the witnesses are dead,
[*Flattering him.*
Your testimony
Help with an oath or two; and for thy master,
Thy liberal master, my good honest servant,
I know you will swear any thing to dash
This cunning slight: besides, I know thou art
A public notary, and such stands in law
For a dozen witnesses; the deed being drawn too
By thee, my careful Marrall, and delivered
When thou wert present, will make good my title;
Wilt thou not swear this?
Mar. I! no, I assure you.
I have a conscience, not seared up like yours;
I know no deeds.
Over. Wilt thou betray me?
Mar. Keep him
From using of his hands, I'll use my tongue
To his no little torment.
Over. Mine own varlet
Rebel against me?
Mar. Yes, and uncase you too.
The ideot; the patch; the slave; the booby;
The property, fit only to be beaten
For your morning exercise; your football, or
The unprofitable lump of flesh, your drudge,
Can now anatomize you, and lay open
All your black plots, level with the earth
Your hill of pride, and shake,
Nay, pulverize, the walls, you think defend you.
Lady. How he foams at the mouth with rage!
Over. O that I had thee in my gripe! I would tear thee
Joint after joint!
Mar. I know you are a tearer.
But I'll have first your fangs pared off; and then
Come nearer to you; when I have discovered,
And made it good before the judge, what ways
And devilish practises you used to cozen with.
Over. But that I will live, rogue, to torture thee,
And make thee wish and kneel in vain to die;
These swords, that keep thee from me, should fix here,
Although they made my body but one wound,
But I would reach thee.
I play the fool, and make my anger but ridiculous.
There will be a time, and place, there will be, cowards!
When you shall feel what I dare do.
Well. I think so:
You dare do any ill, yet want true valour
To be honest and repent.
Over. They are words I know not,
Nor e'er will learn. Patience, the beggar's virtue,
Shall find no harbour here——After these storms,
At length a calm appears.

Enter GREEDY *and Parson* WELLDO.

Welcome, most welcome!
There's comfort in thy looks; is the deed done?
Is my daughter married? say but so, my chaplain,
And I am tame.
Welldo. Married? yes, I assure you.
Over. Then vanish all sad thoughts! there's more gold for thee.
My doubts and fears are in the titles drowned
Of my right honourable, right honourable daughter.
Greedy. Here will be feasting at least for a month!
I am provided: empty guts, croak no more!
You shall be stuffed, like bag-pipes, not with wind,
But bearing dishes.
Over. Instantly be here!
[*Whispering to* WELLDO.

To my wish, to my wish. Now, you that plot against me,
And hoped to trip my heels up; that contemned me;
Think on it and tremble!—[*Loud music.*]—They come, I hear the music.
A lane there for my lord!
Well. This sudden heat
May yet be cooled, sir.
Over. Make way, there, for my lord!

Enter ALLWORTH, MARGARET, LOVELL, *and* LADY.

Marg. Sir, first your pardon, then your blessing, with
Your full allowance of the choice I have made.
Not to dwell too long on words, [*Kneeling.*
This is my husband.
Over. How!
Allw. So, I assure you; all the rites of marriage,
With every circumstance, are past;
And for right honourable son-in-law, you may say
Your dutiful daughter.
Over. Devil! are they married?
Welldo. Do a father's part, and say, Heaven give them joy!
Over. Confusion and ruin! speak, and speak quickly,
Or thou art dead.
Welldo. They are married.
Over. Thou hadst better
Have made a contract with the king of fiends
Than these.——My brain turns!
Welldo. Why this rage to me?
Is not this your letter, sir? and these the words—
Marry her to this gentleman?
Over. It cannot;
Nor will I ever believe it: 'sdeath! I will not.
That I, that in all passages I touched
At worldly profit have not left print
Where I have trod, for the most curious search
To trace my footsteps, should be gulled by children!
Baffled and fooled, and all my hopes and labours
Defeated and made void!
Well. As it appears,
You are so, my grave uncle.
Over. Village nurses
Revenge their wrongs with curses; I'll not waste
A syllable, but thus I take the life,
Which, wretch! I gave to thee.
[*Offers to kill* MARGARET.
Lov. Hold, for your own sake!
Though charity to your daughter hath quite left you,
Will you do an act, tho' in your hopes lost here,
Can leave no hope for peace or rest hereafter?
Over. Lord! thus I spit at thee,
And at thy counsel; and again desire thee,
As thou art a soldier, if thy valour
Dares show itself where multitude and example
Lead not the way, let's quit the house, and change
Six words in private.
Lov. I am ready.
Well. You'll grow like him,
Should you answer his vain challenge.
Over. Are you pale?
Borrow his help, though Hercules call it odds,
I'll stand against both, as I am hem'd in thus.
Say they were a squadron
Of pikes, lined through with shot, when I am mounted
Upon my injuries, shall I fear to charge them?
No: I'll thro' the battalia, and, that routed,
I'll fall to execution.—Ha! I am feeble:
Some undone widow sits upon mine arm,
And takes away the use of't! and my sword,
Glewed to my scabbard with wronged orphans' tears,
Will not be drawn. Ha! what are these? Sure, hangmen,
That come to bind my hands, and then to drag me
Before the judgment-seat.—Now they are new shapes,
And do appear like furies, with steel whips,
To scourge my ulcerous soul! Shall I then fall
Ingloriously, and yield? No: spite of fate
I will be forced to hell like to myself;
Tho' you were legions of accursed spirits,
Thus would I fly among you.——
[*Dragged off by* ORDER *and* AMBLE.
Mar. Is't brave sport?
Greedy. Brave sport? I'm sure it has taken away my stomach.
I do not like the sauce.
Mar. Was it not a rare trick,
(An't please your worship) to make the deed nothing?
Certain minerals I used,
Incorporated in the ink and wax.
Besides, he gave me nothing, but still fed me
With hopes and blows; and that was the inducement
To this conundrum.
Well. You are a rascal. He, that dares be false
To a master, tho' unjust, will ne'er be true
To any other. Look not for reward,
Or favour from me; I will shun thy sight
As I would do a basilisk's. Thank my pity,
If thou keep thy ears; howe'er I will take order
Your practice shall be silenced.
Greedy. I'll commit him,
If you'll have me, sir.
Well. That were to little purpose;
His conscience be his punishment; not a word,
But instantly begone. [*Exit* MARRALL.
Lov. Here is a precedent to teach wicked men,
That, when we leave religion, and turn atheists,

Their own abilities leave them. Pray you take
comfort. [*To* MARG.
I will endeavour you shall be his guardians
In his distraction: and for your land, Mr. Well-
born,
Be it good or ill in law, I'll be an umpire
Between you, and this the undoubted heir
Of sir Giles Overreach; for me, here's the
anchor
That I must fix on. [*Takes the lady's hand.*
Allw. What you shall determine,
My lord, I will allow of.
Well. 'Tis the language,
That I speak too; but there is something else
Beside the repossession of my land
And payment of my debts, that I must practise.
I had a reputation, but 'twas lost
In my loose course; and, till I redeem it
Some noble way, I am but half made up.
It is a time of action; if your lordship
Will please to confer a company upon me
In your command, I doubt not, in my service
To my king and country, but I shall do some-
thing,
That may make me right again.
Lov. Your suit is granted,
And you loved for the motion.
Well. Nothing wants, then, [*To the audience.*
But your allowance—and, in that, our all
Is comprehended; it being known, nor we,
Nor he that wrote the comedy, can be free
Without your manumission; which, if you
Grant willingly, as a fair favour due
The poet's and our labours, as you may,
(For we despair not, gentlemen, of the play)
We jointly shall profess your grace hath might
To teach us action, and him how to write.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

GREAT DUKE OF FLORENCE.

BY

MASSINGER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Cozimo, *duke of Florence.*
Giovanni, *nephew to the duke.*
Lodovico Sanazarro, *the duke's favourite.*
Carolo Charomonte, *Giovanni's tutor.*
Contarino, *secretary to the duke.*
Alphonso, Hippolito, Hieronimo, } *counsellors of state.*
Calandrino, *a merry fellow, servant to Giovanni.*
Bernardo, Cauponi, Petruchio, } *servants to Carolo Charomonte.*

WOMEN.

Fiorinda, *duchess of Urbin.*
Lydia, *daughter to Carolo Charomonte.*
Calaminta, *servant to Fiorinda.*
Petronella, *servant to Lydia.*

Scene—Florence.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter Carolo Charomonte, *and* Contarino.

Car. You bring your welcome with you.
Con. Sir, I find it,
In every circumstance.
Car. Again more welcome.
Yet, give me leave to wish (and pray you excuse me,
For I must use the freedom I was born with)
The great duke's pleasure had commanded you
To my poor house upon some other service;
Not this you are designed to: but his will
Must be obeyed, howe'er it ravish from me
The happy conversation of one,
As dear to me as the old Romans held
Their household Lares, who, they believed, had power
To bless and guard their families.
Con. 'Tis received so
On my part, signior; nor can the duke
But promise to himself as much as may
Be hoped for from a nephew. And it were weakness
In any man to doubt, that Giovanni,
Trained up by your experience and care,
In all those arts peculiar and proper
To future greatness, of necessity
Must, in his actions, being grown a man,
Make good the princely education
Which he derived from you.
Car. I have discharged,
To the utmost of my power, the trust the duke
Committed to me, and, with joy, perceive
The seed of my endeavours was not sown
Upon the barren sands, but fruitful glebe,

Which yields a large increase; my noble charge,
By his sharp wit, and pregnant apprehension,
Instructing those that teach him; making use,
Not in a vulgar and pedantic form,
Of what's read to him, but 'tis straight digested,
And truly made his own. His grave discourse,
In one no more indebted unto years,
Amazes such as hear him. Horsemanship
And skill to use his weapon are, by practice,
Familiar to him: As for knowledge in
Music, he needs it not, it being born with him;
All that he speaks being with such grace delivered,
That it makes perfect harmony.

Con. You describe
A wonder to me.

Car. Sir, he is no less;
And, that there may be nothing wanting that
May render him complete, the sweetness of
His disposition so wins on all
Appointed to attend him, that they are
Rivals even in the coarsest office, who
Shall get precedency to do him service;
Which they esteem a greater happiness
Than if they had been fashioned and built up
To hold command o'er others.

Con. And what place
Does he now bless with his presence?

Car. He is now
Running at the ring, at which he's excellent.
He does allot for every exercise
A several hour; for sloth, the nurse of vices
And rust of action, is a stranger to him.
But I fear I am tedious; let us pass,
If you please, to some other subject, though I cannot
Deliver him as he deserves.

Con. You have given him
A noble character.

Car. And how, I pray you,
(For we that never look beyond our villas
Must be inquisitive) are state affairs
Carried in court?

Con. There's little alteration:
Some rise, and others fall; as it stands with
The pleasure of the duke, their great disposer.

Car. Does Lodovico Sanazarro hold
Weight and grace with him?

Con. Every day new honours
Are showered upon him, and without the envy
Of such as are good men; since all confess,
The service done our master, in his wars
Against Pisa and Sienna, may, with justice,
Claim what's conferred upon him.

Car. 'Tis said nobly:
For princes never more make known their wisdom
Than when they cherish goodness, where they find it;
They being men, and not gods, Contarino,
They can give wealth and titles, but no virtues;
That is without their power. When they advance,
Not out of judgment, but deceiving fancy,
An undeserving man, howe'er set off
With all the trim of greatness, state, and power,
And, of a creature, even grown terrible
To him from whom he took his giant form,
This thing is still a comet, no true star;
And when the bounties, feeding his false fire,
Begin to fail, will of itself go out,
And, what was dreadful, proves ridiculous.
But in our Sanazarro 'tis not so:
He, being pure and tried gold, and any stamp
Of grace to make him current to the world,
The duke is pleased to give him, will add honour
To the great bestower; for he, though allowed
Companion to his master, still preserves
His majesty in full lustre.

Con. He, indeed,
At no part does take from it, but becomes
A partner of his cares, and eases him,
With willing shoulders, of a burthen, which
He should alone sustain.

Car. Is he yet married?

Con. No, signior; still a batchelor; howe'er,
It is apparent, that the choicest virgin
For beauty, bravery, and wealth, in Florence,
Would, with her parents' glad consent, be won
(Were his affection and intent but known)
To be at his devotion.

Car. So I think too.

Enter GIOVANNI *and* CALANDRINO.

But break we off. Here comes my princely charge.
Make your approaches boldly; you will find
A courteous entertainment.

Giov. Pray you, forbear
My hand, good signior; 'tis a ceremony
Not due to me. 'Tis fit we should embrac
With mutual arms

Con. It is a favour, sir,
I grieve to be denied.

Giov. You shall overcome:
But 'tis your pleasure, not my pride, that grants it.
Nay, pray you, guardian, and good sir, put on:
How ill it shews to have that reverend head
Be uncovered to a boy!

Car. Your excellence
Must give me liberty to observe the distance
And duty that I owe you.

Giov. Owe me duty?
I do profess (and when I do deny it
Good fortune leave me), you have been to me
A second father, and may justly challenge,
For training up my youth in arts and arms,
As much respect and service, as was due
To him that gave me life. And did you know, sir,
Or will believe from me, how many sleeps

Good Charomonte hath broken, in his care
To build me up a man, you must confess
Chiron, the tutor to the great Achilles,
Compared with him, deserves not to be named.
And if my gracious uncle, the great duke,
Still holds me worthy his consideration,
Or finds in me aught worthy to be loved,
That little rivulet flowed from this spring;
And so from me report him.

Con. Fame already
Hath filled his highness' ears with the true story
Of what you are, and how much bettered by him.
And 'tis his purpose to reward the travail
Of this grave sir, with a magnificent hand.
For, though his tenderness hardly could consent
To have you one hour absent from his sight,
For full three years he did deny himself
The pleasure he took in you, that you, here,
From this great master, might arrive unto
The theory of those high mysteries
Which you by action must make plain in court.
'Tis, therefore, his request (and that, from him,
Your excellence must grant a strict command),
That instantly (it being not five hours riding)
You should take horse, and visit him. These his letters
Will yield you further reasons.

Cal. To the court?
Farewell the flower, then, of the country's garland!
This is our sun, and, when he's set, we must not
Expect or spring or summer; but resolve
For a perpetual winter.

Car. Pray you observe
[GIOVANNI *reading the letter.*
The frequent changes in his face.

Con. As if
His much unwillingness to leave your house
Contended with his duty.

Car. Now he appears
Collected and resolved

Giov. It is the duke!
The duke, upon whose favour all my hopes
And fortunes do depend. Nor must I check
At his commands, for any private motives
That do invite my stay here, though they are
Almost not to be mastered. My obedience,
In my departing suddenly, shall confirm
I am his highness's creature. Yet, I hope
A little stay, to take a solemn farewell
For all those ravishing pleasures I have tasted
In this my sweet retirement from my guardian,
And his incomparable daughter, cannot meet
An ill construction?

Con. I will answer that;
Use your own will.

Giov. I would speak to you, sir,
In such a phrase as might express the thanks
My heart would gladly pay; but———

Car. I conceive you:
And something I would say; but I must do it
In that dumb rhetoric which you make use of;
For I do wish you all———I know not how,
My toughness melts, and, spite of my discretion,
I must turn woman.

Con. What a sympathy
There is between them!

Cal. Were I on the rack,
I could not shed a tear.—But I am mad,
And, ten to one, shall hang myself for sorrow,
Before I shift my shirt. But hear you, sir,
I'll separate you: When you are gone, what will
Become of me?

Giov. Why thou shalt to court with me.

Cal. To see you worried?

Con. Worried, Calandrino?

Cal. Yes, sir. For, bring this sweet face to the court,
There will be such longing among the madams,
Who shall ingross it first, nay, fight and scratch for it,
That, if they be not stopped, for entertainment
They'll kiss his lips off. Nay, if you'll scape so,
And not be tempted to a farther danger,
These succubæ are so sharp set, that you must
Give out you are an eunuch.

Con. Have a better
Opinion of court-ladies, and take care
Of your own stake.

Cal. For my stake, 'tis past caring;
I would not have a bird of unclean feathers
Handsel his lime-twig—and so much for him:
There's something else that troubles me.

Con. What's that?

Cat. Why, how to behave myself in court, and tightly.
I have been told the very place transforms men,
And that not one of a thousand, that, before,
Lived honestly in the country, on plain sallads,
But bring him thither, mark me that, and feed him
But a month or two with custards and court cake-bread,
And he turns knave immediately. I would be honest;
But I must follow the fashion, or die a beggar.

Giov. And, if I ever reach my hopes, believe it
We will share fortunes.

Car. This acknowledgment

Enter LYDIA.

Binds me your debtor ever. Here comes one,
In whose sad looks you may easily read
What her heart suffers, in that she is forced
To take her last leave of you.

Con. As I live,
A beauty without parallel.

Lyd. Must you go, then,
So suddenly?

Giov. There's no evasion, Lydia,
To gain the least delay, though I would buy it
At any rate. Greatness, with private men

Esteemed a blessing, is to me a curse;
And we, whom, for our high births, they conclude
The only free men, are the only slaves.
Happy the golden mean! had I been born
In a poor sordid cottage, not nursed up
With expectation to command a court,
I might, like such of your condition, sweetest,
Have took a safe and middle course, and not,
As I am now, against my choice compelled,
Or to lie grovelling on the earth, or raised
So high upon the pinnacles of state,
That I must either keep my height with danger,
Or fall with certain ruin.
Lyd. Your own goodness
Will be your faithful guard.
Giov. O Lydia!
Con. So passionate?
Giov. For, had I been your equal,
I might have seen and liked with mine own eyes,
And not, as now, with other's; I might still,
And without observation or envy,
As I have done, continued my delights
With you, that are alone, in my esteem,
The abstract of society: We might walk
In solitary groves, or in choice gardens;
From the variety of curious flowers
Contemplate Nature's workmanship and wonders;
And then, for change, near to the murmur of
Some bubbling fountain, I might hear you sing,
And, from the well-tuned accents of your tongue,
In my imagination conceive
With what melodious harmony a quire
Of angels sing, above, their maker's praises.
And then, with chaste discourse, as we returned,
Imp feathers to the broken wings of time;
And all this I must part from!
Con. You forget
The haste imposed upon us.
Giov. One word more,
And, then, I come. And, after this, when with
Continued innocence of love and service,
I had grown ripe for hymeneal joys,
Embracing you, but with a lawful flame,
I might have been your husband!
Lyd. Sir, I was,
And ever am, your servant; but it was,
And 'tis, far from me, in a thought, to cherish
Such saucy hopes. If I had been the heir
Of all the globes and sceptres mankind bows to,
At my best you had deserved me; as I am,
Howe'er unworthy, in my virgin zeal
I wish you, as a partner of your bed,
A princess equal to you; such a one
That may make it the study of her life,
With all the obedience of a wife, to please you.
May you have happy issue, and I live
To be their humblest handmaid.
Giov. I am dumb,
And can make no reply.
Con. Your excellence
Will be benighted.
Giov. This kiss, bathed in tears,
May learn you what I should say.
Lyd. Give me leave
To wait on you to your horse.
Car. And me to bring you
To the one half of your journey.
Giov. Your love puts
Your age to too much trouble.
Car. I grow young,
When most I serve you.
Con. Sir, the duke shall thank you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

ALPHONSO, HIPPOLITO, HIERONIMO, *with a petition.*

Alph. His highness cannot take it ill.
Hip. However,
We, with our duties, shall express our care
For the safety of his dukedom.
Hier. And our loves

Enter COZIMO, *the Duke.*

To his person. Here he comes: Present it boldly.
Coz. What needs this form? We are not grown so proud
As to disdain familiar conference
With such as are to counsel and direct us.
This kind of adoration shewed not well
In the old Roman emperors, who, forgetting
That they were flesh and blood, would be styled gods:
In us to suffer it, were worse. Pray you, rise.
Still the old suit? With too much curiousness
[*Reads.*
You have too often searched this wound, which yields
Security and rest, not trouble to me.
For here you grieve, that my firm resolution
Continues me a widower; and that
My want of issue to succeed me in
My government, when I am dead, may breed
Distraction in the state, and make the name
And family of the Medicis, now admired,
Contemptible.
Hip. And, with strong reasons, sir.
Alph. For, were you old, and past hope to beget
The model of yourself, we should be silent.
Hier. But, being in your height and pride of years,
As you are now, great sir, and having too
In your possession the daughter of
The deceased duke of Urbin, and his heir,
Whose guardian you are made, were you but pleased
To think her worthy of you, besides children,
The dukedom she brings with her for a dower,
Will yield a large increase of strength and power
To these fair territories, which already

Acknowledge you their absolute lord.
Coz. You press us
With solid arguments, we grant; and, though
We stand not bound to yield account to any,
Why we do this or that (the full consent
Of our subjects being included in our will),
We, out of our free bounties, will deliver
The motives that divert us. You well know,
That three years since, to our much grief, we lost
Our dutchess; such a dutchess, that the world,
In her whole course of life, yields not a lady
That can, with imitation, deserve
To be her second. In her grave we buried
All thoughts of women: Let this satisfy
For any second marriage. Now, whereas
You name the heir of Urbin, as a princess
Of great revenues, 'tis confessed she is so:
But for some causes, private to ourself,
We have disposed her otherwise. Yet despair not;
For you, ere long, with joy, shall understand,
That, in our princely care, we have provided
One worthy to succeed us.
Hip. We submit,
And hold the counsels of great Cozimo
Oraculous.

Enter LODOVICO *and* SANAZARRO.

Coz. My Sanazarro—Nay,
Forbear all ceremony. You look sprightly, friend,
And promise, in your clear aspect, some novel
That may delight us.
San. O sir, I would not be
The harbinger of aught that might distaste you.
And, therefore, know (for 'twere a sin to torture
Your highness' expectation) your vice-admiral,
By my directions, hath surprised the gallies
Appointed to transport the Asian tribute
Of the great Turk; a richer prize was never
Brought into Florence.
Coz. Still my nightingale,
That with sweet accents dost assure me, that
My spring of happiness comes fast upon me.
Embrace me boldly. I pronounce that wretch
An enemy to brave and thriving action,
That dares believe, but in a thought, we are
Too prodigal in our favours to this man,
Whose merits, though with him we should divide
Our dukedom, still continue us his debtor.
Hip. 'Tis far from me.
Alph. We all applaud it.
Coz. Nay, blush not, Sanazarro; we are proud
Of what we build up in thee; nor can our
Election be disparaged, since we have not
Received into our bosom and our grace
A glorious lazy drone, grown fat with feeding
On other's toil, but an industrious bee,
That crops the sweet flowers of our enemies,
And every happy evening returns
Loaden with wax and honey to our hive.
San. My best endeavours never can discharge
The service I should pay.
Coz. Thou art too modest;
But we will study how to give, and when,

Enter GIOVANNI *and* CONTARINO.

Before it be demanded. Giovanni!
My nephew! Let me eye thee better, boy.
In thee, methinks, my sister lives again:
For her love I will be a father to thee,
For thou art my adopted son.
Giov. Your servant,
And humblest subject.
Coz. Thy hard travel, nephew,
Requires soft rest; and, therefore, we forbear,
For the present, an account how thou hast spent
Thy absent hours. See, signiors, see, our care,
Without a second bed, provides you of
A hopeful prince! Carry him to his lodgings,
And, for his farther honour, Sanazarro,
With the rest, do you attend him.
Giov. All true pleasures
Circle your highness.
San. As the rising sun,
We do receive you.
Giov. May this never set,
But shine upon you ever.
[*Exeunt* GIOVANNI, SANAZARRO, HIERONIMO, ALPHONSO, LODOVICO.
Coz. Contarino!
Con. My gracious lord.
Coz. What entertainment found you
From Carolo de Charamonte?
Con. Free
And bountiful. He's ever like himself,
Noble and hospitable.
Coz. But did my nephew
Depart thence willingly?
Con. He obeyed your summons
As did become him. Yet, it was apparent,
But that he durst not cross your will, he would
Have sojourned longer there, he ever finding
Variety of sweetest entertainment.
But there was something else; nor can I blame
His youth, though with some trouble he took leave
Of such a sweet companion.
Caz. Who was it?
Con. The daughter, sir, of Signior Carolo,
Fair Lydia, a virgin at all parts,
But in her birth and fortunes, equal to him.
The rarest beauties Italy can boast of
Are but mere shadows to her, she the substance
Of all perfection. And, what increases
The wonder, sir, her body's matchless form
Is bettered by the pureness of her soul;
Such sweet discourse, such ravishing behaviour,
Such charming language, such enchanting manners,
With a simplicity that shames all courtship,
Flow hourly from her, that I do believe
Had Circe, or Calypso, her sweet graces,

Wandering Ulysses never had remembered
Penelope or Ithaca.
Coz. Be not rapt so.
Con. Your excellence would be so, had you seen her.
Coz. Take up, Take up! But did your observation
Note any passage of affection
Between her and my nephew?
Con. How it should
Be otherwise between them, is beyond
My best imagination. Cupid's arrows
Were useless there; for, of necessity,
Their years and dispositions do accord so,
They must wound one another.
Coz. Hum! Thou art
My secretary, Contarino, and more skilled
In politic designs of state, than in
Thy judgement of a beauty; give me leave
In this to doubt it. Here. Go to my cabinet;
You shall find there letters newly received,
Touching the state of Urbin. Pray you, with care
Peruse them; leave the search of this to us.
Con. I do obey in all things.
[*Exit* CONTARINO.
Coz. Lydia! a diamond so long concealed,
And never worn in court? Of such sweet feature?
And he on whom I fix my dukedom's hopes,
Made captive to it? Hum! 'Tis somewhat strange!
Our eyes are every where, and we will make
A strict inquiry. Sanazarro!

Enter SANAZARRO.

San. Sir.
Coz. Is my nephew at his rest?
San. I saw him in bed, sir.
Coz. 'Tis well; and does the princess Fiorinda
(Nay, do not blush, she is rich Urbin's heir)
Continue constant in her favours to you?
San. Dread sir, she may dispense them as she pleases;
But I look up to her as on a princess
I dare not be ambitious of; and hope
Her prodigal graces shall not render me
Offending to your highness.
Coz. Not a scruple.
He whom I favour, as I do my friend,
May take all lawful graces that become him.
But touching this hereafter; I have now
(And though, perhaps, it may appear a trifle)
Serious employment for thee.
San. I stand ready
For any act you please.
Coz. I know it, friend.
Have you ne'er heard of Lydia, the daughter
Of Carolo Charomonte?
San. Him I know, sir,
For a noble gentleman, and my worthy friend;
But never heard of her.
Coz. She is delivered,
And feelingly, to us by Contarino,
For a master-piece in nature. I would have you
Ride suddenly thither, to behold this wonder:
But not as sent by us, that's our first caution.
The second is, and carefully observe it,
That, though you are a bachelor, and endowed with
All those perfections that may take a virgin,
On forfeit of our favour, do not tempt her.
It may be her fair graces do concern us.
Pretend what business you think fit, to gain
Access into her father's house, and there
Make full discovery of her, and return me
A true relation. I have some ends in it,
With which we will acquaint you.
San. This is, sir,
An easy task.
Coz. Yet, one that must exact
Your secrecy and diligence. Let not
Your stay be long.
San. It shall not, sir.
Coz. Farewell,
And be, as you would keep our favour, careful.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter FIORINDA *and* CALAMINTA.

Fio. How does this dressing shew?
Cal. 'Tis of itself
Curious and rare; but, borrowing ornament,
As it does from your grace, that deigns to wear it,
Incomparable.
Fio. Thou flatterest me.
Cal. I cannot:
Your excellence is above it.
Fio. Were we less perfect,
Yet, being, as we are, an absolute princess,
We, of necessity, must be chaste, wise, fair,
By our prerogative. Yet all these fail
To move where I would have them. How received
Count Sanazarro the rich scarf I sent him
For his last visit?
Cal. With much reverence;
I dare not say affection. He expressed
More ceremony, in his humble thanks,
Than feeling of the favour; and appeared
Wilfully ignorant, in my opinion,
Of what it did invite him to.
Fio. No matter;

He's blind with too much light. Have you not heard
Of any private mistress he's engaged to?
Cal. Not any; and this does amaze me, madam,
That he, a soldier, one that drinks rich wines,
Feeds high, and promises as much as Venus
Could wish to find from Mars, should, in his manners,
Be so averse to women.
Fio. Troth, I know not;
He's man enough; and, if he has a haunt,
He preys far off, like a subtle fox.
Cal. And that way
I do suspect him. For I learnt last night,
(When the great duke went to rest) attended by
One private follower, he took horse; but whither
He's rid, or to what end, I cannot guess at,
But I will find it out.
Fio. Do, faithful servant;

Enter CALANDRINO.

We would not be abused. Who have we here?
Cal. How the fool stares!
Fio. And looks as if he were
Conning his neck-verse.
Caland. If I now prove perfect
In my A. B. C. of courtship, Calandrino
Is made for ever. I am sent—let me see,
On a how d'ye, as they call it.
Cal. What would'st thou say?
Caland. Let me see my notes. These are her lodgings. Well.
Cal. Art thou an ass?
Caland. Peace! thou art a court wag-tail,
[CALANDRINO *still looking on his instructions.*
To interrupt me.
Fio. He has given it you.
Caland. And then say to the illustrious Fi-o-rin-da——
I have it. Which is she?
Cal. Why this, Fop-doodle.
Caland. Leave chattering, bullfinch; you would put me out,
But 'twill not do. Then, after you have made
Your three obeisances to her, kneel and kiss
The skirt of her gown. I am glad it is no worse.
Are you the princess?
Fio. Yes, sir.
Caland. Then stand fair,
(For I am cholerick) and do not nip
A hopeful blossom. Out again. Three low
Obeisances—— [*Reads.*
Fio. I am ready.
Caland. I come on, then.
Cal. With much formality.
Caland. Hum! One, two, three.
[*Makes antic curtesies.*
Thus far I am right. Now for the last. O rare!
She is perfumed all over! Sure great women,
Instead of little dogs, are privileged
To carry musk-cats.
Fio. Now the ceremony
Is passed, what is the substance?
Caland. I'll peruse
My instructions, and then tell you. Her skirt kissed,
Inform her highness, that your lord——
Cal. Who's that?
Caland. Prince Giovanni, who entreats your grace,
That he, with your good favour, may have leave
To present his service to you. I think I have nicked it,
For a courtier of the first form.
Fio. To my wonder.

Enter GIOVANNI *and a Gentleman.*

Return unto the prince. But he prevents
My answer. Calaminta, take him off;
And, for the neat delivery of his message,
Give him ten ducats; such rare parts as yours
Are to be cherished.
Caland. We will share: I know
It is the custom of the court, when ten
Are promised, five is fair. Fie! fie! the princess
Shall never know it, so you dispatch me quickly,
And bid me not come to-morrow.
Cal. Very good, sir.
[*Exeunt* CALANDRINO *and* CALAMINTA.
Giov. Pray you, friend,
Inform the duke I am putting into act
What he commanded.
Gent. I am proud to be employed, sir.
[*Exit gentleman.*
Giov. Madam, that, without warrant, I presume
To 'trench upon your privacies, may argue
Rudeness of manners: but the free access
Your princely courtesy vouchsafes to all
That come to pay their services, gives me hope
To find a gracious pardon.
Fio. If you please, not
To make that an offence in your construction,
Which I receive as a large favour from you,
There needs not this apology.
Giov. You continue,
As you were ever, the greatest mistress of
Fair entertainment.
Fio. You are, sir, the master,
And in the country have learnt to out-do
All that in court is practised. But why should we
Talk at such a distance? You are welcome, sir.
We have been more familiar; and since
You will impose the province you should govern,
Of boldness on me, give me leave to say
You are too punctual. Sit, sir, and discourse
As we were used.
Giov. Your excellence knows so well
How to command, that I can never err
When I obey you.

Fio. Nay, no more of this.
You shall o'ercome; no more, I pray you, sir.
And what delights—pray you, be liberal
In your relation—hath the country life
Afforded you?
Giov. All pleasures, gracious madam,
But the happiness to converse with your sweet virtues.
I had a grave instructor, and my hours,
Designed to serious studies, yielded me
Pleasure with profit, in the knowledge of
What before I was ignorant in; the signior
Carolo de Charomonte being skilful
To guide me through the labyrinth of wild passions,
That laboured to imprison my free soul,
A slave to vicious sloth.
Fio. You speak him well.
Giov. But short of his deserts. Then, for the time
Of recreation, I was allowed
(Against the form followed by jealous parents
In Italy) full liberty to partake
His daughter's sweet society. She's a virgin,
Happy in all endowments which a poet
Could fancy in his mistress; being herself
A school of goodness, where chaste maids may learn,
Without the aids of foreign principles,
By the example of her life and pureness,
To be, as she is, excellent. I but give you
A brief epitome of her virtues, which,
Dilated on at large, and to their merit,
Would make an ample story.
Fio. Your whole age,
So spent with such a father, and a daughter,
Could not be tedious to you.
Giov. True, great princess:
And now, since you have pleased to grant the hearing
Of my time's expence in the country, give me leave
To entreat the favour, to be made acquainted
What service, or what objects in the court
Have, in your excellence's acceptance, proved
Most gracious to you?
Fio. I'll meet your demand,
And make a plain discovery. The duke's care
For my estate and person, holds the first
And choicest place; then, the respect the courtiers
Pay gladly to me, not to be contemned.
But that which raised in me the most delight,
For I'm a friend to valour, was to hear
The noble actions truly reported
Of the brave count Sanazarro. I profess,
When it hath been, and fervently, delivered,
How boldly in the horror of a fight,
Covered with fire and smoke, and, as if nature
Had lent him wings, like lightning he hath fallen
Upon the Turkish gallies, I have heard it
With a kind of pleasure, which hath whispered to me
This worthy must be cherished.
Giov. 'Twas a bounty
You never can repent.
Fio. I glory in it.
And when he did return, but still with conquest,
His armour off, not young Antinous
Appeared more courtly; all the graces that
Render a man's society dear to ladies,
Like pages waiting on him; and it does
Work strangely on me.
Giov. To divert your thoughts,
Though they are fixed upon a noble subject,
I am a suitor to you.
Fio. You will ask,
I do presume, what I may grant, and then
It must not be denied.
Giov. It is a favour,
For which, I hope, your excellence will thank me,
Fio. Nay, without circumstance.
Giov. That you would please
To take occasion to move the duke,
That you, with his allowance, may command
This matchless virgin, Lydia, of whom
I cannot speak too much, to wait upon you.
She's such a one, upon the forfeit of
Your good opinion of me, that will not
Be a blemish to your train.
Fio. 'Tis rank, he loves her:
But I will fit him with a suit. [*Aside.*] I pause not,
As if it bred or doubt or scruple in me,
To do what you desire; for I'll effect it,
And make use of a fair and fit occasion.
Yet, in return, I ask a boon of you,
And hope to find you, in your grant to me,
As I have been to you.
Giov. Command me, madam.
Fio. 'Tis near allied to yours. That you would be
A suitor to the duke, not to expose,
After so many trials of his faith,
The noble Sanazarro to all dangers,
As if he were a wall, to stand the fury
Of a perpetual battery: But now,
To grant him, after his long labours, rest
And liberty to live in court; his arms,
And his victorious sword and shield hung up
For monuments.
Giov. Hum! I'll embrace, fair princess,

Enter COZIMO.

The soonest opportunity. The duke!
Coz. Nay, blush not; we smile on your privacy,
And come not to disturb you. You are equals,
And, without prejudice to either's honour,
May make a mutual change of love and courtship,
Till you are made one, and with holy rites;
And we give suffrage to it.
Giov. You are gracious.
Coz. To ourself in this. But now break off:
Too much

Taken at once of the most curious viands,
Dulls the sharp edge of appetite. We are now
For other sports, in which our pleasure is,
That you should keep us company.
Fior. We attend you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

BERNARDO, CAUPONI, PETRUCHIO.

Bern. Is my lord stirring?
Caup. No, he's fast.
Pet. Let us take, then,
Our morning draught. Such as eat store of beef,
Mutton, and capons, may preserve their healths
With that thin composition called small beer,
As 'tis said they do in England. But Italians,
That think, when they have supped upon an olive,
A root, or bunch of raisins, 'tis a feast,
Must kill those crudities, rising from cold herbs,
With hot and lusty wines.
Caup. A happiness
Those tramontanes ne'er tasted.
Bern. Have they not
Store of wine there?
Caup. Yes, and drink more in two hours,
Than the Dutchman or the Dane in four and twenty.
Pet. But what is't? French trash, made of rotten grapes,
And dregs and lees of Spain, with Welch metheglin,
A drench to kill a horse; but this pure nectar,
Being proper to our climate, is too fine
To brook the roughness of the sea. The spirit
Of this begets in us quick apprehensions,
And active executions; whereas their
Gross feeding makes their understanding like it.
They can fight, and that's their all. [*They drink.*

Enter SANAZARRO, *and a Servant.*

San. Security
Dwells about this house, I think; the gate's wide open,
And not a servant stirring. See the horses
Set up, and clothed.
Serv. I shall, sir.
San. I'll make bold
To press a little further.
Bern. Who is this?
Count Sanazarro!
Pet. Yes, I know him. Quickly
Remove the flaggon.
San. A good day to you, friends!
Nay, do not conceal your physick; I approve it,
And, if you please, will be a patient with you.
Pet. My noble lord—— [*Drinks.*
San. A health to yours. Well done!
I see you love yourselves. And I commend you;
'Tis the best wisdom.
Pet. May it please your honour
To walk a turn in the gallery, I'll acquaint
My lord with your being here.
[*Exit* PETRUCHIO.
San. Tell him, I come
For a visit only. 'Tis a handsome pile this.
[*Exit* SANAZARRO.
Caup. Why, here is a brave fellow, and a right one;
Nor wealth nor greatness makes him proud.
Bern. There are
Too few of them; for most of our new courtiers,
Whose fathers were familiar with the prices
Of oil and corn, with when and where to vent them,
And left their heirs rich from their knowledge that way,
Like gourds shot up in a night, disdain to speak
But to cloth of tissue.

Enter CAROLO CHAROMONTE *in a night gown,* PETRUCHIO *following.*

Car. Stand, you prating knaves,
When such a guest is under my roof! See all
The rooms perfumed. This is the man that carries
The sway and swing of the court; and I had rather
Preserve him mine, with honest offices, than——
But I'll make no comparisons. Bid my daughter
Trim herself up to the height; I know this courtier
Must have a smack at her; and, perhaps, by his place,
Expects to wriggle further. If he does,
I shall deceive his hopes; For I'll not taint
My honour for the dukedom. Which way went he?
Caup. To the round gallery.
Car. I will entertain him
As fits his worth and quality, but no farther.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter SANAZARRO.

San. I cannot apprehend, yet I have argued
All ways I can imagine, for what reasons
The great duke does employ me hither; and,
What does increase the miracle, I must render
A strict and true account, at my return,
Of Lydia, this lord's daughter, and describe
In what she's excellent, and where defective.
'Tis a hard task; he that will undergo
To make a judgment of a woman's beauty,
And see through all her plasterings and paintings,
Had need of Lynceus' eyes, and, with more ease,
May look, like him, through nine mud-walls, than make
A true discovery of her. But the intents
And secrets of my prince's heart must be
Served, and not searched into.

Enter CAROLO CHAROMONTE.

Car. Most noble sir,
Excuse my age, subject to ease and sloth,
That with no greater speed I have presented
My service with your welcome.
San. 'Tis more fit
That I should ask your pardon, for disturbing
Your rest at this unseasonable hour.
But my occasions carrying me so near
Your hospitable house, my stay being short, too;
Your goodness, and the name of friend, which you
Are pleased to grace me with, gave me assurance
A visit would not offend.
Car. Offend, my lord!
I feel myself much younger for the favour.
How is it with our gracious master?
San. He, sir,
Holds still his wonted greatness, and confesses
Himself your debtor for your love and care
To the prince Giovanni, and had sent
Particular thanks by me, had his grace known
The quick dispatch of what I was designed to
Would have licensed me to see you.
Car. I am rich
In his acknowledgment.
San. Sir, I have heard
Your happiness in a daughter.
Car. Sits the wind there? [*Aside.*
San. Fame gives her out for a rare masterpiece.
Car. 'Tis a plain village girl, sir, but obedient;
That's her best beauty, sir.
San. Let my desire
To see her find a fair construction from you:
I bring no loose thought with me.
Car. You are that way,
My lord, free from suspicion. Her own manners,
Without an imposition from me,

Enter LYDIA *and* PETRONELLA.

I hope, will prompt her to it. As she is,
She come's to make a tender of that service
Which she stands bound to pay.
San. With your fair leave,
I make bold to salute you.
Lyd. Sir, you have it.
Pet. I am her gentlewoman, will not he kiss me, too?
This is coarse, 'faith. [*Aside.*
Car. How he falls off!
Lyd. My lord, though silence best becomes a maid,
And to be curious to know but what
Concerns myself, and with becoming distance,
May argue me of boldness, I must borrow
So much of modesty, as to enquire
Prince Giovanni's health.
San. He cannot want
What you are pleased to wish him.
Lyd. Would 'twere so!
And then there is no blessing that can make
A hopeful, and a noble prince complete,
But should fall on him. O! he was our north-star,
The light and pleasure of our eyes.
San. Where am I?
I feel myself another thing: Can charms
Be writ on such pure rubies? Her lips melt
As soon as touched! not those smooth gales that glide
O'er happy Arabia, or rich Sabæa,
Creating, in their passage, gums and spices,
Can serve for a weak simile to express
The sweetness of her breath. Such a brave stature
Homer bestowed on Pallas, every limb
Proportioned to it.
Car. This is strange, my lord!
San. I crave your pardon, and yours, matchless maid:
For such I must report you.
Pet. There's no notice
Taken all this while of me. [*Aside.*
San. And I must add,
If your discourse and reason parallel
The rareness of your more than human form,
You are a wonder.
Car. Pray you, my lord, make trial:
She can speak, I can assure you; and, that my presence
May not take from her freedom, I will leave you:
For know, my lord, my confidence dares trust her
Where, and with whom, she pleases. If he be
Taken the right way with her, I cannot fancy
A better match; and for false play, I know
The tricks, and can discern them. Petronella!
Pet. Yes, my good lord.
Car. I have employment for you.
[*Exeunt* CAROLO *and* PETRONELLA.
Lyd. What is your will, sir?
San. Madam, you are so large a theme to treat of,
And every grace about you offers to me
Such copiousness of language, that I stand
Doubtful which first to touch at. If I err,
As in my choice I may, let me entreat you,
Before I do offend, to sign my pardon;
Let this, the emblem of your innocence,
Give me assurance.
Lyd. My hand joined to yours,
Without this superstition, confirms it.
Nor need I fear you will dwell long upon me;
The barrenness of the subject yielding nothing
That rhetoric, with all her tropes and figures,
Can amplify. Yet, since you are resolved
To prove yourself a courtier in my praise,
As I'm a woman (and you men affirm
Our sex loves to be flattered) I'll endure it.
[CAROLO *above*

Now, when you please, begin.
San. Such Læda's breasts were,
[*Turns from her.*
Down pillows styled by Jove: And their pure whiteness
Shames the swan's down, or snow. No heat of lust
Swells up her azure veins. And yet I feel
That this chaste ice, but touched, fans fire in me.
Lyd. You need not, noble sir, be thus transported,
Or trouble your invention to express
Your thought of me: The plainest phrase and language
That you can use, will be too high a strain
For such an humble theme.
San. If the great duke
Made this his end to try my constant temper,
Though I am vanquished, 'tis his fault, not mine;
For I am flesh and blood, and have affections
Like other men. Who can behold the temples,
Or holy altars, but the objects work
Devotion in him? And I may as well
Walk over burning iron with bare feet,
And be unscorched, as look upon this beauty
Without desire, and that desire pursued, too,
Till it be quenched with the enjoying those
Delights, which to atchieve, danger is nothing,
And loyalty but a word. [*Aside.*
Lyd. I ne'er was proud;
Nor can I find I'm guilty of a thought
Deserving this neglect and strangeness from you.
Nor am I amorous——
San. Suppose his greatness
Loves her himself, why makes he choice of me
To be his agent? It is tyranny
To call one, pinched with hunger, to a feast,
And at that instant cruelly deny him
To taste of what he sees. Allegiance,
Tempted too far, is like the trial of
A good sword on an anvil: as that often
Flies in pieces without service to the owner;
So trust, enforced too far, proves treachery,
And is too late repented. [*Aside.*
Lyd. Pray you, sir,
Or license me to leave you, or deliver
The reasons which invite you to command
My tedious waiting on you.
Car. As I live,
I know not what to think on't. Is't his pride,
Or his simplicity?
San. Whither have my thoughts
Carried me from myself? In this my dulness,
I've lost an opportunity. [*He turns to her.*
Lyd. 'Tis true, [*She falls off.*
I was not bred in court, nor live a star there;
Nor shine in rich embroideries and pearl,
As they, that are the mistresses of great fortunes,
Are every day adorned with.
San. Will you vouchsafe
Your ear, sweet lady?
Lyd. Yet I may be bold,
For my integrity and fame, to rank
With such as are more glorious. Though I never
Did injury, yet I am sensible
When I'm contemned, and scorned.
San. Will you please to hear me?
Lyd. O the difference of natures! Giovanni,
A prince in expectation, when he lived here,
Stole courtesy from Heaven, and would not, to
The meanest servant in my father's house,
Have kept such distance.
San. Pray you, do not think me
Unworthy of your ear: It was your beauty
That turned me statue.—I can speak, fair lady.
Lyd. And I can hear. The harshness of your courtship
Cannot corrupt my courtesy.
San. Will you hear me,
If I speak of love?
Lyd. Provided you be modest;
I were uncivil, else.
Car. They are come to parley:
I must observe this nearer. [CAROLO *descends.*
San. You're a rare one,
And such (but that my haste commands me hence)
I could converse with ever. Will you grace me
With leave to visit you again?
Lyd. So you,
At your return to court, do me the favour
To make a tender of my humble service
To the prince Giovanni.
San. Ever touching
Upon that string? And will you give me hope
Of future happiness?
Lyd. That, as I shall find you.
The fort, that's yielded at the first assault,
Is hardly worth the taking.

Enter CAROLO.

Car. O! they are at it.
San. She is a magazine of all perfection,
And 'tis death to part from her; yet I must——
[*Aside*
A parting kiss, fair maid.
Lyd. That custom grants you.
Car. A homely breakfast does attend your lordship,
Such as the place affords.
San. No; I have feasted
Already here. My thanks, and so I leave you:
I will see you again. Till this unhappy hour
I ne'er was lost; and what to do, or say,
I have not yet determined. [*Exit* SANAZARRO.
Car. Gone so abruptly?
'Tis very strange!
Lyd. Under your favour, sir,
His coming hither was to little purpose
For any thing I heard from him.
Car. Take heed, Lydia!
I do advise you with a father's love,
And tenderness of your honour; as I would not
Have you coarse and harsh in giving entertainment,

So, by no means be credulous. For great men,
Till they have gained their ends, are giants in
Their promises; but, those obtained, weak pigmies
In their performance. And it is a maxim
Allowed among them, so they may deceive,
They may swear any thing; for the queen of love,
As they hold constantly, does never punish,
But smile at lovers' perjuries.—Yet be wise, too;
And, when you are sued to in a noble way,
Be neither nice nor scrupulous.

Lyd. All you speak, sir,
I hear as oracles; nor will digress
From your directions.

Car. So shall you keep
Your fame untainted.

Lyd. As I would my life, sir. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter SANAZARRO *and Servant.*

San. Leave the horses with my grooms; but be you careful
With your best diligence and speed, to find out
The prince, and humbly in my name entreat him
I may exchange some private conference with him,
Before the great duke know of my arrival.

Serv. I haste, my lord.

San. Here I'll attend his coming;
And see you keep yourself, as much as may be,
Concealed from all men else.

Serv. To serve your lordship,
I wish I were invisible. [*Exit servant.*

San. I am driven
Into a desperate straight, and cannot steer
A middle course; and, of the two extremes
Which I must make election of, I know not
Which is more full of horror. Never servant
Stood more engaged to a magnificent master,
Than I to Cozimo. And all those honours
And glories, by his grace conferred upon me,
Or by my prosperous services deserved,
If now I should deceive his trust, and make
A shipwreck of my loyalty, are ruined.
And, on the other side, if I discover
Lydia's divine perfections, all my hopes
In her are sunk, never to be buoyed up:
For 'tis impossible, but as soon as seen,
She must with adoration be sued to.
A hermit at his beads, but looking on her,
Or the cold cynic, whom Corinthian Lais,
Not moved with her lust's blandishments, called a stone,
At this object would take fire. Nor is the duke
Such an Hippolitus, but that this Phædra,
But seen, must force him to forsake the groves
And Dian's huntmanship, proud to serve under
Venus' soft ensigns. No, there is no way
For me to hope fruition of my ends,
But to conceal her beauties—and how that
May be effected, is as hard a task
As with a veil to cover the sun's beams,
Or comfortable light. Three years the prince
Lived in her company, and Contarino,
The secretary, hath possessed the duke
What a rare piece she is.—But he's my creature,
And may with ease be frighted to deny
What he hath said. And, if my long experience,
With some strong reasons I have thought upon,
Cannot o'erreach a youth, my practice yields me
But little profit.

Enter GIOVANNI *and the Servant.*

Giov. You are well returned, sir.

San. Leave us. When that your grace shall know the motives
That forced me to invite you to this trouble,
You will excuse my manners. [*Exit servant.*

Giov. Sir, there needs not
This circumstance between us. You are ever
My noble friend.

San. You shall have further cause
To assure you of my faith and zeal to serve you.
And, when I have committed to your trust
(Presuming still on your retentive silence)
A secret of no less importance than
My honour,' nay, my head, it will confirm
What value you hold with me.

Giov. Pray you believe, sir,
What you deliver to me, shall be locked up
In a strong cabinet, of which you yourself
Shall keep the key. For here I pawn my honour,
(Which is the best security I can give yet)
It shall not be discovered.

San. This assurance
Is more than I with modesty could demand
From such a paymaster; but I must be sudden,
And therefore to the purpose. Can your excellence,
In your imagination, conceive
On what design, or whither, the duke's will
Commanded me hence last night?

Giov. No, I assure you;
And it had been a rudeness to enquire
Of that I was not called to.

San. Grant me hearing,
And I will make you understand
It only did concern you.

Giov. Me, my lord?

San. You, in your present state, and future fortunes;
For both lie at the stake.

Giov. You much amaze me!
Pray you, resolve this riddle.

San. You know the duke,
If he die issueless (as yet he is)
Determines you his heir.

Giov. It hath pleased his highness
Oft to profess so much.

San. But say he should

Be won to prove a second wife, on whom
He may beget a son, how, in a moment,
Will all those glorious expectations, which
Render you reverenced and remarkable,
Be in a moment blasted, howe'er you are
His much-beloved sister's son?

Giov. I must bear it
With patience, and in me it is a duty
That I was born with; and 'twere much unfit
For the receiver of a benefit
To offer, for his own ends, to prescribe
Laws to the giver's pleasure.

San. Sweetly answered,
And like your noble self. This your rare temper
So wins upon me, that I would not live
(If that by honest arts I can prevent it)
To see your hopes made frustrate. And but think
How you shall be transformed from what you are,
Should this (as Heaven avert it) ever happen;
It must disturb your peace. For whereas now,
Being, as you are, received for the heir apparent,
You are no sooner seen, but wondered at;
The signiors making it a business to
Enquire how you have slept; and as you walk
The streets of Florence, the glad multitude,
In throngs, press but to see you, and with joy
The father, pointing with his finger, tells
His son, this is the prince, the hopeful prince,
That must hereafter rule, and you obey him.
Great ladies beg your picture, and make love
To that, despairing to enjoy the substance;
And, but the last night, when 'twas only rumoured
That you were come to court (as if you had
By sea past hither from another world)
What general shouts and acclamations followed!
The bells rang loud, the bonfires blazed, and such
As loved not wine, carousing to your health,
Were drunk, and blushed not at it: And is this
A happiness to part with?

Giov. I allow these
As flourishes of fortune, with which princes
Are often soothed, but never yet esteemed them
For real blessings.

San. Yet all these were paid
To what you may be, not to what you are;
For if the great duke but shew to his servants
A son of his own, you shall, like one obscure,
Pass unregarded.

Giov. I confess, command
Is not to be contemned; and if my fate
Appoint me to it, as I may, I'll bear it
With willing shoulders. But, my lord, as yet,
You've told me of a danger coming towards me,
But have not named it.

San. That is soon delivered.
Great Cozimo, your uncle, as I more
Than guess (for 'tis no frivolous circumstance
That does persuade my judgment to believe it)
Purposes to be married.

Giov. Married, sir!
With whom, and on what terms? pray you, instruct me.

San. With the fair Lydia.

Giov. Lydia!

San. The daughter
Of signior Charomonte.

Giov. Pardon me,
Though I appear incredulous; for, on
My knowledge, he ne'er saw her.

San. That is granted:
But Contarino hath so sung her praises,
And given her out for such a master-piece,
That he's transported with it, sir. And love
Steals sometimes through the ear, into the heart,
As well as by the eye. The duke no sooner
Heard her described, but I was sent in post
To see her, and return my judgment of her.

Giov. And what's your censure?

San. 'Tis a pretty creature.

Giov. She's very fair.

San. Yes, yes, I have seen worse faces.

Giov. Her limbs are neatly formed.

San. She hath a waist
Indeed, sized to love's wish.

Giov. A delicate hand, too.

San. Then for a leg and foot——

Giov. And there I leave you,
For I presumed no farther.

San. As she is, sir,
I know she wants no gracious part that may
Allure the duke; and if he only see her,
She is his own. He will not be denied,
And then you're lost. Yet, if you'll second me,
(As you have reason, for it most concerns you)
I can prevent all yet.

Giov. I would you could,
A noble way.

San. I will cry down her beauties,
Especially the beauties of her mind,
As much as Contarino hath advanced them;
And this, I hope, will breed forgetfulness,
And kill affection in him. But you must
Join with me in my report, if you be questioned.

Giov. I never told a lie yet, and I hold it
In some degree blasphemous, to dispraise
What's worthy admiration. Yet, for once,
I will dispraise a little, and not vary
From your relation.

San. Be constant in it.

Enter ALPHONSO.

Alph. My lord, the duke hath seen your man and wonders

Enter COZIMO, CONTARINO, *and attendants.*

You come not to him. See, if his desire
To have conference with you, hath not brought
Him hither in his own person.

Coz. They are comely coursers,
And promise swiftness.

Con. They are, of my knowledge,
Of the best race in Naples.

Coz. You are, nephew,
As I hear, an excellent horseman, and we like it.
'Tis a fair grace in a prince. Pray you, make trial
Of their strength and speed, and, if you think them fit
For your employment, with a liberal hand
Reward the gentleman, that did present them
From the viceroy of Naples.
Giov. I will use
My best endeavour, sir.
[*Exeunt* GIOVANNI, ALPHONSO, *and* HIPPOLITO.
Coz. Wait on my nephew.
Nay, stay you, Contarino; be within call;
It may be we shall use you. You have rode hard, sir,
And we thank you for it. Every minute seems
Irksome and tedious to us, till you have
Made your discovery. Say, friend, have you seen
This phœnix of our age?
San. I have seen a maid, sir;
But, if that I have judgment, no such wonder
As she was delivered to you.
Coz. This is strange!
San. But certain truth. It may be, she was looked on
With admiration in the country, sir:
But, if compared with many in your court,
She would appear but ordinary.
Coz. Contarino
Reports her otherwise.
San. Such as ne'er saw swans,
May think crows beautiful.
Coz. How is her behaviour?
San. 'Tis like the place she lives in.
Coz. How her wit,
Discourse, and entertainment?
San. Very coarse;
I would not willingly say poor and rude:
But, had she all the beauties of fair women,
The dulness of her soul would fright me from her.
Coz. You are curious, sir. I know not what to think on't.
Contarino!
Con. Sir.
Coz. Where was thy judgment, man,
To extol a virgin Samazarro tells me
Is nearer to deformity?
San. I saw her,
And curiously perused her; and I wonder
That she, that did appear to me, that know
What beauty is, not worthy the observing,
Should so transport you.
Con. 'Troth, my lord, I thought then——
Coz. Thought? didst thou not affirm it?
Con. I confess, sir,
I did believe so then; but, now I hear
My lord's opinion to the contrary,
I am of another faith; for 'tis not fit
That I should contradict him. I am dim, sir;
But he's sharp-sighted.
San. This is to my wish. [*Aside.*
Coz. We know not what to think of this; yet would not

Enter GIOVANNI, HIPPOLITO, *and* LODOVICO.

Determine rashly of it. How do you like
My nephew's horsemanship?
Hip. In my judgment, sir,
It is exact and rare.
Alph. And, to my fancy,
He did present great Alexander, mounted
On his Bucephalus.
Coz. You are right courtiers,
And know it is your duty to cry up
All actions of a prince.
San. Do not betray
Yourself; you're safe; I've done my part.
[*Aside to* GIOVANNI.
Giov. I thank you;
Nor will I fail.
Coz. What's your opinion, nephew,
Of the horses?
Giov. Two of them are, in my judgment,
The best I ever backed: I mean the roan, sir,
And the brown bay; but for the chesnut coloured,
Though he be full of metal, hot, and fiery,
He treads weak in his pasterns.
Coz. So, come nearer;
This exercise hath put you into a sweat;
Take this, and dry it: and now I command you
To tell me truly, what's your censure of
Charomonte's daughter, Lydia?
Giov. I am, sir,
A novice in my judgment of a lady;
But, such as it is, your grace shall have it freely.
I would not speak ill of her, and am sorry,
If I keep myself a friend to truth, I cannot
Report her as I would, so much I owe
Her reverend father: but I'll give you, sir,
As near as I can, her character in little.
She's of a goodly stature, and her limbs
Not disproportioned. For her face, it is
Far from deformity; yet they flatter her
That style it excellent. Her manners are
Simple and innocent; but her discourse
And wit deserve my pity, more than praise.
At the best, my lord, she is a handsome picture:
And, that said, all is spoken.
Coz. I believe you;
I ne'er yet found you false.
Giov. Nor ever shall, sir.——
Forgive me, matchless Lydia! too much love,
And jealous fear to lose thee, do compel me,
Against my will, my reason, and my knowledge,
To be a poor detracter of that beauty,
Which fluent Ovid, if he lived again,
Would want words to express. [*Aside.*

Coz. Pray you, make choice of
The richest of our furniture for these horses;
[*To* SANAZARRO.
And take my nephew with you; we, in this,
Will follow his directions.
Giov. Could I find now
The princess Fiorinda, and persuade her
To be silent in the suit that I moved to her,
All were secure.
San. In that, my lord, I'll aid you.
Coz. We will be private; leave us. All my studies [*Exeunt all but* COZIMO.
And serious meditations aim no farther
Than this young man's good. He was my sister's son,
And she was such a sister, when she lived,
I could not prize too much; nor can I better
Make known how dear I hold her memory,
Than in my cherishing the only issue
Which she hath left behind her. Who's that?

Enter FIORINDA.

Fio. Sir.
Coz. My fair charge, you are welcome to us.
Fio. I have found it, sir.
Coz. All things go well in Urbin?
Fio. Your gracious care to me, an orphan, frees me
From all suspicion that my jealous fears
Can drive into my fancy.
Coz. The next summer
In our own person, we will bring you thither,
And seat you in your own.
Fio. When you think fit, sir.
But, in the mean time, with your highness' pardon,
I am a suitor to you.
Coz. Name it, madam,
With confidence to obtain it.
Fio. That you would please
To lay a strict command on Charomonte,
To bring his daughter Lydia to the court:
And, pray you, think, sir, that 'tis not my purpose
To employ her as a servant, but to use her
As a most wished companion.
Coz. Ha! your reason?
Fio. The hopeful prince, your nephew, sir, hath given her
To me for such an abstract of perfection
In all that can be wished for in a virgin,
As beauty, music, ravishing discourse,
Quickness of apprehension, with choice manners
And learning, too, not usual with women,
That I am much ambitious (though I shall
Appear but as a foil to set her off)
To be from her instructed, and supplied
In what I am defective.
Coz. Did my nephew
Seriously deliver this?
Fior. I assure your grace,
With zeal and vehemence; and even when,
With his best words, he strived to set her forth,
Though the rare subject made him eloquent,
He would complain, all he could say came short
Of her deservings.
Coz. Pray you, have patience.
This was strangely carried.—Ha! are we trifled with?
Dare they do this? Is Cozimo's fury, that
Of late was terrible, grown contemptible?
Well; we will clear our brows, and undermine
Their secret works, though they have digged like moles,
And crush them with the tempest of my wrath
When I appear most calm; he is unfit
To command others, that knows not to use it,
And with all rigour. Yet my stern looks shall not
Discover my intents; for I will strike
When I begin to frown. [*Aside.*] You are the mistress
Of that you did demand.
Fior. I thank your highness;
But speed in the performance of the grant
Doubles the favour, sir.
Coz. You shall possess it sooner than you expect;
Only be pleased to be ready when my secretary
Waits upon you, to take the fresh air. My nephew!
And my bosom friend, so to cheat me? 'Tis not fair! [*Aside.*

Enter GIOVANNI *and* SANAZARRO.

San. Where should this princess be? Not in her lodgings,
Nor in the private walks, her own retreat,
Which she so much frequented?
Giov. By my life,
She's with the duke; and I much more than fear,
Her forwardness to prefer my suit hath ruined
What, with such care, we built up.
Coz. Have you furnished
Those coursers, as we willed you?
San. There's no sign
Of anger in his looks. [*Aside.*
Giov. They are complete, sir.
Coz. 'Tis well. To your rest. Soft sleeps wait on you, madam;
To-morrow, with the rising of sun,
Be ready to ride with us. They with more safety
Had trod on fork-tongued adders, than provoked me. [*Exit* COZIMO.
Fior. I come not to be thanked, sir, for the speedy
Performance of my promise touching Lydia;
It is effected.
San. We are undone.
Fior. The duke
No sooner heard me, with my best of language,

Describe her excellencies, as you taught me,
But he confirmed it. You look sad, as if
You wished it were undone.
Giov. No, gracious madam,
I am your servant for it.
Fior. Be you as careful
For what I moved to you. Count Sanazarro,
Now I perceive you honour me, in vouchsafing
To wear so slight a favour.
San. 'Tis a grace
I am unworthy of.
Fior. You merit more,
In prizing so a trifle. Take this diamond;
I'll second what I have begun: for, know,
Your valour hath so won upon me, that
'Tis not to be resisted. I have said, sir,
And leave you to interpret it. [*Exit* FIORINDA.
San. This, to me,
Is wormwood. 'Tis apparent we are taken
In our own noose.—What's to be done?
Giov. I know not.
And 'tis a punishment justly fallen upon me
For leaving Truth, a constant mistress, that
Ever protects her servants, to become
A slave to lies and falsehood. What excuse
Can we make to the duke? What mercy hope for,
Our packing being laid open?
San. 'Tis not to
Be questioned, but this purposed journey is
To see fair Lydia.
Giov. And to divert him
Impossible.
San. There's now no looking backward.
Giov. And which way to go on with safety, not
To be imagined.
San. Give me leave. I have
An embryo in my brain, which, I despair not,
May be brought to form and fashion, provided
You will be open-breasted.
Giov. 'Tis no time now,
Our dangers being equal, to conceal
A thought from you.
San. What power hold you o'er Lydia?
Do you think, that, with some hazard of her life,
She would prevent your ruin?
Giov. I presume so:
If, in the undertaking it, she stray not
From what becomes her innocence; and to that
'Tis far from me to press her; I myself
Will rather suffer.
San. 'Tis enough; this night
Write to her by your servant Calandrino,
As I shall give direction; my man

Enter CALANDRINO.

Shall bear him company. See, sir, to my wish
He does appear, but much transformed from what
He was when he came hither.
Cal. I confess
I am not very wise; and yet I find
A fool, so he be parcel knave, in court
May flourish and grow rich.
Giov. Calandrino!
Cal. Peace!
I'm in contemplation.
Giov. Don't you know me?
Cal. I tell thee, no; on forfeit of my place,
I must not know myself, much less my father,
But by petition: that petition lined, too,
With golden birds, that sing to the tune of profit,
Or I am deaf.
Giov. But you've your sense of feeling.
[*Offering to kick him.*
San. Nay, pray you, forbear.
Cal. I have all that's requisite
To the making up of a signior. My spruce ruff,
My hooded cloak, long stocking, and paned hose,
My case of tooth-picks, and my silver fork,
To convey an olive neatly to my mouth;
And, what is all in all, my pockets ring
A golden peal. O, that the peasants in the country,
My quondam fellows, but saw me as I am!
How they would admire and worship me!
Giov. As they shall;
For instantly you must thither.
Cal. My grand signior,
Vouchsafe a bezolus manus, and a cringe
Of the last edition.
Giov. You must ride post with letters
This night to Lydia.
Cal. An' it please your grace,
Shall I use my coach, or foot-cloth mule?
San. You widgeon,
You are to make all speed; think not of pomp.
Giov. Follow for your instructions, sirrah!
Cal. I have one suit to you,
My good lord.
San. What is it?
Cal. That you would give me
A subtle court-charm, to defend me from
The infectious air of the country.
Giov. What's the reason?
Cal. Why, as this court-air taught me knavish wit,
By which I am grown rich; if that again
Should turn me fool and honest—vain hopes, farewell,
For I must die a beggar.
San. Go to, sirrah!
You'll be whipped for this.
Giov. Leave fooling, and attend us. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter CAROLO CHAROMONTE, *and* LYDIA.

Car. DAUGHTER, I have observed, since the prince left us,
Whose absence I mourn with you, and the visit
Count Sannazarro gave us, you have nourished
Sad and retired thoughts, and parted with
That freedom and alacrity of spirit,
With which you used to cheer me.
Lyd. For the count, sir,
All thought of him does with his person die;
But, I confess ingenuously, I cannot
So soon forget the choice and chaste delights
The courteous conversation of the prince
(And without stain, I hope) afforded me,
When he made this house a court.
Car. It is in us
To keep it so without him. Want we know not,
And all we can complain of (Heaven be praised for it)
Is too much plenty, and we will make use of

Enter Servants.

All lawful pleasures. How now, fellows, when
Shall we have this lusty dance?
Caup. In the afternoon, sir.
'Tis a device, I wis, of my own making,
And such a one, as shall make your signiorship know
I have not been your butler for nothing, but
I've crotchets in my head. We'll trip it tightly,
And make my sad young mistress merry again,
Or I'll forswear the cellar.
Bern. If we had
Our fellow Calandrino here to dance
His part, we were perfect.
Petru. O! he was a rare fellow;
But I fear the court hath spoiled him.
Caup. When I was young,
I could have cut a caper on a pinnacle;
But now I am old and wise. Keep your figure fair,
And follow but the sample I shall set you,
The duke himself will send for us, and laugh at us,
And that were credit.
Lyd. Who have we here?

Enter CALANDRINO.

Cal. I find
What was brawn in the country, in the court grows tender.
The bots on these jolting jades, I am bruised to jelly.
A coach for my money! and that the courtezans know well;
Their riding so makes them last three years longer
Than such as are hackneyed.
Car. Calandrino? 'tis he.
Cal. Now to my postures. Let my hand have the honour
To convey a kiss from my lips to the cover of
Your foot, dear signior.
Car. Fie, you stoop too low, sir.
Cal. The hem of your vestment, lady. Your glove is for princes;
Nay, I have conned my distances.
Lyd. 'Tis most courtly.
Caup. Fellow Calandrino!
Cal. Signior de Cauponi,
Grand botelier of the mansion!
Bern. How is it, man?
[*Claps him on the shoulder.*
Cal. Be not so rustic in your salutations.
Signior Bernardo, master of the accounts!
Signior Petruchio! May you long continue
Your function in the chamber.
Caup. When shall we learn such gambols in our villa?
Lyd. Sure, he's mad.
Car. 'Tis not unlike, for most of such mushrooms are so.
What news at court?
Cal. Basto! They are mysteries,
And not to be revealed. With your favour, signior,
I am in private to confer awhile
With this signiora. But I'll pawn my honour,
That neither my terse language, nor my habit,
Howe'er it may convince, nor my new shrugs,
Shall render her enamoured.
Car. Take your pleasure.
A little of these apish tricks may pass;
Too much is tedious. [*Exit* CAROLO.
Cal. The prince, in this paper,
Presents his service. Nay it is not courtly
To see the seal broke open. So I leave you.
Signiors of the villa, I'll descend to be
Familiar with you.
Caup. Have you forgot to dance?
Cal. No, I am bettered.
Pet. Will you join with us?
Cal. As I like the project.
Let me warm my brains, first, with the richest grape,
And then I'm for you.
Caup. We will want no wine. [*Exeunt.*
Lyd. [*Alone.*] That this comes only from the best of princes,
With a kind of adoration does command me
To entertain it, and the sweet contents,
[*Kissing the letter.*
That are inscribed here by his hand, must be
Much more than musical to me. All the service
Of my life at no part can deserve this favour.
O what a virgin longing I find on me
To unrip the seal, and read it! Yet, to break
What he hath fastened, rashly, may appear

A saucy rudeness in me. I must do it,
(Nor can I, else, learn his commands, or serve them)
But with such reverence, as I would open
Some holy writ, whose grave instructions beat down
Rebellious sins, and teach my better part
How to mount upward. So 'tis done, and I
[*Opens the letter. Reads.*
With eagle's eyes will curiously peruse it.

'Chaste Lydia! The favours are so great
'On me by you conferred, that to entreat
'The least addition to them, in true sense
'May argue me of blushless impudence.
'But, such are my extremes, if you deny
'A farther grace, I must, unpitied, die.
'Haste cuts off circumstance. As you're ad-
'mired
'For beauty, the report of it hath fired
'The duke, my uncle; and, I fear, you'll prove
'Not with a sacred, but unlawful love.
'If he see you, as you are, my hoped-for light
'Is changed into an everlasting night.
'How to prevent it if your goodness find,
'You save two lives, and me you ever bind,
'The honourer of your virtues,
'GIOVANNI.'

Were I more deaf than adders, these sweet charms
Would through my ears find passage to my soul,
And soon enchant it. To save such a prince,
Who would not perish? Virtue in him must suffer,
And piety be forgotten. The duke's lust,
Though it raged more than Tarquin's, shall not reach me.
All quaint inventions of chaste virgins aid me!
My prayers are heard—I have it. The duke ne'er saw me;
Or, if that fail, I am again provided.
[*This spoke as if she studied an evasion.*]
But for the servants! They will take what form
I please to put upon them. Giovanni,
Be safe; thy servant Lydia assures it.
Let mountains of afflictions fall on me,
Their weight is easy, so I set thee free. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Enter COZIMO, GIOVANNI, SANAZARRO, CAROLO, *and Servants.*

San. Are you not tired with travel, sir?
Coz. No, no;
I am fresh and lusty.
Car. This day shall be ever
A holiday to me, that brings my prince
Under my humble roof. [*Weeps.*
Giov. See, sir, my good tutor
Sheds tears for joy.
Coz. Dry them up, Charomonte,
And all to bear the room, while we exchange

Some private words together.
Giov. O my lord,
How grossly have we overshot ourselves!
San. In what, sir?
Giov. In forgetting to acquaint
My guardian with our purpose. All that Lydia
Can do, avails us nothing—if the duke
Find out the truth from him.
San. 'Tis now past help,
And we must stand the hazard—Hope the best, sir!
[*Exeunt* GIOVANNI *and* SANAZARRO.
Car. My loyalty doubted, sir?
Coz. 'Tis more. Thou hast
Abused our trust, and, in a high degree,
Committed treason.
Car. Treason! 'Tis a word
My innocence understands not. Were my breast
Transparent, and my thoughts to be discerned,
Not one spot shall be found to taint the candour
Of my allegiance. And I must be bold
To tell you, sir (for he that knows no guilt
Can know no fear), 'tis tyranny to o'er-charge
An honest man; and such, till now, I've lived;
And such, my lord, I'll die.
Coz. Sir, do not flatter
Yourself with hope, these great and glorious words,
(Which every guilty wretch, as well as you,
That's armed with impudence, can with ease deliver,
And with as full a mouth) can work on us;
Nor shall gay flourishes of language clear
What is, in fact, apparent.
Car. Fact! What fact?
You, that know only what it is, instruct me,
For I am ignorant.
Coz. This, then, sir. We gave up
(On our assurance of your truth and care)
Our nephew Giovanni, nay, our heir
In expectation, to be trained up by you
As did become a prince.
Car. And I discharged it.
Is this the reason?
Coz. Take us with you, sir.
And, in respect we knew his youth was prone
To women, and that, living in our court,
He might make some unworthy choice, before
His weaker judgment was confirmed, we did
Remove him from it; constantly presuming
You, with your best endeavours, rather would
Have quenched those heats in him, than light a torch,
As you have done, to his looseness.
Car. I! my travail
Is ill-requited, sir; for, by my soul,
I was so curious that way, that I granted
Access to none could tempt him, nor did ever
One syllable, or obscene accent, touch
His ear, that might corrupt him.
Coz. No! Why, then,
With your allowance did you give free way

To all familiar privacy, between
My nephew and your daughter? Or why did you
(Had you no other ends in it but our service)
Read to them, and, together, as they had been
Scholars of one form, grammar, rhetoric,
Philosophy, history, and interpret to them
The close temptations of lascivious poets?
Or wherefore (for we still had spies upon you)
Was she still present, when, by your advice,
He was taught the use of his weapon, horsemanship,
Wrestling, nay, swimming, but to fan in her
A hot desire of him? And, then, forsooth,
His exercises ended, covered with
A fair pretence of recreation for him,
When Lydia was instructed in those graces
That add to beauty, he brought to admire her,
Must hear her sing, while to her voice, her hand
Made ravishing music; and, this applauded, dance
A light levalto with her?

Car. Have you ended
All you can charge me with?

Coz. Nor stopped you there,
But they must, unattended, walk into
The silent groves, and hear the amorous birds
Warbling their wanton notes; here, a sure shade
Of barren sycamores, which the all-seeing sun
Could not pierce through; near that, an arbour hung
With spreading eglantine; there, a bubbling spring
Watering a bank of hyacinths and lillies,
With all allurements that could move to love.
And could this, Charomonte, (should I grant
They had been equals both in birth and fortune,)
Become your gravity? Nay, 'tis clear as air,
That your ambitious hopes to match your daughter
Into our family, gave convenience to it.
And this, though not in act, in the intent,
I call high treason.

Car. Hear my just defence, sir,
And, though you are my prince, it will not take from
Your greatness to acknowledge with a blush,
In this my accusation you have been
More swayed by spleen, and jealous suppositions,
Than certain grounds of reason. You had a father
(Blest be his memory) that made frequent proofs
Of my loyalty and faith, and, would I boast
The dangers I have broke through in his service,
I could say more. Nay, you yourself, dread sir,
Whenever I was put into the test,
Found me true gold, and not adulterate metal;
And am I doubted now?

Coz. This is from the purpose.

Car. I will come to it, sir; your grace well knew,
Before the prince's happy presence made
My poor house rich, the chiefest blessing which
I gloried in (though now it prove a curse),
Was an only daughter. Nor did you command me,
As a security to your future fears,
To cast her off: Which had you done, howe'er
She was the light of my eyes, and comfort of
My feeble age; so far I prized my duty
Above affection, she now had been
A stranger to my care. But she is fair!
Is that her fault or mine? Did ever father
Hold beauty in his issue for a blemish?
Her education and her manners tempt, too.
If these offend, they're easily removed:
You may, if you think fit, before my face,
In recompense of all my watchings for you,
With burning corrosives transform her to
An ugly leper; and this done, to taint
Her sweetness, prostitute her to a loathsome brothel.
This I will rather suffer, sir, and more,
Than live suspected by you.

Coz. Let not passion
Carry you beyond your reason.

Car. I am calm, sir;
Yet you must give me leave to grieve, I find
My actions misinterpreted. Alas! sir,
Was Lydia's desire to serve the prince
Called an offence? Or did she practice to
Seduce his youth, because, with her best zeal
And fervour, she endeavoured to attend him?
'Tis a hard construction——Though she be my daughter,
I may thus far speak her. From her infancy
She was ever civil, her behaviour nearer
Simplicity than craft; and malice dares not
Affirm, in one loose gesture, or light language,
She gave a sign she was in thought unchaste.
I'll fetch her to you, sir; and but look on her
With equal eyes, you must, in justice, grant
That your suspicion wrongs her.

Coz. It may be;
But I must have stronger assurance of it
Than passionate words. And, not to trifle time,
As we came unexpected to your house,
We will prevent all means that may prepare her
How to answer that, with which we come to charge her.
And howsoever it may be received
As a foul breach of hospitable rites,
On thy allegiance and boasted faith,
Nay, forfeit of thy head, we do confine thee
Close prisoner to thy chamber, till all doubts
Are cleared that do concern us.

Car. I obey, sir,
And wish your grace had followed my hearse
To my sepulchre, my loyalty unsuspected,
Rather than now.—But I am silent, sir,
And let that speak my duty.

[*Exit* CAROLO.

Coz. If this man
Be false, disguised treachery ne'er put on
A shape so near to truth. Within there!

Enter GIOVANNI *and* SANAZARRO, *ushering in* PERONELLA. CALANDRINO *and others, setting forth a banquet.*

San. Sir.
Coz. Bring Lydia forth.
Giov. She comes, sir, of herself,
To present her service to you.
Coz. Ha! This personage
Cannot invite affection.
San. See you keep state.
Pet. I warrant you.
Coz. The manners of her mind
Must be transcendent, if they can defend
Her rougher out-side. May we, with your liking,
Salute you, lady?
Pet. Let me wipe my mouth, sir,
With my cambric-handkerchief, and then have at you.
Coz. Can this be possible?
San. Yes, sir, you will find her
Such as I gave her to you.
Pet. Will your dukeship
Sit down and eat some sugar-plumbs? Here's a castle
Of march pane, too, and this quince-marmalade
Was of my own making; all summed up together
Did cost the setting on; and here is wine, too,
[*Drinks all off.*
As good as ever was tapped: I'll be your tapster;
For I know the fashion—Now you must do me right, sir;
You shall, nor will, nor choose.
Giov. She's very simple.
Coz. Simple! 'tis worse. Do you drink thus often, lady?
Pet. Still when I am thirsty, and eat when I am hungry.
Such junckets come not every day. Once more to you,
With a heart and a half, i'faith.
Coz. Pray you, pause a little;
If I hold your cards I shall pull down the side;
I am not good at the game.
Pet. Then I'll drink for you.
Coz. Nay, pray you stay. I'll find you out a pledge
That shall supply my place; what think you of
This complete signior? You are a Juno, and in such state
Must feast this Jupiter. What think you of him?
Pet. I desire no better.
Coz. And you will undertake this service for me?
You are good at the sport.
Caland. Who, I? A pidler, sir.
Coz. Nay, you shall sit enthroned, and eat and drink
As you were a duke.
Caland. If your grace will have me,
I'll eat and drink like an emperor.
Coz. Take your place, then;
We are amazed.
Giov. This is gross: Nor can the imposture
But be discovered.
San. The duke's too sharp-sighted
To be deluded thus.
Caland. Nay, pray you eat fair;
Or divide, and I will choose. Cannot you use
Your fork as I do? Gape, and I will feed you.
[*Feeds her.*
Gape wider yet; this is court-like.
Pet. To choke daws with:
I like it not.
Caland. But you like this. [*They drink.*
Pet. Let it come, boy.
Coz. What a sight is this! We could be angry with you.
How much you did belye her, when you told us
She was only simple! This is barbarous rudeness,
Beyond belief.
Giov. I would not speak her, sir,
Worse than she was.
San. And I, my lord, chose rather
To deliver her better parted than she is,
Than to take from her.

Enter CAUPONI.

Caup. Ere I'll lose my dance,
I'll speak to the purpose. I am, sir, no prologue;
But, in plain terms, must tell you, we are provided
Of a lusty hornpipe.
Coz. 'Prithee let us have it,
For we grow dull.
Caup. But, to make up the medley,
For it is of several colours, we must borrow
Your grace's ghost here.
Caland. Pray you, sir, depose me;
It will not do else, I am, sir, the engine
[*Rises, and resigns his chair.*
By which it moves.
Pet. I will dance with my duke, too;
I will not out.
Coz. Begin, then. There's more in this
[*Dance.*
Than yet I have discovered. Some Œdipus
Resolve this riddle!
Pet. Did I not foot it roundly? [*Falls down.*
Coz. As I live, stark-drunk. Away with her.
We'll reward you,
When you have cooled yourselves in the cellar.
Caup. Heaven preserve you. [*Exeunt Dancers.*
Coz. We pity Charomonte's wretched fortune
In a daughter, nay, a monster. Good old man!
The place grows tedious: Our removal shall be
With speed. We'll only, in a word or two,
Take leave and comfort him.
San. 'Twill rather, sir,
Increase his sorrow, that you know his shame;
Your grace may do it by letter.
Coz. Who signed you
A patent to direct us? Wait our coming
In the garden.

Giov. All will out.
San. I more than fear it.
[*Exeunt* GIOV. *and* SAN.
Coz. These are strange chimeras to us! What to judge of it
Is past our apprehension! One command
Charomonte to attend us. Can it be,
[*Exit Servant.*
That Contarino could be so besotted
As to admire this prodigy? Or her father
To dote upon it? Or does she personate,
For some ends unknown to us, this rude behaviour,
Which, in the scene presented, would appear
Ridiculous and impossible? O, you are welcome.

Enter CAROLO.

We now acknowledge the much wrong we did you
In our unjust suspicion. We have seen
The wonder, sir, your daughter.
Car. And have found her
Such as I did report her. What she wanted
In courtship, was, I hope, supplied in civil
And modest entertainment.
Coz. Pray you, tell us,
And truly we command you, did you never
Observe she was given to drink?
Car. To drink, sir?
Coz. Yes. Nay, more, to be drunk.
Car. I had rather see her buried.
Coz. Dare you trust your own eyes, if you find her now
More than distempered?
Car. I will pull them out, sir,
If your grace can make this good. And if you please
To grant me liberty, as she is, I'll fetch her,
And in a moment.
Coz. Look you do, and fail not,
On the peril of your head.
Car. Drunk?—She disdains it. [*Exit* CAROLO.
Coz. Such contrarieties were never read of.
Charomonte is no fool, nor can I think
His confidence built on sand. We are abused.

Enter CAROLO *and* LYDIA.

Lyd. I am indisposed, sir,
And that life, you tendered once, much endangered
In forcing me from my chamber.
Car. Here she is, sir,
Suddenly sick, I grant; but, sure, not drunk.
Speak to my lord the duke,
Lyd. All is discovered. [*Kneels.*
Coz. Is this your only daughter?
Car. And my heir, sir,
Nor keep I any woman in the house
(Unless for sordid offices) but one,
I do maintain trimmed up in her cast habits,
To make her sport. And she, indeed, loves wine,
And will take too much of it; and, perhaps, for mirth,
She was presented to you.
Coz. It shall yield
No sport to the contrivers. 'Tis too plain now.
Her presence does confirm what Contarino
Delivered of her; nor can sickness dim
The splendour of her beauties: being herself, then,
She must exceed his praise.
Lyd. Will your grace hear me?
I am faint, and can say little.
Coz. Here are accents,
Whose every syllable is musical!
Pray you let me raise you, and a-while rest here.
False Sanazarro, treacherous Giovanni!
But stand we talking?
Car. Here's a storm soon raised.
Coz. As thou art our subject, Charomonte, swear
To act what we command.
Car. That is an oath
I long since took.
Coz. Then, by that oath we charge thee,
Without excuse, denial, or delay,
To apprehend, and suddenly, Sanazarro,
And our ungrateful nephew. We have said it.
Do it without reply, or we pronounce thee,
Like them, a traitor to us. See them guarded
In several lodgings, and forbid access
To all, but when we warrant. Is our will
Heard sooner than obeyed?
Car. These are strange turns!
But I must not dispute them. [*Exit* CAROLO.
Coz. Be severe in it.
O my abused lenity! From what height
Is my power fallen!
Lyd. O me most miserable!
That, being innocent, make others guilty:
Most gracious prince!——
Coz. Pray you rise, and then speak to me.
Lyd. My knees shall first be rooted in this earth,
And, myrrha like, I'll grow up to a tree,
Dropping perpetual tears of sorrow, which,
Hardened by the rough wind, and turned to amber,
Unfortunate virgins like myself shall wear,
Before I'll make petition to your greatness
But with such reverence, my hands held up thus,
As I would do to Heaven. You princes are
As gods on earth to us, and to be sued to
With such humility, as his deputies
May challenge from their vassals.
Coz. Here's that form
Of language I expected; pray you, speak:
What is your suit?
Lyd. That you would look upon me
As an humble thing, that millions of degrees
Is placed beneath you. For what am I, dread sir?
Or what can fall in the whole course of my life,
That may be worth your care, much less your trouble?

As the lowly shrub is to the lofty cedar,
Or a mole-hill to Olympus, if compared,
I am to you, sir. Or, suppose the prince,
(Which cannot find belief in me) forgetting
The greatness of his birth and hopes, hath thrown
An eye of favour on me, in me punish
(That am the cause) the rashness of his youth.
Shall the queen of the inhabitants of the air,
The eagle, that bears thunder on her wings,
In her angry mood, destroy her hopeful young,
For suffering a wren to perch too near them?
Such is our disproportion.

Coz. With what fervour
She pleads against herself!

Lyd. For me, poor maid,
I know the prince to be so far above me,
That my wishes cannot reach him. Yet I am
So much his creature, to fix him in
Your wonted grace and favour, I'll abjure
His sight for ever, and betake myself
To a religious life (where in my prayers
I may remember him) and ne'er see man more,
But my ghostly father. Will you trust me, sir?
In truth I'll keep my word; or, if this fail,
A little more of fear what may befall him,
Will stop my breath for ever!

Coz. Had you thus argued [*Raises her.*
As you were yourself, and brought as advocates
Your health and beauty, to make way for you,
No crime of his could put on such a shape
But I should look with the eyes of mercy on it.
What would I give to see this diamond
In her perfect lustre, as she was before
The clouds of sickness dimmed it! Yet, take comfort,
And, as you would obtain remission for
His treachery to me, cheer your drooping spirits,
And call the blood again into your cheeks,
And then plead for him; and in such a habit
As in your highest hopes you would put on,
If we were to receive you for our bride.

Lydia. I'll do my best, sir.

Coz. And that best will be
A crown of all felicity to me. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

SANAZARRO *above.*

San. 'Tis proved in me, the curse of human frailty
(Adding to our afflictions) makes us know
What's good; and yet our violent passions force us
To follow what is ill. Reason assured me
It was not safe to shave a lion's skin;
And that to trifle with a sovereign, was
To play with lightning: Yet imperious beauty,
Treading upon the neck of understanding,
Compelled me to put off my natural shape
Of loyal duty, to disguise myself
In the adulterate and cobweb masque
Of disobedient treachery. Where is now
My borrowed greatness? or the promised lives
Of following courtiers echoing my will?
In a moment vanished. Power, that stands not on
Its proper base, which is peculiar only
To absolute princes, falls or rises with
Their frown or favour. The great duke, my master,
(Who almost changed me to his other self)
No sooner takes his beams of comfort from me,
But I, as one unknown, or unregarded,
Unpitied suffer! Who makes intercession
To mercy for me now? Who does remember
The service I have done him? Not a man!
And such as spake no language, but my lord,
The favourite of Tuscany's grand duke,
[*Looks backwards.*
Deride my madness. Ha! what noise of horses?
A goodly troop! This back-part of my prison
Allows me liberty to see and know them.
Contarino! Yes, 'tis he; and Lodovico:
And the duchess Fiorinda, Urbin's heir,
A princess I have slighted; yet I wear
Her favours. And, to teach me what I am,
She whom I scorned can only mediate for me.
This way she makes, yet speak to her I dare not;
And how to make a suit to her, is a task
Of as much difficulty—Yes, thou blessed pledge
[*Takes off the ring, and writes on a pane of glass.*]
Of her affection, aid me. This supplies
The want of pen and ink, and this of paper.
It must be so; and I in my petition
Concise and pithy.

Enter CONTARINO, *leading in* FIORINDA, ALPHONSO, LODOVICO, HIERONIMO, CALAMINTA.

Fio. 'Tis a goodly pile, this.

Hier. But bettered by the owner.

Alph. But most rich
In the great states it covers.

Fio. The duke's pleasure
Commands us hither.

Con. Which was laid on us
To attend you to it.

Lod. Signior Charomonte,
To see your excellence his guest, will think
Himself most happy.

Fio. Tie my shoe. What's that?
[*The pane thrown down.*
A pane thrown from the window, no wind stirring?

Cala. And at your feet too fallen; there's something writ on it.

Con. Some courtier, belike, would have it known
He wore a diamond.
Cala. Ha! it is directed
To the princess Fiorinda.
Fio. We will read it.

The inscription.

'He, whom you pleased to favour, is cast down
'Past hope of rising, by the great duke's frown,
'If, by your gracious means, he cannot have
'A pardon. And, that got, he lives your slave.'

The subscription.

'Of men the most distressed,
'SANAZARRO.'

Of me the most beloved, and I will save thee,
Or perish with thee. Sure, thy fault must be
Of some prodigious shape, if that my prayers
And humble intercession to the duke

Enter COZIMO *and* CAROLO.

Prevail not with him. Here he comes; delay
Shall not make less my benefit.
Coz. What we purpose
Shall know no change, and therefore move me not.
We were made as properties, and what we shall
Determine of them cannot be called rigour,
But noble justice. When they proved disloyal,
They were cruel to themselves. The prince, that pardons
The first affront offered to majesty,
Invites a second, rendering that power
Subjects should tremble at, contemptible.
Ingratitude is a monster, Carolo,
To be strangled in the birth, not to be cherished.
Madam, you are happily met with.
Fio. Sir, I am
An humble suitor to you; and the rather
Am confident of a grant, in that your grace,
When I made choice to be at your devotion,
Vowed to deny me nothing.
Coz. To this minute
We have confirmed it. What's your boon?
Fio. It is, sir,
That you, in being gracious to your servant,
The ne'er sufficiently praised Sanazarro,
(That now under your heavy displeasure suffers)
Would be good unto yourself. His services,
So many, and so great, (your storm of fury
Calmed by your better judgment) must inform you,
Some little slip (for sure it is no more)
From his loyal duty, with your justice cannot
Make foul his fair deservings. Great sir, therefore,
Look backward on his former worth, and, turning
Your eye from his offence (what 'tis I know not),
And, I am confident, you will receive him
Once more into your favour.
Coz. You say well,
You are ignorant in the nature of his fault,
Which, when you understand, (as we'll instruct you)
Your pity will appear a charity,
(It being conferred on an unthankful man,)
To be repented. He's a traitor, madam,
To you, to us, to gratitude; and in that
All crimes are comprehended.
Fio. If his offence
Aimed at me only, whatsoe'er it is,
'Tis freely pardoned.
Coz. This compassion in you
Must make the colour of his guilt more ugly.
The honours we have hourly heaped upon him,
The titles, the rewards, to the envy of
The old nobility, as the common people,
We now forbear to touch at, and will only
Insist on his gross wrongs to you. You were pleased,
Forgetting both yourself and proper greatness,
To favour him, nay, to court him to embrace
A happiness, which, on his knees, with joy
He should have sued for. Who repined not at
The grace you did him! Yet, in recompense
Of your large bounties, the disloyal wretch
Makes you a stale; and, that he might be by you
Scorned and derided, gives himself up wholly
To the service of another. If you can
Bear this with patience, we must say, you have not
The bitterness of spleen, or ireful passions,
Familiar to women. Pause upon it,
And when you seriously have weighed his carriage,
Move us again, if your reason will allow it,
His treachery known. And then, if you continue
An advocate for him, we, perhaps, because
We would deny you nothing, may awake
Our sleeping mercy. Carolo!
Car. My lord. [*They whisper.*
Fio. To endure a rival, that were equal to me,
Cannot but speak my poverty of spirit;
But an inferior, more: Yet true love must not
Know or degrees, or distances. Lydia may be
As far above me in her form, as she
Is in her birth beneath me; and what I
In Sanazarro liked, he loves in her.
But if I free him now, the benefit
Being done so timely, and confirming too
My strength and power, my soul's best faculties being
Bent wholly to preserve him, must supply me
With all I am defective in, and bind him
My creature ever. It must needs be so,
Nor will I give it o'er thus.
Coz. Does our nephew
Bear his restraint so constantly as you
Deliver it to us?
Car. In my judgment, sir,

He suffers more for his offence to you,
Than in his fear of what can follow it.
For he is so collected and prepared
To welcome that you shall determine of him,
As if his doubts and fears were equal to him.
And sure he's not acquainted with much guilt,
That more laments the telling one untruth,
Under your pardon still, (for 'twas a fault, sir,)
Than others, that pretend to conscience, do
Their crying secret sins.

Coz. No more; this gloss
Defends not the corruption of the text;
Urge it no more.

[CAROLO *and the others whisper.*

Fio. I once more must make bold, sir,
To trench upon your patience. I have
Considered my wrongs duly: Yet that cannot
Divert my intercession for a man,
Your grace, like me, once favoured. I am still
A suppliant to you, that you would vouchsafe
The hearing his defence, and that I may,
With your allowance, see, and comfort him.
Then, having heard all that he can alledge
In his excuse for being false to you,
Censure him as you please.

Coz. You will o'ercome;
There's no contending with you. Pray you, enjoy
What you desire, and tell him, he shall have
A speedy trial, in which we'll forbear
To sit as judge, because our purpose is
To rise up his accuser.

Fio. All increase
Of happiness wait on Cozimo.

[*Exeunt* FIORINDA *and* CALAMINTA.

Alph. Was it no more?

Car. My honour's pawned for it.

Con. I'll second you.

Lod. Since it is for the service and the safety
Of the hopeful prince, fall what can fall, I'll run
The desperate hazard.

Hie. He's no friend to virtue
That does decline it. [*They all kneel.*

Coz. Ha! what sue you for?
Shall we be ever troubled? Do not tempt
That anger may consume you.

Car. Let it, sir:
The loss is less, though innocent we perish,
Than that your sister's son should fall, unheard,
Under your fury. Shall we fear to entreat
That grace for him, that are your faithful servants,
Which you vouchsafe the count, like us a subject?

Coz. Did not we vow, till sickness had forsook
Thy daughter Lydia, and she appeared,
In her perfect health and beauty, to plead for him,
We were deaf to all persuasion?

Car. And that hope, sir,
Hath wrought a miracle. She is recovered,
And, if you please to warrant her, will bring
The penitent prince before you.

Coz. To enjoy
Such happiness, what would we not dispense with?

Alph. Lod. Hie. We all kneel for the prince.

Con. Nor can it stand
With your mercy, that are gracious to strangers,
To be cruel to your own.

Coz. But art thou certain
I shall behold her at the best?

Car. If ever
She was handsome, as it fits not me to say so,
She is now much bettered.

Coz. Rise; thou art but dead
If this prove otherwise. Lydia, appear,
And feast an appetite, almost pined to death
With longing expectation to behold
Thy excellencies: Thou, as beauty's queen,
Shalt censure the detractors. Let my nephew
Be led in triumph under her command;
We'll have it so; and Sanazarro tremble
To think whom he hath slandered. We'll retire
Ourselves a little, and prepare to meet
A blessing, which, imagination tells us,
We are not worthy of, and then come forth;
But with such reverence, as if I were
Myself the priest, the sacrifice, my heart,
To offer at the altar of that goodness,
That must or kill or save me. [*Exit* COZIMO.

Car. Are not these
Strange gambols in the duke?

Alph. Great princes have,
Like meaner men, their weakness.

Lod. And may use it
Without controul or check.

Con. 'Tis fit they should;
Their privilege were less else than their subjects.

Hie. Let them have their humours; there's no crossing them. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter FIORINDA, SANAZARRO, *and* CALAMINTA.

San. And can it be your bounties should fall down
In showers on my ingratitude? Or the wrongs
Your greatness should revenge, teach you to pity?
What retribution can I make? what service
Pay to your goodness, that in some proportion,
May to the world express I would be thankful?
Since my engagements are so great, that all
My best endeavours to appear your creature,
Can but proclaim my wants, and what I owe
To your magnificence.

Fio. All debts are discharged
In this acknowledgment: Yet, since you please,
I shall impose some terms of satisfaction
For that, which you profess yourself obliged for:
They shall be gentle ones, and such as will not,
I hope, afflict you.

San. Make me understand,
Great princess, what they are, and my obedience

Shall, with all cheerful willingness, subscribe
To what you shall command.
Fio. I will bind you to
Make good your promise. First, I then enjoin you
To love a lady, that a noble way
Truly affects you; and that you would take
To your protection and care, the dukedom
Of Urbin, which no more is mine, but yours;
And that, when you have full possession of
My person, as my fortunes, you would use me,
Not as a princess, but instruct me in
The duties of an humble wife; for such,
The privilege of my birth no more remembered,
I will be to you. This consented to,
All injuries forgotten, on your lips
I thus sign your *quietus.*
San. I am wretched
In having but one life to be employed
As you please to dispose it: And, believe it,
If it be not already forfeited
To the fury of my prince, as 'tis your gift,
With all the faculties of my soul I'll study,
In what I may, to serve you.
Fio. I am happy

Enter GIOVANNI *and* LYDIA.

In this assurance.—What
Sweet lady's this?
San. 'Tis Lydia, madam, she——
Fio. I understand you.
Nay, blush not; by my life, she is a rare one!
And, if I were your judge, I would not blame you,
To like and love her.—But, sir, you are mine now;
And I presume so on your constancy,
That I dare not be jealous.
San. All thoughts of her
Are in your goodness buried.
Lyd. Pray you, sir,
Be comforted; your innocence should not know
What 'tis to fear, and if you but look on
The guards, that you have in yourself, you cannot.
The duke's your uncle, sir; and though a little
Incensed at you, when he sees your sorrow,
He must be reconciled. What rugged Tartar,
Or cannibal, though bathed in human gore,
But, looking on your sweetness, would forget
His cruel nature, and let fall his weapon,
Though then aimed at your throat?
Giov. O Lydia,
Of maids the honour, and your sex's glory!
It is not fear to die, but to lose you,
That brings this fever on me. I will now
Discover to you that, which, till this minute,
I durst not trust the air with. Ere you knew
What power the magic of your beauty had,
I was enchanted by it, liked, and loved it,
My fondness still encreasing with my years;
And, flattered by false hopes, I did attend
Some blessed opportunity to move
The duke, with his consent, to make you mine.
But now, such is my star-crossed destiny,
When he beholds you as you are, he cannot
Deny himself the happiness to enjoy you.
And I as well in reason may entreat him
To give away his crown, as to part from
A jewel of more value, such you are:
Yet, howsoever, when you are his dutchess,
And I am turned unto forgotten dust,
Pray you, love my memory. I should say more,
But I am cut off.

Enter COZIMO, CAROLO, CONTARINO, *and others.*

San. The duke! that countenance, once,
When it was cloathed in smiles, shewed like an angel's;
But, now 'tis folded up in clouds of fury,
'Tis terrible to look on.
[*The* DUKE *admiring* LYDIA.
Lyd. Sir.
Coz. A while
Silence your musical tongue, and let me feast
My eyes with the most ravishing object that
They ever gazed on. There's no miniature
In her fair face, but is a copious theme
Which would (discoursed at large of) make a volume.
What clear arched brows! What sparkling eyes! The lilies
Contending with the roses in her cheeks,
Who shall most set them off! What ruby lips!
Or unto what can I compare her neck,
But to a rock of crystal! Every limb
Proportioned to love's wish, and in their neatness
Add lustre to the richness of her habit,
Not borrow from it.
Lyd. You are pleased to shew, sir,
The fluency of your language, in advancing
A subject much unworthy.
Coz. How unworthy?
By all the vows which lovers offer at
The Cyprian goddess' altars, eloquence
Itself, presuming as you are to speak you,
Would be struck dumb. And what have you deserved, then,
(Wretches, you kneel too late) that have endeavoured
To spout the poison of your black detraction
On this immaculate whiteness! Was it malice
To her perfections? Or——
Fio. Your highness promised
A gracious hearing to the count.
Lyd. And prince too;
Do not make void such a grant.
Coz. We will not;
Yet, since their accusation must be urged,
And strongly, ere their weak defence have hearing,
[*Seats the ladies.*
We seat you here, as judges, to determine

Of your gross wrongs and ours. And now, remembering
Whose deputies we are, be neither swayed,
Or with particular spleen or foolish pity;
For neither can become you.
Car. There's some hope yet,
Since they have such gentle judges.
Coz. Rise, and stand forth, then,
And hear with horror to your guilty souls
What we will prove against you. Could this princess
(Thou enemy to thyself!) stoop her high flight
Of towering greatness, to invite thy lowness
To look upon it, and with nimble wings
Of gratitude, couldst thou forbear to meet it?
Were her favours boundless in a noble way,
And warranted by our allowance, yet,
In thy acceptation, there appeared no sign
Of a modest thankfulness?
Fio. Pray you, forbear
To press that farther; 'tis a fault we have
Already heard, and pardoned.
Coz. We will then
Pass over it, and briefly touch at that,
Which does concern ourself; in which, both being
Equal offenders, what we shall speak, points
Indifferently at either. How we raised thee,
Forgetful Sanazarro, of our grace,
To a full possession of power and honours,
It being too well known, we'll not remember.
And what thou wert (rash youth) in expectation,
(And from which, headlong, thou hast thrown thyself)
Not Florence, but all Tuscany, can witness
With admiration. To assure thy hopes,
We did keep constant to a widowed bed,
And did deny ourself those lawful pleasures,
Our absolute power and height of blood allowed us:
Made both the keys that opened our heart's secrets,
And what you spake, believed as oracles.
But you, in recompense of this, to him
That gave you all, to whom you owed your being,
With treacherous lies endeavoured to conceal
This jewel from our knowledge, which ourself
Could only lay just claim to.
Giov. 'Tis most true.
San. We both confess a guilty cause.
Coz. Look on her;
Is this a beauty fit to be embraced
By any subject's arms? Can any tire
Become that forehead, but a diadem?
Or, should we grant your being false to us
Could be excused, your treachery to her,
In seeking to deprive her of that greatness,
(Her matchless form considered), she was born to,
Must ne'er find pardon! We have spoken, ladies,
Like a rough orator, that brings more truth
Than rhetorick, to make good his accusation,
And now expect your sentence.
[*The ladies descend from the state.*
Lydia. In your birth, sir,
You were marked out the judge of life and death,
And we, that are your subjects, to attend
With trembling fear your doom.
Fio. We do resign
This chair, as only proper to yourself.
Giov. And, since in justice we are lost, we fly
Unto your saving mercy. [*All kneeling.*
San. Which sets off
A prince much more than rigour.
Car. And becomes him,
When 'tis expressed to such as fell by weakness,
That being a twin-born brother to affection,
Better than wreaths of conquest.
Hier. Lod. Con. Alph. We all speak
Their language, mighty sir.
Coz. You know our temper,
And, therefore, with more boldness venture on it:
And, would not our consent to your demands
Deprive us of a happiness, hereafter
Ever to be despaired of, we, perhaps,
Might hearken nearer to you, and could wish,
With some qualification or excuse,
You might make less the mountains of your crimes,
And so invite our clemency to feast with you.
But you, that know with what impatience
Of grief, we parted from the fair Clarinda,
Our dutchess, (let her memory still be sacred!)
And with what imprecations on ourself
We vowed, not hoping e'er to see her equal,
Ne'er to make trial of a second choice,
If nature framed not one that did excel her,
(As this maid's beauty prompts us that she does)
And yet, with oaths then mixed with tears, upon
Her monument we swore our eye should never
Again be tempted; 'tis true, and those vows
Are registered above; something here tells me.
Carolo, thou heardst us swear.
Car. And swear so deeply,
That if all women's beauties were in this
(As she's not to be named with the dead dutchess),
Nay, all their virtues bound up in one story,
(Of which mine is scarce an epitome)
If you should take her as a wife, the weight
Of your perjuries would sink you. If I durst,
I had told you this before.
Coz. 'Tis strong truth, Carolo:
And yet, what was necessity in us
Cannot free them from treason.
Car. There's your error.
The prince, in care to have you keep your vow
Made unto heaven, vouchsafed to love my daughter.
Lydia. He told me so, indeed, sir.
Fio. And the count
Averred as much to me.

Coz. You all conspire
To force our mercy from us.
Car. Which, given up
To after-times, preserves you unforesworn;
An honour, which will live upon your tomb,
When your greatness is forgotten.
Coz. Though we know
All this is practice, and that both are false,
Such reverence we will pay to dead Clarinda,
And to our serious oaths, that we are pleased,
With our own hand, to blind our eyes, and not
Know what we understand. Here, Giovanni,
We pardon thee, and take from us in this,
More than our dukedom: love her. As I part
With her, all thoughts of women fly fast from us.
Sanazarro, we forgive you: in your service
To this princess merit it. Yet, let not others
That are in trust and grace, as you have been,
By the example of our tenderness,
Presume upon their sovereign's lenity. [*A shout.*

Enter CALANDRINO *and* PETRONELLA.

All. Long live great Cozimo!
Caland. Sure the duke is
In the giving vein, they are so loud. Come on, spouse,
We have heard all, and we will have our boon, too.
Coz. What is't!
Caland. That your grace, in remembrance of
My share in a dance, and that I played your part
When you should have drunk hard, would get this signior's grant
To give this damsel to me in the church;
For we are contracted. In it you shall do
Your dukedom pleasure.
Coz. How?
Caland. Why, the whole race
Of such as can act naturally fools' parts,
Are quite worn out, and they that do survive,
Do only zanie us; and we will bring you,
If we die not without issue, of both sexes
Such chopping mirth-makers, as shall preserve
Perpetual cause of sport, both to your grace
And your posterity, that sad melancholy
Shall never approach you.
Coz. We are pleased in it,
And will pay her portion. May the passage prove
Of what's presented, worthy of your love
And favour, as was aimed; and we have all
That can, in compass of our wishes, fall.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE.

BY

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

DUKE OF MEDINA.
DON JUAN DE CASTRO, *a Spanish colonel.*
SANCHIO, } *officers in the army.*
ALONZO, }
MICHAEL PEREZ, *the copper captain.*
LEON, *brother to Altea, and, by her contrivance, married to Margaritta.*
CACAFOGO, *a rich usurer.*

WOMEN.

MARGARITTA, *a wanton lady, married to Leon, by whom she is reclaimed.*
ALTEA, *her servant.*
CLARA, *a Spanish lady.*
ESTIFANIA, *a woman of intrigue.*
An old woman.
Maid.
Visiting ladies.

Scene—Spain.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A chamber.*

Enter DON JUAN DE CASTRO *and* MICHAEL PEREZ.

Mich. ARE your companies full, colonel?
Juan. No, not yet, sir,
Nor will not be this month yet, as I reckon.
How rises your command?
Mich. We pick up still,
And, as our monies hold out, we have men come.
About that time, I think, we shall be full, too:
Many young gallants go.
Juan. And inexperienced.
The wars are dainty dreams to young hot spirits;
Time and experience will allay those visions.
We have strange things to fill our numbers:
There's one Don Leon, a strange goodly fellow,
Commended to me from some noble friends,
For my Alferes.
Mich. I've heard of him, and that he hath served before, too.
Juan. But no harm done, nor ever meant, Don Michael,
That came to my ears yet: ask him a question,
He blushes like a girl, and answers little,
To the point less. He wears a sword, a good one,
And good clothes, too; he's whole skinned, has no hurt yet;
Good promising hopes. I never yet heard certainly,
Of any gentleman, that saw him angry.
Mich. Preserve him; he'll conclude a peace, if need be;
Many, as stout as he, will go along with us,
That swear as valiantly as heart can wish.
Their mouths charged with six oaths at once, and whole ones,
That make the drunken Dutch creep into molehills.
Juan. 'Tis true, such we must look for. But, Michael Perez,

When heard you of Donna Margaritta, the great heiress?
Mich. I hear every hour of her, though I ne'er saw her;
She is the main discourse. Noble Don Juan de Castro,
How happy were that man could catch this wench up,
And live at ease! She's fair, and young, and wealthy,
Infinite wealthy, and as gracious, too,
In all her entertainments, as men report.
Juan. But she is proud, sir; that I know for certain;
And that comes seldom without wantonness:
He, that shall marry her, must have a rare hand.
Mich. Would I were married! I would find that wisdom,
With a light rein to rule my wife. If e'er woman,
Of the most subtile mould, went beyond me,
I'd give boys leave to hoot me out of the parish.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, there be two gentlewomen attend to speak with you.
Juan. Wait on them in.
Mich. Are they two handsome women?
Ser. They seem so, very handsome! but they're veiled, sir.
Mich. Thou puttest sugar in my mouth. How it melts with me!
I love a sweet young wench.
Juan. Wait on them in, I say. [*Exit Servant.*
Mich. Don Juan.
Juan. Michael, how you burnish?
Will not this soldier's heat out of your bones yet?
Mich. There be two.
Juan. Say honest, what shame have you, then?
Mich. I would fain see that.
I've been in the Indies twice, and have seen strange things;
But for two honest women:—one I read of once.
Juan. Prithee, be modest.
Mich. I'll be any thing.

Enter Servant, DONNA CLARA *and* ESTIFANIA, *veiled.*

Juan. You're welcome, ladies.
Mich. Both hooded! I like them well though:
They came not for advice in law, sure, hither.
They're very modest; 'tis a fine preludium.
Juan. With me, or with this gentleman, would you speak, lady?
Cla. With you, sir, as I guess, Juan de Castro.
Mich. Her curtain opens; she is a pretty gentlewoman.
Juan. I am the man, and shall be bound to fortune,
I may do any service to your beauties.
Cla. Captain, I hear you're marching down to Flanders,
To serve the Catholic king.
Juan. I am, sweet lady.
Cla. I have a kinsman, and a noble friend,
Employed in those wars; may be, sir, you know him;
Don Campusano, captain of carbines,
To whom I would request your nobleness
To give this poor remembrance. [*Gives a letter.*
Juan. I shall do it:
I know the gentleman, a most worthy captain.
Cla. Something in private.
Juan. Step aside: I'll serve thee.
[*Exeunt* JUAN *and* CLARA.
Mich. Prithee, let me see thy face.
Estif. Sir, you must pardon me;
Women of our sort, that maintain fair memories,
And keep suspect off from their chastities,
Had need wear thicker veils.
Mich. I am no blaster of a lady's beauty,
Nor bold intruder on her special favours:
I know how tender reputation is,
And with what guards it ought to be preserved.
Lady, you may to me——
Estif. You must excuse me, signior, I come
Not here to sell myself.
Mich. As I am a gentleman; by the honour of a soldier!
Estif. I believe you;
I pray be civil: I believe you'd see me,
And when you've seen me, I believe you'll like me;
But in a strange place, to a stranger, too,
As if I came on purpose to betray you,
Indeed I will not.
Mich. I shall love you dearly,
And 'tis a sin to fling away affection;
I have no mistress; no desire to honour
Any but you.
I know not, you have struck me with your modesty
So deep, and taken from me
All the desire, I might bestow on others——
Quickly, before they come.
Estif. Indeed, I dare not.
But since I see you're so desirous, sir,
To view a poor face, that can merit nothing
But your repentance——
Mich. It must needs be excellent.
Estif. And with what honesty you ask it of me,
When I am gone, let your man follow me,
And view what house I enter. Thither come,
For there I dare be bold to appear open;
And as I like your virtuous carriage, then,

Enter JUAN, CLARA, *and Servant.*

I shall be able to give welcome to you.
She hath done her business; I must take my leave, sir.
Mich. I'll kiss your fair white hand, and thank you, lady.
My man shall wait, and I shall be your servant.
Sirrah, come near, hark.

Ser. I shall do it faithfully. [*Exit.*
Juan. You will command me no more services?
Cla. To be careful of your noble health, dear sir,
That I may ever honour you.
Juan. I thank you,
And kiss your hands. Wait on the ladies down there. [*Exeunt ladies and Servant.*
Mich. You had the honour to see the face, that came to you?
Juan. And 'twas a fair one. What was yours, don Michael?
Mich. Mine was in the eclipse, and had a cloud drawn over it.
But I believe well, and I hope 'tis handsome.
She had a hand would stir a holy hermit.
Juan. You know none of them?
Mich. No.
Juan. Then I do, captain;
But I'll say nothing till I see the proof on't.
Sit close, don Perez, or your worship's caught.
Mich. Were those she brought love letters?
Juan. A packet to a kinsman now in Flanders.
Yours was very modest, methought.
Mich. Some young unmanaged thing:
But I may live to see.
Juan. 'Tis worth experience.
Let us walk abroad and view our companies.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Another Street,* ESTIFANIA *crosses the stage.*

Enter a servant of MICHAEL PEREZ *after her.*

Ser. 'Tis this or that house, or I've lost my aim;
They're both fair buildings; she walked plaguy fast.

Enter ESTIFANIA, *courtesies, and exit.*

And hereabouts I lost her. Stay, that's she!
'Tis very she! she makes me a low court'sy:—
Let me note the place, the street I well remember. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A chamber in* MARGARITTA'S *house.*

Enter three old Ladies.

1 *Lady.* What should it mean, that in such haste we're sent for?
2 *Lady.* Belike the lady Margaret has some business
She'd break to us in private.
3 *Lady.* It should seem so.
'Tis a good lady, and a wise young lady.
2 *Lady.* And virtuous enough, too, that I warrant ye,
For a young woman of her years: 'tis a pity
To load her tender age with too much virtue.
3 *Lady.* 'Tis more sometimes than we can well away with.

Enter ALTEA.

Alt. Good-morrow, ladies.
All. 'Morrow, my good madam.
1 *Lady.* How does the sweet young beauty, lady Margaret?
2 *Lady.* Has she slept well after her walk last night?
1 *Lady.* Are her dreams gentle to her mind?
Alt. All's well,
She's very well: she sent for you thus suddenly,
To give her counsel in a business
That much concerns her.
2 *Lady.* She does well and wisely,
To ask the counsel of the ancientest. Madam,
Our years have run through many things she knows not.
Alt. She would fain marry.
1 *Lady.* 'Tis a proper calling,
And well beseems her years. Who should she yoke with?
Alt. That is left to argue on. I pray, come in
And break your fast; drink a good cup or two,
To strengthen your understandings, then she'll tell ye.
2 *Lady.* And good wine breeds good counsel; we'll yield to ye. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A street.*

Enter JUAN DE CASTRO *and* LEON.

Juan. Have you seen any service?
Leon. Yes.
Juan. Where?
Leon. Every where.
Juan. What office bore ye?
Leon. None; I was not worthy.
Juan. What captains know you?
Leon. None; they were above me.
Juan. Were you ne'er hurt?
Leon. Not that I well remember;
But once I stole a hen, and then they beat me.
Pray, ask me no long questions. I have an ill memory.
Juan. This is an ass. Did you ne'er draw your sword yet?
Leon. Not to do any harm, I thank Heaven for it.
Juan. Nor ne'er ta'en prisoner?
Leon. No, I ran away;
For I ne'er had no money to redeem me.
Juan. Can you endure a drum?
Leon. It makes my head ache.
Juan. Are you not valiant, when you're drunk?
Leon. I think not; but I am loving, sir.
Juan. What a lump is this man!
Was your father wise?
Leon. Too wise for me, I'm sure;
For he gave all he had to my younger brother.

Juan. That was no foolish part, I'll bear you witness.
Why art thou sent to me to be my officer,
Aye, and commended, too, when thou dar'st not fight?
Leon. There be more officers of my opinion,
Or I am cozened, sir; men that talk more, too.
Juan. How wilt thou escape with a bullet?
Leon. Why, by chance.
They aim at honourable men; alas, I am none, sir.
Juan. This fellow hath some doubts in his talk, that strike me.

Enter ALONZO.

He cannot be all fool. Welcome, Alonzo.
Alon. What have you got there, Temperance into your company?
The spirit of peace? we shall have wars by the ounce, then.

Enter CACAFOGO.

Oh, here's another pumpion, the crammed son of a starved usurer, Cacafogo.
Both their brains, buttered, cannot make two spoonfuls.
Caca. My father's dead, I am a man of war, too,
Monies, demesnes; I have ships at sea, too, captains.
Juan. Take heed of the Hollanders, your ships may leak else.
Caca. I scorn the Hollanders, they are my drunkards.
Alon. Put up your gold, sir, I will borrow it else.
Caca. I am satisfied you shall not.
Come out, I know thee; meet mine anger instantly!
Leon. I never wronged ye.
Caca. Thou hast wronged mine honour,
Thou look'st upon my mistress thrice lasciviously;
I'll make it good.
Juan. Do not heat yourself, you will surfeit.
Caca. Thou want'st my money, too, with a pair of base bones,
In whom there was no truth, for which I beat thee,
I beat thee much; now I will hurt thee dangerously.
This shall provoke thee. [*He strikes.*
Alon. You struck too low, by a foot, sir.
Juan. You must get a ladder, when you would beat this fellow.
Leon. I cannot chuse but kick again; pray, pardon me.
Caca. Hadst thou not asked my pardon, I had killed thee.
I leave thee, as a thing despised; *beso las manos a vostra Signora.* [*Exit* CACA.
Alon. You have escaped by miracle: there is not, in all Spain,
A spirit of more fury than this fire-drake.
Leon. I see he's hasty, and I would give him leave
To beat me soundly, if he'd take my bond.
Juan. What shall I do with this fellow?
Alon. Turn him off;
He will infect the camp with cowardice,
If he go with thee.
Juan. About some week hence, sir,
If I can hit upon no abler officer,
You shall hear from me.
Leon. I desire no better. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*A chamber in* MARGARITTA'S *house.*

Enter ESTIFANIA *and* PEREZ.

Per. You have made me too bountiful amends, lady,
For your strict carriage, when you saw me first.
These beauties were not meant to be concealed;
It was a wrong to hide so sweet an object;
I could now chide ye, but it shall be thus:
No other anger ever touch your sweetness.
Estif. You appear to be so honest and so civil,
Without a blush, sir, I dare bid you welcome.
Per. Now, let me ask your name.
Estif. 'Tis Estifania, the heir of this poor place.
Per. Poor, do you call it?
There's nothing that I cast mine eyes upon,
But shews both rich and admirable; all the rooms
Are hung, as if a princess were to dwell here;
The gardens, orchards, every thing so curious.
Is all that plate your own, too?
Estif. 'Tis but a little,
Only for present use; I've more and richer,
When need shall call, or friends compel me use it;
The suits you see of all the upper chambers,
Are those, that commonly adorn the house;
I think, I have, besides, as fair as Seville,
Or any town in Spain, can parallel.
Per. Now, if she be not married, I have some hopes.
Are you a maid?
Estif. You make me blush to answer;
I ever was accounted so to this hour,
And that's the reason, that I live retired, sir.
Per. Then would I counsel you to marry presently,
(If I can get her, I am made for ever) [*Aside.*
For every year you lose, you lose a beauty.
A husband now, an honest, careful husband,
Were such a comfort. Will you walk above stairs?
Estif. This place will fit our talk; 'tis fitter far, sir;
Above, there are day-beds, and such temptations
I dare not trust, sir.
Per. She is excellent wise withal, too.

Estif. You named a husband; I am not so strict, sir,
Nor tied unto a virgin's solitariness,
But if an honest, and a noble one,
Rich, and a soldier, for so I've vowed he shall be,
Were offered me, I think I should accept him.
But, above all, he must love.
Per. He were base else.
There's comfort ministered in the word, soldier.
How sweetly should I live!
Estif. I'm not so ignorant,
But that I know well how to be commanded,
And how again to make myself obey, sir.
I waste but little: I have gathered much:
My rial not less worth, when it is spent,
If spent by my direction. To please my husband,
I hold it as indifferent in my duty,
To be his maid in the kitchen, or his cook,
As in the hall to know myself the mistress.
Per. Sweet, rich, and provident! now, fortune, stick to me.
I am a soldier, and a bachelor, lady;
And such a wife as you I could love infinitely.
They, that use many words, some are deceitful:
I long to be a husband, and a good one;
For 'tis most certain I shall make a precedent
For all, that follow me, to love their ladies.
I'm young, you see; able, I'd have you think, too;
If it please you know, try me before you take me.
'Tis true, I shall not meet in eqal wealth with ye;
But jewels, chains, such as the war has given me,
A thousand ducats, too, in ready gold,
As rich clothes, too, as any he bears arms, lady.
Estif. You're a gentleman, and fair, I see by ye,
And such a man I'd rather take——
Per. Pray, do so.
I'll have a priest o' the sudden.
Estif. And as suddenly
You will repent, too.
Per. I'll be hanged or drowned first,
By this, and this, and this kiss.
Estif. You're a flatterer;
But I must say there was something, when I saw you
First, in that noble face, that stirred my fancy.
Per. I'll stir it better ere you sleep, sweet lady.
I'll send for all my trunks, and give up all to ye,
Into your own dispose, before I bed ye;
And then, sweet wench.—
Estif. You have the art to cozen me.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in* MARGARITTA'S *house.*

Enter MARGARITTA, *three ladies, and* ALTEA.

Mar. COME in, and give me your opinions seriously.
1 *Lady.* You say you have a mind to marry, lady.
Mar. 'Tis true, I have, for to preserve my credit.
I desire my pleasure, and pleasure I must have.
2 *Lady.* What husband mean ye?
Alt. A husband of an easy faith, a fool,
Made by her wealth, and moulded to her pleasure;
One, though he sees himself become a monster,
Shall hold the door, and entertain the maker.
2 *Lady.* You grant there may be such a man.
1 *Lady.* Yes, marry; but how to bring him to this rare perfection.
2 *Lady.* They must be chosen so, things of no honour,
Nor outward honesty.
Mar. No, 'tis no matter;
I care not what they are, so they be comely.
Alt. With search, and wit, and labour,
I've found one out, a right one, and a perfect.
Mar. Is he a gentleman?
Alt. Yes, and a soldier; but as gentle as you'd wish him. A good fellow, and has good clothes, if he knew how to wear them.
Mar. Those I'll allow him;
They are for my credit. Does he understand
But little?
Alt. Very little.
Mar. 'Tis the better.
Have not the wars bred him up to anger?
Alt. No, he won't quarrel with a dog that bites him;
Let him be drunk or sober, he's one silence.
Mar. H'as no capacity what honour is;
For that's a soldier's god?
Alt. Honour's a thing too subtle for his wisdom;
If honour lie in eating, he's right honourable.
Mar. Is he so goodly a man, do you say?
Alt. As you shall see, lady;
But, to all this, he's but a trunk.
Mar. I'd have him so.
Go, find me out this man, and let me see him.
If he be that motion, that you tell me of,
And make no more noise, I shall entertain him.
Let him be here.
Alt. He shall attend your ladyship. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A street.*

Enter JUAN, ALONSO, *and* PEREZ.

Juan. Why, thou'rt not married indeed?
Per. No, no, pray think so.
Alas! I am a fellow of no reckoning,
Nor worth a lady's eye.

Alon. Wou'dst steal a fortune,
And make none of thy friends acquainted with it,
Nor bid us to thy wedding?
Per. No, indeed.
There was no wisdom it it, to bid an artist,
An old seducer, to a female banquet.
I can cut up my pie without your instructions.
Juan. Was it the wench in the veil?
Per. Basta; 'twas she.
The prettiest rogue, that e'er you looked upon;
The loving'st thief!
Juan. And is she rich withal, too?
Per. A mine, a mine; there is no end of her wealth, colonel;
I am an ass, a bashful fool. Pr'ythee, colonel,
How do thy companies fill now?
Juan. You're merry, sir;
You intend a safer war at home, belike, now?
Per. I do not think I shall fight much this year, colonel;
I find myself given to my ease a little.
I care not, if I sell my foolish company;
They're things of hazard.
Alon. How it angers me,
This fellow, at first sight, should win a lady,
A rich young wench——And I, that have consumed
My time and art in searching out their subtleties,
Like a fooled alchymist, blow up my hopes still.
When shall we come to thy house, and be freely merry?
Per. When I have managed her a little more.
I have an house to maintain an army.
Alon. If thy wife be fair, thou'lt have few less come to thee.
Per. Where they'll get entertainment, is the point;
Signior, I beat no drum.
May be I'll march, after a month or two,
To get a fresh stomach. I find, colonel,
A wantonness in wealth, methinks, I agree not with.
'Tis such a trouble to be married, too,
And have a thousand things of great importance,
Jewels and plate, and fooleries molest me,
To have a man's brains whimsied with his wealth.
Before I walked contentedly.

Enter Servant.

Ser. My mistress, sir, is sick, because you're absent.
She mourns, and will not eat.
Per. Alas, my jewel!
Come, I'll go with thee. Gentlemen, your fair leaves;
You see I am tied a little to my yoke;
Pray, pardon me; would ye had both such loving wives!
Juan. I thank ye
For your old boots. Never be blank, Alonzo,
Because this fellow has outstripped thy fortune.
Tell me, ten days hence, what he is, and how
The gracious state of matrimony stands with him.
Come, let's to dinner; when Margaritta comes,
We'll visit both; it may be then your fortune.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A chamber.*

Enter MARGARITTA, ALTEA, *and Ladies.*

Mar. Is he come?
Alt. Yes, madam, he has been here this half hour.
I've questioned him of all that you can ask him,
And find him fit as you had made the man.
Mar. Call him in, Altea. [*Exit* ALTEA.

Enter LEON *and* ALTEA.

A man of a comely countenance. Pray ye, come this way.
Is his mind so tame?
Alt. Pray question him, and, if you find him not
Fit for your purpose, shake him off; there's no harm done.
Mar. Can ye love a young lady? How he blushes!
Alt. Leave twirling of your hat, and hold your head up,
And speak to the lady.
Leon. Yes, I think I can;
I must be taught; I know not what it means, madam.
Mar. You shall be taught. And can you, when she pleases,
Go ride abroad, and stay a week or two?
You shall have men and horses to attend ye,
And money in your purse.
Leon. Yes, I love riding;
And when I am from home, I am so merry!
Mar. Be as merry as you will. Can you as handsomely,
When you are sent for back, come with obedience,
And do your duty to the lady loves you?
Leon. Yes, sure, I shall.
Mar. And when you see her friends here,
Or noble kinsmen, can you entertain
Their servants in the cellar, and be busied,
And hold your peace, whate'er you see or hear?
Leon. 'Twere fit I were hanged else.
Mar. Come, salute me.
Leon. Madam?
Mar. How the fool shakes! I will not eat you, sir.
Can't you salute me?
Leon. Indeed, I know not; but, if your ladyship will
Please to instruct me, sure I shall learn.
Mar. Come on, then.
Leon. Come on, then. [*He kisses her.*
Mar. You shall, then, be instructed.

If I should be this lady, that affects ye;
Nay, say I marry ye?
Alt. Hark to the lady.
Mar. What money have ye?
Leon. None, madam, nor no friends.
I would do any thing to serve your ladyship.
Mar. You must not look to be my master, sir.
Nor talk in the house, as though you wore the breeches;
No, nor command in any thing.
Leon. I will not;
Alas, I am not able! I've no wit, madam.
Mar. Nor do not labour to arrive at any;
'Twill spoil your head. I take ye upon charity,
And like a servant ye must be unto me.
As I behold your duty, I shall love you;
Can you mark these?
Leon. Yes, indeed, forsooth.
Mar. There is one thing,
That, if I take ye in, I put ye from me,
Utterly from me; you must not be saucy,
No, nor at any time familiar with me,
Scarce know me, when I call ye not.
Leon. I will not. Alas, I never knew myself sufficiently!
Mar. Nor must not now.
Leon. I'll be a dog to please you.
Mar. Indeed, you must fetch and carry as I appoint ye.
Leon. I were to blame else.
Mar. Kiss me again. [*Kisses her.*
If you see me
Kiss any other, twenty in an hour, sir,
You must not start, nor be offended.
Leon. No, if you kiss a thousand, I shall be contented;
It will the better teach me how to please ye.
Alt. I told ye, madam.
Mar. 'Tis the man I wished for, the less you speak——
Leon. I'll never speak again, madam,
But when you charge me; then I'll speak softly too.
Mar. Get me a priest; I'll wed him instantly.
But, when you're married, sir, you must wait on me,
And see ye observe my laws.
Leon. Else you shall hang me.
Mar. I'll give you better clothes, when you deserve them.
Come in, and serve for witness.
Omnes. We shall, madam.
Mar. And then away to the city presently;
I'll to my new house, and new company.
Leon. A thousand crowns are thine; I'm a made man.
[*Aside to* ALTEA.
Alt. Do not break out too soon.
Leon. I know my time, wench.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A grand saloon.*

Enter CLARA *and* ESTIFANIA, *with a paper.*

Cla. What, have you caught him?
Estif. Yes.
Cla. And do you find him
A man of those hopes, that you aimed at?
Estif. Yes, and the most kind man;
I find him rich too, Clara.
Cla. Hast thou married him?
Estif. What, dost thou think I fish without a bait, wench?
I bob for fools. He is mine own. I have him.
I told thee what would tickle him like a trout;
And as I cast it, so I caught him daintily;
And all, he has, I've stowed at my devotion.
Cla. Does the lady know this? she's coming now to town:
Now, to live here, in this house.
Estif. Let her come,
She shall be welcome, I'm prepared for her;
She's mad, sure, if she be angry at my fortune;
For what I have made bold.
Cla. Dost thou not love him?
Estif. Yes, entirely well.
As long as there he stays, and looks no farther
Into my ends; but when he doubts, I hate him;
And that wise hate will teach me how to cozen him.
How to decline their wives, and curb their manners;
To put a stern and strong rein to their natures:
And holds he is an ass not worth acquaintance,
That cannot mould a devil into obedience.
I owe him a good turn for these opinions;
And, as I find his temper, I may pay him.

Enter PERTZ.

O, here he is! now you shall see a kind man.
Per. My Estifania, shall we to dinner, lamb?
I know thou stay'st for me.
Estif. I cannot eat else.
Per. I never enter, but methinks a paradise
Appears about me.
Estif. You are welcome to it, sir.
Per. I think I have the sweetest seat in Spain, wench,
Methinks the richest, too. We'll eat i' the garden,
In one of the arbours; there 'tis cool and pleasant;
And have our wine cooled in the running fountain.
Who's that?
Estif. A friend of mine, sir.
Per. Of what breeding?
Estif. A gentlewoman, sir.
Per. What business has she?
Is she a woman learned in the mathematics?
Can she tell fortunes?
Estif. More than I know, sir.

Per. Or has she e'er a letter from a kinswoman,
That must be delivered in my absence, wife?
Or comes she from the doctor to salute ye,
And learn your health? she looks not like a confessor.
Estif. What needs all this? why are you troubled, sir?
What do you suspect? she cannot cuckold ye:
She is a woman, sir, a very woman.
Per. Your very woman may do very well, sir,
Towards the matter; for, though she cannot perform it
In her own person, she may do it by proxy.
Your rarest jugglers work still by conspiracy.
Estif. Cry ye mercy, husband! you are jealous, then,
And haply suspect me?
Per. No, indeed, wife.
Estif. Methinks you should not, till you have more cause,
And clearer, too. I'm sure you've heard say, husband,
A woman forced will free herself through iron;
A happy, calm, and good wife, discontented,
May be caught by tricks.
Per. No, no: I do but jest with ye.
Estif. To-morrow, friend, I'll see you.
Cla. I shall leave ye
Till then, and pray all may go sweetly with ye. [*Exit.*
[*Knocking.*
Estif. Why, where's the girl? who's at the door? [*Knock.*
Per. Who knocks there?
Is't for the king you come, ye knock so boisterously?
Look to the door.

Enter Maid.

Maid. My lady, as I live! mistress, my lady's come;
She's at the door; I peeped through, I saw her,
And a stately company of ladies with her.
Estif. This was a week too soon, but I must meet with her,
And set a new wheel going, and a subtle one,
Must blind this mighty Mars, or I am ruined. [*Aside.*
Per. What are they at the door?
Estif. Such, my Michael,
As you may bless the day they entered here;
Such for our good.
Per. 'Tis well.
Estif. Nay, 'twill be better
If you will let me but dispose the business,
And be a stranger to it, and not disturb me.
What have I now to do but advance your fortune?
Per. Do, I dare trust thee; I am ashamed I was angry;
I find thee a wise young wife.
Estif. I'll wise your worship
Before I leave ye. [*Aside.*] Pray ye walk by, and say nothing;
Only salute them, and leave the rest to me, sir;
I was born to make ye a man.
Per. The rogue speaks heartily:
Her good-will colours in her cheeks: I am born to love her.
I must be gentle to these tender natures:
A soldier's rude, harsh words befit not ladies;
Nor must we talk to them, as we talk to
Our officers. I'll give her way, for 'tis for me she
Works now; I am husband, heir, and all she has—

Enter MARGARITTA, LEON, ALTEA, *and Ladies.*

Who are these? I hate such flaunting things.
A woman of rare presence! excellent fair;
This is too big, sure, for a bawdy house;
Too open seated, too.
Estif. My husband, lady.
Mar. You have gained a proper man.
Per. Whate'er I am, I am your servant, lady. [*Kisses.*
Estif. Sir, be ruled now, [*Apart to* PEREZ.
And I shall make you rich: this is my cousin;
That gentleman doats on her, even to death.
See how he observes her.
Per. She is a goodly woman.
Estif. She is a mirror.
But she is poor, she were for a prince's side else;
This house she has brought him to as to her own,
And presuming upon me, and on my courtesy——
Conceive me short; he knows not but she's wealthy:
Or if he did know otherwise, 'twere all one,
He's so far gone.
Per. Forward; she's a rare face.
Estif. This we must carry with discretion, husband,
And yield unto her for four days.
Per. Yield our house up, our goods and wealth!
Estif. All this is but seeming. Do you see this writing?
Two hundred pounds a year, when they are married,
Has she sealed to for our good—The time is unfit now;
I'll shew it you to-morrow.
Per. All the house?
Estif. All, all; and we'll remove, too, to confirm him.
They'll into the country suddenly again,
After they are matched, and then she'll open to him.
Per. The whole possession, wife? Look what you do.
A part of the house.
Estif. No, no, they shall have all,
And take their pleasure too; 'tis for our advantage.

Why, what's four days? Had you a sister, sir,
A niece, or mistress, that required this courtesy,
And should I make a scruple to do you good?
Per. If easily it would come back.
Estif. I swear, sir, as easily as it came on.
Is't not pity
To let such a gentlewoman for a little help——
You give away no house.
Per. Clear but that question.
Estif. I'll put the writings into your hand.
Per. Well then.
Estif. And you shall keep them safe.
Per. I'm satisfied. Would I had the wench too!
Estif. When she has married him,
So infinite his love is linked unto her,
You, I, or any one that helps at this pinch,
May have—Heaven knows what.
Per. I'll remove my trunks straight,
And take some poor house by; 'tis but four days.
Estif. I have a poor friend; there we will be.
Per. 'Tis well then.
Estif. Go handsome off, and leave the house clear.
Per. Well.
Estif. That little stuff we'll use shall follow after;
And a boy to guide ye. Peace, and we are made both.
Mar. Come, let's go in. Are all the rooms kept sweet, wench?
Estif. They're sweet and neat. [*Exit* PEREZ.
Mar. Why, where's your husband?
Estif. Gone, madam.
When you come to your own, he must give place, lady.
Mar. Well, send you joy; you would not let me know it,
Yet I shall not forget ye.
Estif. Thank your ladyship.
Mar. Come, lead me. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber.*

Enter MARGARITTA *and* ALTEA.

Alt. ARE you at ease now? Is your heart at rest,
Now you have got a shadow, an umbrella,
To keep the scorching world's opinion
From your fair credit?
Mar. I am at peace, Altea.
If he continue but the same he shews,
And be a master of that ignorance
He outwardly professes, I am happy.
Alt. You're a made woman.
Mar. But if he should prove now
A crafty and dissembling kind of husband,
One read in knavery, and brought up in the art
Of villainy concealed?
Alt. My life, an innocent.
Mar. That's it I aim at.
That's it I hope too, then I'm sure I rule him:
For innocents are like obedient children,
Brought up under a hard mother-in-law, a cruel,
Who, being not used to breakfasts and collations,
When they have coarse bread offered, are thankful,
And take it for a favour too.
Are the rooms made ready
To entertain my friends? I long to dance now.
Let me have a song. Is the great couch up
The duke of Medina sent?
Alt. Your house is nothing now but various pleasures.
The gallants begin to gaze too.
Mar. Let them gaze on.
I was brought up a courtier, high and happy;
And company is my delight, and courtship,
And handsome servants at my will. Where's my good husband?
Where does he wait?
Alt. He knows his distance, madam.
I warrant ye he is busy in the cellar
Among his fellow-servants, or asleep,
Till your commands awake him.

Enter LEON *and* LORENZO.

Mar. 'Tis well, Altea;
It should be so; my ward I must preserve him.
Who sent for him? How dare he come uncalled for?
His bonnet on too!
Alt. Sure he sees you not.
Mar. How scornfully he looks!
Leon. Are all the chambers
Decked and adorned thus for my lady's pleasure?
New hangings every hour for entertainment?
And new plate bought, new jewels to give lustre?
Ser. They are, and yet there must be more and richer;
It is her will.
Leon. Hum, is it so? 'Tis excellent.
Is it her will, too, to have feasts and banquets,
Revels and masques?
Ser. She ever loved them dearly;
And we shall have the bravest house kept now, sir.
I must not call ye master; she has warned me:
Nor must not put my hat off to you.
Leon. 'Tis no fashion.
What though I be her husband, I'm your fellow;
I may cut first?
Ser. That's as you shall deserve, sir.
Leon. I thank you, sir.

Enter a Lady.

1 *Lady.* Madam, the duke Medina, with some captains,
Will come to dinner, and have sent rare wine,
And their best services.
Mar. They shall be welcome.
See all be ready in the noblest fashion.
Go, get your best clothes on; but, till I call ye,
Be sure you be not seen. Dine with the gentlewomen,
And behave yourself handsomely, sir; 'tis for my credit.

Enter a second Lady.

2 *Lady.* Madam, the lady Julia——
Leon. That's a bawd;
A three-piled bawd; bawd major to the army.
2 *Lady.* Has brought her coach to wait upon your ladyship,
And to be informed if you will take the air this morning.
Leon. The neat air of her nunnery.
Mar. Tell her no; i' the afternoon I'll call on her.
2 *Lady.* I will, madam. [*Exit.*
Leon. Faith, madam, in my little understanding,
You'd better entertain your honest neighbours,
Your friends about ye, that may speak well of ye,
And give a worthy mention of your bounty.
Mar. How now, what's this?
Leon. 'Tis only to persuade ye
Courtiers are tickle things to deal withal,
A kind of march-pane men that will not last, madam;
An egg and pepper goes farther than their portions;
And in a well-knit body, a poor parsnip
Will play his prize above their strong potables.
Mar. The fellow's mad!
Leon. He, that shall counsel ladies,
That have both liquorish and ambitious eyes,
Is either mad or drunk, let him speak gospel.
Alt. He breaks out modestly.
Leon. Pray ye be not angry;
My indiscretion has made bold to tell ye
What you'll find true.
Mar. Thou dar'st not talk?
Leon. Not much, madam;
You have a tie upon your servant's tongue;
He dare not be so bold as reason bids him;
'Twere fit there were a stronger on your temper.
Ne'er look so stern upon me! I'm your husband:
But what are husbands? Read the New World's Wonders,
Such husbands as this monstrous world produces,
And you will scarce find such strange deformities;
They're shadows to conceal your venal virtues;
Sails to your mills, that grind with all occasions;
Balls that lie by you, to wash out your stains;
And bills nailed up with horns before your doors,
To rent out wantonness.
Mar. Do you hear him talk?
Leon. I've done, madam:
An ox once spoke, as learned men deliver;
Shortly I shall be such, then I'll speak wonders.
'Till when I tie myself to my obedience. [*Exit.*
Mar. First I'll untie myself. Did you mark the gentleman,
How boldly and how saucily he talked,
And how unlike the lump I took him for!
The piece of ignorant dough! he stood up to me,
And rated my commands.
This was your providence,
Your wisdom, to elect this gentleman,
Your excellent forecast in the man, your knowledge!
What think ye now?
Alt. I think him an ass still.
This boldness, some of your people have blown into him,
This wisdom too, with strong wine; 'tis a tyrant,
And a philosopher also, and finds out reasons.
Mar. I'll have my cellar locked, no school kept there,
Nor no discovery. I'll turn my drunkards,
Such as are understanding in their draughts,
And dispute learnedly the whys and wherefores,
To grass immediately: I'll keep all fools;
Sober or drunk, still fools that shall know nothing.
Nothing belongs to mankind but obedience,
And such a hand I'll keep over this husband.
Alt. He'll fall again: my life, he cries by this time:
Keep him from drink; he's a high constitution.

Enter LEON.

Leon. Shall I wear my new suit, madam?
Mar. No, your old clothes.
And get you into the country presently,
And see my hawks well trained: you shall have victuals,
Such as are fit for saucy palates, sir,
And lodgings with the hinds; it is too good too.
Leon. Good madam, be not so rough with repentance!
Alt. You see how he's come round again.
Mar. I see not what I expect to see.
Leon. You shall see, madam, if it please your ladyship.
Alt. He's humbled;
Forgive, good lady.
Mar. Well, go, get you handsome,
And let me hear no more.
Leon. Have ye yet no feeling?
I'll pinch you to the bones then, my proud lady. [*Exit.*
Mar. See you preserve him thus, upon my favour.
You know his temper, tie him to the grindstone;
The next rebellion I'll be rid of him.

I'll have no needy rascals I tie to me
Dispute my life. Come in, and see all handsome.
Alt. I hope to see you so too, I've wrought ill else. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An ordinary apartment.*

Enter PERIZ.

Per. Shall I
Never return to mine own house again?
We're lodged here in the miserablest dog-hole!
A conjuror's circle gives content above it;
A hawk's mew is a princely palace to it:
We have a bed no bigger than a basket,
And we lie like butter clapt together,
And sweat ourselves to sauce immediately;
The fumes are infinite, that inhabit here too,
And to that so thick they cut like marmalade;
So various too, they'll pose a gold finder.
Never return to mine own paradise——
Why, wife, I say; why, Estifania!
Estif. [*within.*] I'm going presently.
Per. Make haste, good jewel.
I'm like the people that live in the sweet islands:
I die, I die, if I stay but one day more here.
My lungs are rotten with the damps that rise,
And I cough nothing now but stinks of all sorts.
The inhabitants we have are two starved rats,
(For they're not able to maintain a cat here,)
And those appear as fearful as two devils;
They've eat a map o' the whole world up already,
And if we stay a night, we're gone for company.
There's an old woman, that's now grown to marble,
Dried in this brick-kiln, and she sits i' the chimney,
Which is but three tiles raised, like a house of cards,
The true proportion of an old smoaked Sybil.
There is a young thing too, that nature meant
For a maid servant, but 'tis now a monster;
She has a husk about her like a chesnut,
With laziness, and living under the line here;
And these two makes a hollow sound together,
Like frogs, or winds between two doors, that murmur.

Enter ESTIFANIA.

Mercy deliver me. Oh, are you come, wife;
Shall we be free again?
Estif. I am now going,
And you shall, presently, to your own house, sir:
The remembrance of this small vexation
Will be argument of mirth for ever.
By that time you have said your orisons,
And broke your fast, I shall be back, and ready
To usher you to your old content, your freedom.
Per. Break my fast! break my neck rather.
Is there any thing here to eat
But one another, like a race of cannibals?
A piece of buttered wall you think is excellent.
Let's have our house again immediately;
And pray ye take heed unto the furniture,
None be embezzled.
Estif. Not a pin, I warrant ye.
Per. And let them instantly depart.
Estif. They shall both; there's reason in all courtesy;
For by this time I know she has acquainted him,
And has provided too: she sent me word, sir,
And will give over gratefully unto you.
Per. I will walk in the church-yard;
The dead cannot offend more than these living.
An hour hence I'll expect ye.
Estif. I'll not fail, sir.
Per. And do you hear? let's have a handsome dinner,
And see all things be decent as they have been;
And let me have a strong bath to restore me;
I stink like a stale fish-shambles, or an oil-shop.
Estif. You shall have all, which some interpret nothing. [*Aside.*
I'll send ye people for the trunks afore-hand.
Per. Let them be known and honest;
And do my service to your niece.
Estif. I shall, sir:
But if I come not at my hour, come thither,
That they may give you thanks for your fair courtesy;
And pray you, be brave for my sake.
Per. I observe ye. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A street.*

Enter JUAN DE CASTRO, SANCHIO, *and* CACALOGO.

San. Thou'rt very brave.
Caca. I've reason, I have money.
San. Is money reason?
Caca. Yes, and rhyme too, captain.
If you've no money, you're an ass.
San. I thank ye.
Caca. Ye've manners; ever thank him, that has money.
San. Wilt thou lend me any?
Caca. Not a farthing, captain:
Captains are casual things.
San. Why so are all men. Thou shalt have my bond.
Caca. Not bonds, nor fetters, captain.
My money is my own, I make no doubt on't.
Juan. What dost thou do with it?
Caca. Put it to pious uses.
Buy wine and wenches, and undo young coxcombs
That would undo me.
Juan. Are those hospitals?
Caca. I first provide to fill my hospitals
With creatures of mine own, that I know wretched,
And then I build: those are more bound to pray for me:
Besides, I keep the inheritance in my name still.

Juan. A provident charity. Are you for the wars, sir?
Caca. I am not poor enough to be a soldier,
Nor have I faith enough to ward a bullet;
There is no lining for a trench, I take it.
Juan. Ye have said wisely.
Caca. Had you but my money,
You'd swear it, colonel. I had rather drill at home
A hundred thousand crowns, and with more honour,
Than exercise ten thousand fools with nothing.
A wise man safely feeds, fools cut their fingers.
San. A right state usurer. Why dost not marry,
And live a reverend justice?
Caca. Is it not nobler to command a reverend justice, than to be one?
And for a wife, what need I marry, captain,
When every courteous fool, that owes me money,
Owes me his wife too, to appease my fury?
Juan. Wilt thou go to dinner with us?
Caca. I will go, and view the pearl of Spain, the orient
Fair one, the rich one too; and I will be respected.
I bear my patent here; I will talk to her;
And when your captainships shall stand aloof,
And pick your noses, I will pick the purse
Of her affection.
Juan. The duke dines there to-day too, the duke of Medina.
Caca. Let the king dine there!
He owes me money, and so far's my creature,
And certainly I may make bold with mine own, captain.
San. Thou wilt eat monstrously.
Caca. Like a true born Spaniard:
Eat as I were in England, where the beef grows:
And I will drink abundantly, and then
Talk ye as wantonly as Ovid did,
To stir the intellectuals of the ladies;
I learnt it of my father's amorous scrivener.
Juan. If we should play now, you must supply me.
Caca. You must pawn a horse troop,
And then have at ye, colonel.
San. Come, let's go.
This rascal will make rare sport. How the ladies
Will laugh at him!
Juan. If I light on him, I'll make his purse sweat too.
Caca. Will ye lead, gentlemen? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*An ordinary apartment.*

Enter PEREZ, *Old Woman, and Maid.*

Per. Nay, pray ye come out, and let me understand ye,
And tune your pipe a little higher, lady;
I'll hold ye fast. How came my trunks open,
And my goods gone? What pick-lock spirit——
Old Wom. Ha! What would ye have?
Per. My goods again. How came my trunks all open?
Old Wom. Are your trunks all open?
Per. Yes, and clothes gone,
And chains and jewels. How she smells like hung beef,
The palsy, and pick-locks! Fye, how she belches
The spirit of garlic!
Old Wom. Where's your gentlewoman?
The young fair woman?
Per. What's that to my question?
She is my wife, and gone about my business.
Maid. Is she your wife, sir?
Per. Yes, sir: is that a wonder?
Is the name of wife unknown here?
Old Wom. Is she duly and truly your wife?
Per. Duly and truly my wife! I think so,
For I married her. It was no vision, sure!
Maid. She has the keys, sir.
Per. I know she has; but who has all my goods, spirit?
Old Wom. If you be married to that gentlewoman,
You are a wretched man: she has twenty husbands.
Maid. She tells you true.
Old Wom. And she has cozened all, sir.
Per. The devil she has! I had a fair house with her,
That stands hard by, and furnished royally.
Old Wom. You're cozened too; 'tis none of her's, good gentleman,
It is a lady's.
Maid. The lady Margaritta; she was her servant,
And kept the house; but going from her, sir,
For some lewd tricks she played.
Per. Plague o' the devil!
Am I, in the full meridian of my wisdom,
Cheated by a stale quean! What kind of lady
Is that that owns the house?
Old Wom. A young sweet lady.
Per. Of low stature?
Old Wom. She's indeed but little, but she's wondrous fair.
Per. I feel I'm cozened:
Now I am sensible I am undone.
This is the very woman sure, that cousin,
She told me would entreat but for four days
To make the house hers—I am entreated sweetly.
Maid. When she went out this morning, I saw, sir,
She had two women at the door attending,
And there she gave them things, and loaded them:
But what they were——I heard your trunks too open,
If they be yours.
Per. They were mine while they were laden;
But now they've cast their calves, they're not worth owning.

Was she her mistress, say you?
Old Wom. Her own mistress, her very mistress, sir; and all you saw
About and in that house was hers.
Per. No plate, no jewels, nor no hangings?
Maid. Not a farthing; she's poor, sir, a poor shifting thing.
Per. No money?
Old Wom. Abominable poor, as poor as we are,
Money as rare to her, unless she steal it.
But for one single gown her lady gave her,
She might go bare, good gentlewoman.
Per. I'm mad now:
I think I am as poor as she, I'm wild else.
One single suit I have left too, and that's all,
And if she steals that she must flay me for it.
Where does she use?
Old Wom. You may find the truth as soon.
Alas, a thousand concealed corners, sir, she lurks in;
And here she gets a fleece, and there another,
And lives in mists and smokes where none can find her.
Per. Is she a whore too?
Old Wom. Little better, gentleman:
I dare not say she is so, sir, because
She's yours, sir: these five years she has firked
A pretty living.
Per. She has firked me finely.
A whore and thief; two excellent moral learnings
In one she saint. I hope to see her legend.
Have I been feared for my discoveries,
And been courted by all women to conceal them;
Have I so long studied the art of this sex,
And read the warning to young gentlemen;
Have I professed to tame the pride of ladies,
And make them bear all tests; and am I tricked now?
Caught in my own noose? Here's a rial left yet;
There's for your lodging, and your meat for a week;
A silk-worm lives at a more plentiful ordinary,
And sleeps in a sweeter box.
Farewell, great grandmother;
If I do find you were an accessary,
'Tis but the cutting off two smoaking minutes!
I'll hang ye presently.
Old Wom. And I deserve it—I tell you truth.
Per. Not I, I am an ass, mother.
Old Wom. O the rogue, the villain! Is this usage for the fair sex. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*A grand apartment.*

Enter the DUKE OF MEDINA, JUAN DE CASTRO, ALONZO, SANCHIO, CACAFOGO, *and Attendants.*

Duke. A goodly house.
Juan. And richly furnished too, sir.
Alon. Hung wantonly; I like that preparation;
It stirs the blood into a hopeful banquet,
And intimates the mistress free and jovial;
I love a house, where pleasure prepares welcome.
Duke. Now, Cacafogo, how like you this mansion?
'Twere a brave pawn.
Caca. I shall be master of it;
'Twas built for my bulk, the rooms are wide and spacious,
Airy, and full of ease, and that I love well.
I'll tell you, when I taste the wine, my lord,
And take the height of her table with my stomach,
How my affection stands to the young lady.

Enter MARGARITTA, ALTEA, *Ladies, and Servant.*

Mar. All welcome to your grace, and to these soldiers!
You honour my poor house with your fair presence;
Those few slight pleasures, that inhabit here, sir,
I do beseech your grace command; they're yours;
Your servant but preserves them to delight ye.
Duke. I thank ye, lady. I am bold to visit ye,
Once more to bless mine eyes with your sweet beauty.
It has been a long night, since you left the court,
For, till I saw you now, no day broke to me.
Mar. Bring in the duke's meat.
San. She's most excellent.
Juan. Most admirable fair, as e'er I looked on;
I rather would command her than my regiment.
Caca. I'll have a fling; 'tis but a thousand ducats,
Which I can cozen up in ten days.

Enter LEON.

Mar. Why, where's this dinner?
Leon. 'Tis not ready, madam,
Nor shall it be, until I know the guests *too*,
Nor are they fairly welcome till I bid them.
Juan. Is not this my Alferes? he looks another thing;
Are miracles a-foot again?
Mar. Why, sirrah; why, sirrah, you!
Leon. I hear you, saucy woman;
And, as you are my wife, command your absence,
And know your duty; 'tis the crown of modesty.
Duke. Your wife!
Leon. Yes, good my lord, I am her husband,
And, pray, take notice, that I claim that honour,
And will maintain it.
Caca. If thou be'st her husband,
I am determined thou shalt be my cuckold;
I'll be thy faithful friend.
Leon. Peace, dirt and dunghill!
I will not lose my anger on a rascal.
Provoke me more, I'll beat thy blown-up body,
Till thou rebound'st again like a tennis-ball.
Caca. I'll talk with you another time [*Exit.*
Alon. This is miraculous!

San. Is this the fellow
That had the patience to become a fool,
A fluttered fool, and, on a sudden, break,
As if he would shew a wonder to the world,
Both in bravery and fortune too?
I am astonished!
Mar. I'll be divorced immediately.
Leon. You shall not.
You shall not have so much will to be wicked.
I am more tender of your honour, lady.
You took me for a shadow,
You took me to gloss over your discredit,
To be your fool.
You had thought you had found a coxcomb.
I'm innocent of any foul dishonour I mean to ye;
Only I will be known to be your lord now,
And be a fair one, too, or I will fall for it.
Mar. I do command ye from me, thou poor fellow,
Thou cozened fool!
Leon. Thou cozened fool!
I will not be commanded: I'm above ye.
You may divorce me from your favour, lady,
But from your 'state you never shall. I'll hold that,
And hold it to my use; the law allows it.
And then maintain your wantonness, I'll wink at it.
Mar. Am I braved thus in mine own house?
Leon. 'Tis mine, madam!
You are deceived, I'm lord of it, I rule it,
And all that's in it; you've nothing to do here, madam,
But as a servant to sweep clean the lodgings,
And at my farther will to do me service;
And so I'll keep it.
Mar. 'Tis well.
Leon. It shall be better.
Mar. As you love me, give way.
Leon. I will give none, madam;
I stand upon the ground of my own honour,
And will maintain it; you shall know me now
To be an understanding, feeling man,
And sensible of what a woman aims at;
A young proud woman, that has will to sail with;
A wanton woman, that her blood provokes too.
I cast my cloud off, and appear myself,
The master of this little piece of mischief,
And I will put a spell about your feet, lady;
They shall not wander, but where I give way now.
Duke. Is this the fellow, that the people pointed at,
For the mere sign of man, the walking image?
He speaks wondrous highly.
Leon. As a husband ought, sir,
In his own house; and it becomes me well, too.
I think your grace would grieve, if you were put to it,
To have a wife or servant of your own,
(For wives are reckoned in the rank of servants)
Under your own roof to command ye.
Juan. Brave! a strange conversion; thou shalt lead
In chief now.
Duke. Is there no difference betwixt her and you, sir?
Leon. Not now, my lord; my fortune makes me even,
And, as I am an honest man, I'm nobler.
Mar. Get me my coach.
Leon. Let me see who dares get it,
Till I command; I'll make him draw your coach,
And eat your coach too (which will be hard diet),
That executes your will; or, take your coach, lady;
I give you liberty; and take your people,
Which I turn off; and take your will abroad with ye——
Take all these freely, but take me no more;
And so, farewell.
Duke. Nay, sir, you shall not carry it
So bravely off; you shall not wrong a lady
In a high huffing strain, and think to bear it.
We shall not stand by, as bawds to your brave fury,
To see a lady weep——Draw, sir.
Leon. They're tears of anger,
Wrung from her rage, because her will prevails not.
She would even now swoon, if she could not cry,
Else they were excellent, and I should grieve, too;
But falling thus, they shew nor sweet nor orient.
Put up, my lord! this is oppression,
And calls the sword of justice to relieve me,
The law to lend her hand, the king to right me;
All which shall understand how you provoke me.
In mine own house to brave me, is this princely?
Then to my guard; and if I spare your grace,
And do not make this place your monument,
Too rich a tomb for such a rude behaviour,
Mercy forsake me! [*Draws.*
I have a cause will kill a thousand of ye.
Juan. Hold, fair sir, I beseech ye!
The gentleman but pleads his own right nobly.
Leon. He, that dares strike against the husband's freedom,
The husband's curse stick to him, a tamed cuckold!
His wife be fair and young; but most dishonest,
Most impudent, and he have no feeling of it,
No conscience to reclaim her from a monster;
Let her lie by him like a flattering ruin,
And, at one instant, kill both name and honour:
Let him be lost, no eye to weep his end,
And find no earth, that's base enough to bury him!
Now, sir, fall on, I'm ready to oppose ye.
Duke. I've better thought. I pray, sir, use your wife well.
Leon. Mine own humanity will teach me that, sir.
And now, you're welcome all, and we'll to dinner;
This is my wedding-day.

Duke. I'll cross your joy yet.
Juan. I've seen a miracle; hold thine own, soldier!
Sure they dare fight in fire, that conquer women.

Enter PEREZ.

Per. 'Save ye, which is the lady of the house?
Leon. That's she, sir, that good-natured pretty lady,
If you'd speak with her.
Juan. Don Michael!
Per. Pray do not know me, I am full of businiess.
When I have more time I'll be merry with ye.
It is the woman. Good madam, tell me truly,
Had you a maid called Estifania?
Mar. Yes, truly had I.
Per. Was she a maid do you think?
Mar. I dare not swear for her;
For she had but a scant fame.
Per. Was she your kinswoman?
Mar. Not that I ever knew; now I look better,
I think you married her; give you much joy, sir.
Per. Give me a halter.
Mar. You may reclaim her; 'twas a wild young girl.
Per. Is not this house mine, madam?
Was not she owner of it? Pray, speak truly.
Mar. No, certainly, I'm sure my money paid for it,
And ne'er remember yet I gave it you, sir.
Per. The hangings and the plate, too?
Mar. All are mine, sir,
And every thing you see about the building;
She only kept my house, when I was absent;
And so I'll keep it, I was weary of her.
Per. Where is your maid?
Mar. Do you not know, that have her?
She's yours now, why should I look after her?
Since that first hour I came I never saw her.
Per. I saw her later—would the devil had had her!
It is all true, I find; a wild-fire take her!
Juan. Is thy wife with child, Don Michael? Thy excellent wife.
Art thou a man yet?
Alon. When shall we come and visit thee?
San. And eat some rare fruit? Thou hast admirable orchards.
You are so jealous now! Pox on your jealousy,
How scornfully you look!
Per. Prithee leave fooling.
I'm in no humour now to fool and prattle.
Did she ne'er play the wag with you?
Mar. Yes, many times,
So often that I was ashamed to keep her.
But I forgave her, sir, in hopes she'd mend still;
And had not you o' the instant married her,
I'd put her off.
Per. I thank ye; I am blest still;
Which way soe'er I turn I'm a made man.
Miserably gulled beyond recovery.
Juan. You'll stay and dine?
Per. Certain I cannot, captain.
Hark in thine ear, I am the arrantest puppy,
The miserablest ass! But I must leave ye.
I am in haste, in haste. Bless you, good madam,
And may you prove as good as my wife!
Leon. What then, sir?
Per. No matter, if the devil had one to fetch the other. [*Exit* PEREZ.
Leon. Will you walk in, sir? will your grace but honour me,
And taste our dinner? You are nobly welcome.
All anger's past, I hope, and I shall serve ye.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A street.*

Enter PEREZ.

Per. I'll to a conjurer, but I'll find this polecat,
This pilfering whore. A plague of veils, I cry,
And covers for the impudence of women!
Their sanctity in show will deceive devils.
It is my evil angel! let me bless me.

Enter ESTIFANIA, *with a casket.*

Estif. 'Tis he! I'm caught. I must stand to it stoutly,
And show no shake of fear. I see he's angry,
Vexed at the uttermost.
Per. My worthy wife,
I have been looking of your modesty
All the town over.
Estif. My most noble husband,
I'm glad I have found ye; for, in truth, I am weary,
Weary and lame with looking out your lordship.
Per. I have been in bawdy houses——
Estif. I believe you, and very lately, too.
Per. 'Pray ye, pardon me;
To seek your ladyship, I have been in cellars,
In private cellars, where the thirsty bawds
Hear your confessions; I have been at plays,
To look you out among the youthful actors;
At puppet-shows, you are mistress of the motions;
At last, I went to church to seek you out;
'Tis so long since you were there, they have forgot you.
Estif. You had a pretty progress; I'll tell mine now.
To look you out, I went to twenty taverns——
Per. And are you sober?
Estif. Yes, I reel not yet, sir;

Where I saw twenty drunk, most of them soldiers.
There I had great hope to find you disguised, too;
From hence to the dicing-house; there I found quarrels
Needless and fenceless, swords, pots, and candlesticks,
Tables, and stools, and all in one confusion,
And no man knew his friend. I left this chaos,
And to the surgeon's went: he willed me stay,
For, says he, learnedly, if he be tippled,
Twenty to one he whores, and then I hear of him;
If he be mad, he quarrels, then he comes, too
I sought ye where no safe thing would have ventured,
Amongst diseases, base and vile, vile women;
For I remembered your old Roman axiom,
The more the danger, still the more the honour.
Last, to your confessor I came, who told me,
You were too proud to pray; and here I've found ye.
Per. She bears up bravely, and the rogue is witty,
But I shall dash it instantly to nothing.
Here leave we off our wanton languages,
And now conclude we in a sharper tongue.
Why am I cozened?
Estif. Why am I abused?
Per. Thou most vile, base, abominable——
Estif. Captain.
Per. Thou stinking, over-stewed, incorrigible——
Estif. Captain.
Per. Do you echo me?
Estif. Yes, sir, and go before ye,
And round about ye! Why do you rail at me,
For that was your own sin, your own knavery?
Per. And brave me, too?
Estif. You'd best now draw your sword, captain!
Draw it upon a woman, do, brave captain,
Upon your wife, Oh, most renowned captain!
Per. A plague upon thee, answer me directly;
Why didst thou marry me?
Estif. To be my husband;
I thought you had had infinite, but I am cozened.
Per. Why didst thou flatter me, and shew me wonders?
A house and riches, when they are but shadows;
Shadows to me!
Estif. Why did you work on me,
(It was but my part to requite you, sir)
With your strong soldier's wit, and swore you'd bring me
So much in chains, so much in jewels, husband,
So much in right rich clothes?
Per. Thou hast them, rascal;
I gave them to thy hands, my trunks and all,
And thou hast opened them, and sold my treasure.

Estif. Sir, there's your treasure, sell it to a tinker
To mend old kettles! Is this noble usage?
Let all the world view here the captain's treasure.
A man would think now these were worthy matters.
Here's a shoeing-horn chain gilt over; how it scenteth,
Worse than the dirty mouldy heels it served for!
And here's another of a lesser value;
So little, I would shame to tie my dog in it.
These are my jointure: blush and save a labour,
Or else these will blush for ye.
Per. A fire subtle ye! are ye so crafty?
Estif. Here's a goodly jewel!
Did not you win this at Goletta, captain?
Or took it in the field from some brave bashaw?
See how it sparkles!—Like an old lady's eyes;
And fills each room with light, like a close lanthorn.
This would do rarely in an abbey window,
To cozen pilgrims.
Per. Prithee leave prating.
Estif. And here's a chain of whitings' eyes for pearls;
A mussel-monger would have made a better.
Per. Nay, prithee wife, my clothes, my clothes.
Estif. I'll tell ye,
Your clothes are parallels to these, all counterfeit.
Put these and them on, you are a man of copper,
A kind of candlestick,
A copper, a copper captain! these you thought, my husband,
To have cozened me withal; but I am quit with you.
Per. Is there no house, then, nor no grounds about it?
No plate nor hangings
Estif. There are none, sweet husband.
Shadow for shadow is as equal justice.
[PEREZ *sings*—ESTIFANIA *sings*.
Can you rail now? Pray, put your fury up, sir,
And speak great words! you are a soldier; thunder!
Per. I will speak little; I have played the fool,
And so I am rewarded.
Estif. You have spoke well, sir;
And now I see you're so comfortable,
I'll heighten you again. Go to your house;
They're packing to be gone; you must sup there;
I'll meet you, and bring clothes and clean linen after,
And all things shall be well. I'll colt you once more,
And teach you to bring copper.
Per. Tell me one thing,
I do beseech thee, tell me truth, wife:
However, I forgive thee; art thou honest?
The beldam swore——
Estif. I bid her tell you so, sir

It was my plot; alas, my credulous husband!
The lady told you, too——
Per. Most strange things of thee.
Estif. Still 'twas my way, and all to try your sufferance.
And she denied the house?
Per. She knew me not,
No, nor title that I had.
Estif. 'Twas well carried;
No more, I am right and straight.
Per. I would believe thee,
But Heaven knows how my heart is; will ye follow me?
Estif. I'll be there straight.
Per. I'm fooled, yet dare not find it.
Estif. Go, silly fool; thou may'st be a good soldier
In open fields, but for our private service
Thou art an ass.

Enter CACATOGO.

Here comes another trout, that I must tickle,
And tickle daintily, I've lost my end else.
May I crave your leave, sir?
Caca. Prithee, be answered, thou shalt crave no leave;
I am in my meditations; do not vex me;
A beaten thing! but this hour a most bruised thing,
That people had compassion on, it looked so!
The next sir Palmerin. Here's fine proportion!
An ass, and then an elephant. Sweet justice!
There's no way left to come at her now, no craving;
If money could come near, yet I would pay him;
I have a mind to make him a huge cuckold,
And money may do much; a thousand ducats!
'Tis but the letting blood of a rank heir.
Estif. Pray you, hear me.
Caca. I know thou hast some wedding-ring to pawn now,
Of silver gilt, with a blind posy in it:
Or thy child's whistle, or thy squirrel's chain.
I'll none of them. I would she did but know me!
Or would this fellow had but use of money,
That I might come in any way.
Estif. I am gone, sir;
And I shall tell the beauty sent me to ye,
The lady Margaritta——
Caca. Stay, I prithee.
What is thy will? I turn me wholly to ye;
And talk now till thy tongue ache, I will hear ye.
Estif. She would intreat you, sir——
Caca. She shall command, sir;
Let it be so; I beseech thee, my sweet gentlewoman,
Do not forget thyself.
Estif. She does command, then,
This courtesy, because she knows you're noble.
Caca. Your mistress by the way?
Estif. My natural mistress.
Upon these jewels, sir, they're fair and rich,
And view them right——
Caca. To doubt them is an heresy.
Estif. A thousand ducats; 'tis upon necessity
Of present use; her husband, sir, is stubborn.
Caca. Long may he be so.
Estif. She desires, withal,
A better knowledge of your parts and person,
And when you please to do her so much honour——
Caca. Come, let's dispatch.
Estif. In truth I've heard her say, sir,
Of a fat man she has not seen a sweeter.
But in this business, sir——
Caca. Let's do it first,
And then dispute; the lady's use may long for it.
Estif. All secrecy she would desire. She told me
How wise you are.
Caca. We are not wise to talk thus.
Carry her the gold, I'll look her out a jewel
Shall sparkle like her eyes, and thee another.
Come, prithee come, I long to serve the lady;
Long monstrously. Now, valour, I shall meet ye,
You, that dare dukes. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Chamber.*

Enter the Duke, SANCHIO, JUAN, *and* ALONZO.

Duke. He shall not have his will, I shall prevent him.
I have a toy here, that will turn the tide,
And suddenly and strangely. Here, Don Juan,
Do you present it to him.
Juan. I am commanded. [*Exit.*
Duke. A fellow founded out of charity,
And moulded to the height, contemn his maker,
Curb the free hand that framed him!
It must not be.
San. That such an oyster-shell should hold a pearl,
And of so rare a price, in prison!
Was she made to be the matter of her own undoing,
To let a slovenly, unwieldy fellow,
Unruly and self-willed, dispose her beauties?
We suffer all, sir, in this sad eclipse:
She should shine, where she might shew like herself,
An absolute sweetness, to comfort those admire her,
And shed her beams upon her friends.
We are gulled all,
And all the world will grumble at your patience,
If she be ravished thus.
Duke. Ne'er fear it, Sanchio;
We'll have her free again, and move at court
In her clear orb. But one sweet handsomeness
To bless this part of Spain, and have that slubbered!
Alon. 'Tis every good man's cause, and we must stir in it.
Duke. I'll warrant ye, he shall be glad to please us,

And glad to share too; we shall hear anon
A new song from him; let's attend a little.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Another Chamber.*

Enter LEON *and* JUAN *with a commission.*

Leon. Colonel, I am bound to you for this nobleness.
I should have been your officer, 'tis true, sir;
And a proud man I should have been to have served you.
It has pleased the king, out of his boundless favours,
To make me your companion: this commission
Gives me a troop of horse.
Juan. I do rejoice at it,
And am a glad man we shall gain your company.
I'm sure the king knows you are newly married,
And out of that respect gives you more time, sir.
Leon. Within four days I'm gone, so he commands me,
And 'tis not mannerly for me to argue it.
The time grows shorter still—Are your goods ready?
Juan. They are aboard.
Leon. Who waits there?

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir.
Leon. Do you hear, ho? Go carry this unto your mistress, sir,
And let her see how much the king has honoured me;
Bid her be lusty, she must make a soldier.
Go, take down all the hangings,
And pack up all my clothes, my plate and jewels,
And all the furniture, that's portable.
Sir, when we lie in garrison, 'tis necessary
We keep a handsome port, for the king's honour.
And, do you hear? let all your lady's wardrobe
Be safely placed in trunks; they must along too.
Ser. Whither must they go, sir?
Leon. To the wars, Lorenzo.
Ser. Must my mistress go, sir?
Leon. Ay, your mistress, and you, and all must go.
I will not leave a turnspit behind me,
That has one dram of spleen against a Dutchman:
All must go.
Ser. Why Pedro, Vasco, Diego, come, help me, boys. [*Exit.*
Juan. He has taken a brave way to save his honour,
And cross the duke; now I shall love him dearly.
By the life of credit, thou art a noble gentleman.

Enter MARGARITTA, *led by two Ladies.*

Leon. Why, how now, wife; what, sick at my preferment?
This is not kindly done,
Mar. No sooner love ye,
Love ye entirely, sir, brought to consider
The goodness of your mind and mine own duty,
But lose you instantly, be divorced from ye!
This is a cruelty. I'll to the king,
And tell him 'tis unjust to part two souls,
Two minds so nearly mixed.
Leon. By no means, sweet-heart.
Mar. If he were married but four days, as I am—
Leon. He'd hang himself the fifth, or fly his country. [*Aside.*
Mar. He'd make it treason for that tongue, that durst
But talk of war, or any thing to vex him.
You shall not go.
Leon. Indeed I must, sweet wife.
What, should I lose the king for a few kisses?
We'll have enough.
Mar. I'll to the duke, my cousin; he shall to the king.
Leon. He did me this great office;
I thank his grace for it: should I pray him now
To undo it again? Fie, 'twere a base discredit.
Mar. Would I were able, sir, to bear you company!
How willing should I be then, and how merry!
I will not live alone
Leon. Be in peace, you shall not.
[*Knocking within.*
Mar. What knocking's this? Oh, Heaven, my head! Why, rascal,
I think the wars begun in the house already.
Leon. The preparation is, they are taking down
And packing up the hangings, plate and jewels,
And all those furnitures, that shall befit me,
When I lie in garrison.

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Must the coach go too, sir?
Leon. How will your lady pass to the sea else easily?
We shall find shipping for't there to transport it.
Mar. I go? Alas!
Leon. I'll have a main care of ye:
I know you are sickly; he shall drive the easier,
And all accommodation shall attend ye.
Mar. Would I were able!
Leon. Come, I warrant ye.
Am not I with ye, sweet? Are her clothes packed up,
And all her linen? Give your maids direction:
You know my time's but short, and I'm commanded.
Mar. Let me have a nurse,
And all such necessary people with me;
An easy bark.
Leon. It shall not trot, I warrant ye;
Curvet it may sometimes.
Mar. I am with child, sir.
Leon. At four days warning! This is something speedy.

Do you conceive as our jennets do, with a west wind?
My heir will be an errant fleet one, lady.
Mar. You must provide a cradle, and what a trouble's that!
Leon. The sea shall rock it;
'Tis the best nurse; 'twill roar and rock together.
A swinging storm will sing you such a lullaby!
Mar. Faith let me stay. I shall but shame you, sir.
Leon. An you were a thousand shames you shall along with me:
At home I'm sure you'd prove a million.
Every man carries the bundle of his sins
Upon his back: you are mine; I'll sweat for ye.

Enter Duke, ALONZO, *and* SANCHIO.

Duke. What, sir, preparing for your noble journey?
'Tis well, and full of care.
I saw your mind was wedded to the war,
And knew you'd prove some good man for your country;
Therefore, fair cousin, with your gentle pardon,
I got this place. What, mourn at his advancement!
You are to blame; he'll come again, sweet cousin:
Meantime, like sad Penelope and sage,
Among your maids at home, and housewifely—
Leon. No, sir, I dare not leave her to that solitariness:
She's young, and grief or ill news from those quarters
May daily cross her: she shall go along, sir.
Duke. By no means, captain.
Leon. By all means, an't please ye.
Duke. What, take a young and tender-bodied lady,
And expose her to those dangers, and those tumults!
A sickly lady, too!
Leon. 'Twill make her well, sir;
There's no such friend to health as wholesome travel.
San. Away, it must not be.
Alon. It ought not, sir.
Go hurry her! It is not humane, captain.
Duke. I cannot blame her tears——Fright her with tempests,
With thunder of the war!
I dare swear, if she were able——
Leon. She's most able:
And, pray ye, swear not: she must go, there's no remedy:
Nor greatness, nor the trick you had to part us,
Which smells too rank, too open, too evident,
Shall hinder me. Were she but ten hours mine,
Nay, less, but two hours, I would have her with me;
I would not leave her fame to so much ruin,
To such a desolation and discredit, as
Her weakness and your hot will would work her to.
Fie, fie, for shame!

Enter PEREZ.

What mask is this now?
More tropes and figures to abuse my sufferance!
What cousin's this?
Juan. Michael Van Owle, how dost thou?
In what dark barn, or tod of aged ivy,
Hast thou lain hid?
Per. Things must both ebb and flow, colonel,
And people must conceal and shine again.
You're welcome hither, as your friend may say, gentlemen;
A pretty house, ye see, handsomely seated,
Sweet and convenient walks, the waters crystal.
Alon. He's certain mad.
Juan. As mad as a French tailor, that
Has nothing in his head but ends of fustians.
Per. I see you're packing now, my gentle cousin,
And my wife told me I should find it so;
'Tis true I do: you were merry, when I was last here:
But 'twas your will to try my patience, madam.
I'm sorry, that my swift occasions
Can let you take your pleasure here no longer;
Yet I would have you think, my honoured cousin,
This house, and all I have, are all your servants.
Leon. What house, what pleasure, sir? what do you mean?
Per. You hold the jest so stiff, 'twill prove discourteous.
This house I mean; the pleasures of this place.
Leon. And what of them?
Per. They're mine, sir, and you know it;
My wife's, I mean, and so conferred upon me.
The hangings, sir, I must entreat your servants,
That are so busy in their offices,
Again to minister to their right uses.
I shall take view of the plate anon, and furnitures,
That are of under place. You're merry still, cousin,
And of a pleasant constitution:
Men of great fortunes make their mirths *ad placitum.*
Leon. Pr'ythee, good stubborn wife, tell me directly:
Good evil wife, leave fooling, and tell me honestly,
Is this my kinsman?
Mar. I can tell ye nothing,
Leon. I've many kinsmen, but so mad a one,
And so fantastic——all the house?
Per. All mine.
And all within it. I will not bait you an ace on't.
Can't you receive a noble courtesy,
And quietly and handsomely as ye ought, coz,
But you must ride o' the top on't?
Leon. Canst thou fight?

Per. I'll tell ye presently: I could have done, sir.
Leon. For you must law and claw before ye get it.
Juan. Away, no quarrels.
Leon. Now I am more temperate,
I'll have it prov'd, you were ne'er yet in bedlam;
Never in love, for that's a lunacy;
No great state left ye, that ye never looked for,
Nor cannot manage, that's a rank distemper;
That you were christened, and who answered for you.
And then I yield——Do but look at him.
Per. He has half persuaded me, I was bred i' the moon:
I have ne'er a brush at my breech—Are not we both mad?
And is not this a fantastic house we are in,
And all a dream we do? Will you walk out?
And if I do not beat thee presently
Into a sound belief as sense can give thee,
Brick me into that wall there for a chimney-piece,
And say, I was one of the Cæsars done by a seal-cutter.
Leon. I'll talk no more; come, we'll away immediately.
Mar. Why then the house is his, and all that's in it:
I'll give away my skin, but I'll undo ye:
I gave it to his wife. You must restore, sir;
And make a new provision.
Per. Am I mad, now,
Or am I christened? You, my pagan cousin,
My mighty Mahound kinsman, what quirk now?
You shall be welcome all. I hope to see, sir,
Your grace here, and my coz: we are all soldiers,
And must do naturally for one another.
Duke. Are you blank at this? Then I must tell ye, sir,
Ye've no command; now you may go at pleasure,
And ride your ass troop. 'Twas a trick I used
To try your jealousy, upon entreaty,
And saving of your wife.
Leon. All this not moves me,
Nor stirs my gall, nor alters my affections.
You have more furniture, more houses, lady,
And rich ones, too; I will make bold with those;
And you have land in the Indies, as I take it;
Thither we'll go, and view awhile those climates,
Visit your factors there, that may betray ye.
'Tis done; we must go.
Mar. Now thou'rt a brave gentleman;
And, by this sacred light, I love thee dearly:
Hark ye, sir;
The house is none of yours; I did but jest, sir;
You are no coz of mine; I beseech ye, vanish.
I tell you plain, you have no more right than he
Has, that senseless thing. Your wife has once more fooled ye, sir.
Go ye and consider.
Leon. Good-morrow, my sweet Mahound cousin.
You are welcome—welcome all—my cousin too—
We are soldiers, and should naturally do for one another.
Per. By this hand she dies for't,
Or any man that speaks for her.
These are fine toys. [*Exit* PEREZ.
Mar. Let me request you stay but one poor month;
You shall have a commission, and I'll go, too.
Give me but will so far.
Leon. Well, I will try ye.
Good-morrow to your grace; we've private business.
Duke. If I miss thee again, I'm an arrant bungler.
Juan. Thou shalt have my command, and I'll march under thee,
Nay, be thy boy, before thou shalt be baffled;
Thou art so brave a fellow.
Alon. I have seen visions. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—MARGARITTA'S *House.*

Enter LEON, *with a letter, and* MARGARITTA.

Leon. Come hither, wife. Do you know this hand?
Mar. I do, sir; 'tis Estifania's, that was once my woman.
Leon. She writes to me here, that one Cacafogo,
An usuring jeweller's son, I know the rascal,
Is mortally fallen in love with you.
Mar. He is a monster; deliver me from mountains.
Leon. Do you go a birding for all sorts of people?
And this evening will come to ye, and shew ye jewels,
And offers any thing to get access to you.
If I can make or sport or profit on him,
(For he is fit for both) she bids me use him,
And so I will. Be you conformable, and follow but my will.
Mar. I shall not fail, sir.
Leon. Will the duke come again, do you think?
Mar. No, sure, sir.
He has now no policy to bring him hither.
Leon. Nor bring you to him, if my wit hold, fair wife.
Let's in to dinner. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Street.*

Enter PEREZ.

Per. Had I but lungs enough to bawl sufficiently,
That all the queans in Christendom might hear me,
That men might run away from the contagion,
I had my wish. Would it were made high treason,
Most infinite high, for any man to marry;
I mean, for a man, that would live handsomely,
And like a gentleman, in's wits and credit.
What torments shall I put her to?
Cut her in pieces, every piece will live still,
And every morsel of her will do mischief.
They have so many lives, there's no hanging of them.
They are too light to drown, they're cork and feathers;
To burn too cold, they live like salamanders:
Under huge heaps of stones to bury her,
And so depress her as they did the giants?
She will move under more than built old Babel.
I must destroy her.

Enter CACAFOGO, *with a casket.*

Caca. Be cozened by a thing of clouts! a she moth,
That every silkman's shop breeds! To be cheated,
And of a thousand ducats, by a whim-wham!
Per. Who is he, that's cheated? Speak again, thou vision!
But art thou cheated? Minister some comfort.
Tell me, I conjure thee, art thou cheated bravely?
Come, prithee come; art thou so pure a coxcomb,
To be undone? Do not dissemble with me.
Caca. Then keep thy circle:
For I'm a spirit wild, that flies about thee;
And, whosoe'er thou art, if thou be'st human,
I'd let thee plainly know, I'm cheated damnably.
Per. Ha, ha, ha!
Caca. Dost thou laugh? Damnably, I say, most damnably.
Per. By whom, good spirit? Speak, speak! Ha, ha, ha!
Caca. I'll utter; laugh till thy lungs crack; by a rascal woman!
A lewd, abominable, and plain woman!
Dost thou laugh still?
Per. I must laugh; prithee pardon me,
I shall laugh terribly.
Caca. I shall be angry,
Terribly angry; I have cause.
Per. That's it;
And 'tis no reason but thou shouldst be angry,
Angry at heart; yet I must laugh still at thee.
By a woman cheated! Art sure it was a woman?
Caca. I shall break thy head; my valour itches at thee
Per. It is no matter. By a woman cozened,
A real woman!
Caca. By a real devil.
Plague of her jewels, and her copper chains,
How rank they swell!
Per. Sweet, cozened sir, let's see them.
I have been cheated, too; I would have you note that;
And lewdly cheated, by a woman also,
A scurvy woman. I am undone, sweet sir;
Therefore, I must have leave to laugh.
Caca. Pray ye, take it;
You are the merriest undone man in Europe.
What need we fiddles, bawdy songs, and sherry,
When our own miseries can make us merry?
Per. Ha, ha, ha!
I've seen these jewels: what a notable pennyworth
Have you had! You will not take, sir,
Some twenty ducats—
Caca. Thou'rt deceived; I will take——
Per. To clear your bargain, now.
Caca. I'll take some ten,
Some any thing, some half ten, half a ducat.
Per. An excellent lapidary set these stones, sure:
D'ye mark their waters?
Caca. Quicksands choak their waters,
And her's that brought them, too! but I shall find her.
Per. And so shall I, I hope: but do not hurt her.
If you had need of cozening, as you may have,
(For such gross natures will desire it often;
'Tis, at sometimes too, a fine variety)
You cannot find, in all this kingdom,
A woman, that can cozen ye so neatly.
She has taken half mine anger off with this trick.
[*Exit.*
Caca. If I were valiant now, I'd kill this fellow.
I've money enough lies by me, at a pinch,
To pay for twenty rascals' lives, that vex me.
I'll to this lady; there I shall be satisfied.
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A street.*

Enter PEREZ *and* ESTIFANIA, *meeting.*

Per. Why, how dar'st thou meet me again, thou rebel,
And know'st how thou hast used me thrice, thou rascal?
Were there not ways enough to fly my vengeance,
No holes nor vaults to hide thee from my fury,
But thou must meet me face to face to kill thee?
I would not seek thee to destroy thee willingly,
But now thou com'st to invite me, com'st upon me.
How like a sheep-biting rogue, taken in the manner,

And ready for a halter, dost thou look now?
Thou hast a hanging look, thou scurvy thing!
Hast ne'er a knife,
Nor e'er a string to lead thee to Elysium;
Be there no pitiful 'pothecaries in this town,
That have compassion upon wretched women,
That dare administer a dram of ratsbane,
But thou must fall to me?

Estif. I know you've mercy.

Per. If I had tons of mercy, thou deserv'st none.
What new tricks now a-foot, and what new houses
Have you in the air? What orchards in apparition?
What can'st thou say for thy life?

Estif. Little or nothing.
I know you'll kill me, and I know 'tis useless
To beg for mercy. Pray, let me draw my book out,
And pray a little.

Per. Do, a very little;
For I have a farther business than thy killing.
I have money yet to borrow. Speak when you are ready.

Estif. Now, now sir, now [*Shews a pistol.*
Come on. Do you start off from me?
Do you sweat, great captain? Have you seen a spirit?

Per. Do you wear guns?

Estif. I am a soldier's wife, sir,
And by that privilege I may be armed.
Now, what's the news? And let's discourse more friendly,
And talk of our affairs in peace.

Per. Let me see,
Prithee let me see thy gun; 'tis a very pretty one.

Estif. No, no, sir, you shall feel.

Per. Hold, hold, ye villain! what, would you
Kill your own husband?

Estif. Let mine own husband, then,
Be in his own wits. There, there's a thousand ducats.
Who must provide for you? And yet you'll kill me!

Per. I will not hurt thee for ten thousand millions.

Estif. When will you redeem your jewels? I have pawned them,
You see for what we must keep touch.

Per. I'll kiss thee;
And get as many more. I'll make thee famous.
Had we the house now!

Estif. Come along with me;
If that be vanished, there be more to hire, sir.

Per. I see I am an ass, when thou art near me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A chamber.*

Enter LEON *and* MARGARITTA.

Leon. Come, we'll away unto your country house,
And there we'll learn to live contentedly.
This place is full of charge, and full of hurry;
No part of sweetness dwells about these cities.

Mar. Whither you will, I wait upon your pleasure;
Live in a hollow tree, sir, I'll live with ye.

Leon. Ay, now you strike a harmony, a true one,
When your obedience waits upon your husband.
Why, now I doat upon you, love ye dearly;
And my rough nature falls, like roaring streams,
Clearly and sweetly into your embraces.
Oh, what a jewel is a woman excellent,
A wise, a virtuous, and a noble woman!
When we meet such, we bear our stamps on both sides,
And through the world we hold our current virtues.
Alone, we are single medals, only faces,
And wear our fortunes out in useless shadows.
Command you now, and ease me of that trouble;
I'll be as humble to you as a servant.
Bid whom you please, invite your noble friends,
They shall be welcome all, now experience
Has bound you fast unto the chain of goodness.
[*Clashing swords, a cry within*—Down with their swords!]
What noise is this? what dismal cry?

Mar. 'Tis loud too.
Sure there's some mischief done in the street;
Look out there!

Leon. Look out, and help.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Oh, sir, the duke Medina——

Leon. What of the duke Medina?

Ser. Oh, sweet gentleman! he's almost slain!

Mar. Away, away, and help him!
All the house help. [*Exit Servant.*

Leon. How! slain? Why, Margaritta,
Wife, sure some new device they have afoot again,
Some trick upon my credit; I shall meet it.
I'd rather guide a ship imperial,
Alone, and in a storm, than rule one woman.

Enter DUKE, SANCHIO, ALONZO, *and Servant.*

Mar. How came you hurt, sir?

Duke. I fell out with my friend, the noble colonel.
My cause was naught, for 'twas about your honour;
And he, that wrongs the innocent, ne'er prospers,
And he has left me thus; for charity,
Lend me a bed to ease my tortured body,
That, ere I perish, I may shew my penitence.
I fear I'm slain.

Leon. Help, gentlemen, to carry him.
There shall be nothing in this house, my lord,
But as your own.

Duke. I thank ye, noble sir.

Leon. To bed with him; and, wife, give your attendance.
[*Exeunt* DUKE, SANCHIO, ALONZO, MARGARITTA, *and servant.*

Enter JUAN.

Leon. Afore me,
'Tis rarely counterfeited.
Juan. True, it is so, sir;
And take you heed this last blow do not spoil ye.
He is not hurt, only we made a scuffle,
As though we purposed anger: that same scratch
On's hand he took, to colour all, and draw compassion,
That he might get into your house more cunningly.
I must not stay; stand now, and you're a brave fellow,
Leon. I thank ye, noble colonel, and I honour ye.
Never be quiet? [*Exit* JUAN.

Enter MARGARITTA.

Mar. He's most desperate ill, sir;
I do not think these ten months will recover him.
Leon. Does he hire my house to play the fool in,
Or does it stand on fairy ground? We're haunted.
Are all men and their wives troubled with dreams thus?
Mar. What ail you, sir?
Leon. Nay, what ail you, sweet wife,
To put these daily pastimes on my patience?
What dost thou see in me, that I should suffer this?
Mar. Alas, I pity ye.
Leon. Thou'lt make me angry;
Thou never saw'st me mad yet.
Mar. You are always;
You carry a kind of bedlam still about ye.
Leon. If thou pursuest me farther, I run stark mad.
If you have more hurt dukes, or gentlemen,
To lie here on your cure, I shall be desperate.
I know the trick, and you shall feel I know it:
Are ye so hot, that no hedge can contain ye?
I'll have thee let blood in all the veins about thee;
I'll have thy thoughts found, too, and have them opened,
Thy spirits purged, for those are they that fire ye.
The maid shall be thy mistress, thou the maid,
And all her servile labours thou shalt reach at,
And go through cheerfully, or else sleep empty;
That maid shall lie by me, to teach you duty:
You in a pallet by, to humble ye,
And grieve for what you lose, thou foolish, wicked woman.
Mar. I've lost myself, sir,
And all that was my base self, disobedience:
[*Kneels.*
My wantonness, my stubbornness, I've lost too.
And now, by that pure good faith good wives are crowned with,
By your own nobleness——
Leon. Beware, beware——have you no fetch now?
Mar. No, by my repentance, no.
Leon. And art thou truly, truly honest?
Mar. These tears will shew it.
Leon. I take you up, and wear you next my heart;
See you be worth it.

Enter ALIIA.

Now, what with you?
Alt. I come to tell my lady,
There is a fulsome fellow would fain speak with her.
Leon. 'Tis Cacafogo; keep him from the duke,
The duke from him; anon he'll yield us laughter.
Alt. Where is it, please you, that we shall detain him?
He seems at war with reason, full of wine.
Leon. To the cellar with him; 'tis the drunkard's den,
Fit cover for such beasts. Should he be resty,
Say I am at home: unwieldy as he is,
He'll creep into an augre-hole to shun me.
Alt. I'll dispose him there. [*Exit.*
Leon. Now, Margaritta, comes your trial on:
The duke expects you; acquit yourself to him;
I put you to the test; you have my trust,
My confidence, my love.
Mar. I will deserve them. [*Exit.*
Leon. My work is done, and now my heart's at ease.
I read in every look, she means me fairly;
And nobly shall my love reward her for't.
He, who betrays his rights, the husband's rights,
To pride and wantonness; or who denies
Affection to the heart he has subdued,
Forfeits the claim to manhood and humanity.
[*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*A chamber. Duke discovered in a night gown.*

Duke. Why, now, this is most excellent invention.
I shall succeed, spite of this huffing husband.
I can but smile to think most wary spouses
The soonest are deceived.

Enter MARGARITTA.

Who's there, my love?
Mar. 'Tis I, my lord.
Duke. Are you alone, sweet friend?
Mar. Alone, and come to enquire how your wounds are.
Duke. I have none, lady; not a hurt about me;

My damages I did but counterfeit,
And feigned the quarrel to enjoy you, lady.
I am as lusty, and as full of health,
As high in blood——
Mar. As low in blood, you mean:
Dishonest thoughts debase the greatest birth:
The man, that acts unworthily, though ennobled,
Sullies his honour.
Duke. Nay, nay, my Margaritta;
Come to my couch, and there let's lisp love's language.
Mar. Would you take that, which I've no right to give?
Steal wedlock's property: and, in his house,
Beneath the roof of him, that entertains you,
Would you his wife betray? Will you become
The ungrateful viper, who, restored to life,
Venomed the breast, which saved him?
Duke. Leave these dull thoughts to mortifying penance;
Let us, while love is lusty, prove its power.
Mar. Ill wishes, once, my lord, my mind debased:
You found my weakness, wanted to ensnare it:
Shameful I own my fault, but 'tis repented.
No more the wanton Margaritta now,
But the chaste wife of Leon. His great merit,
His manly tenderness, his noble nature,
Commands from me affection in return,
Pure as esteem can offer. He has won me;
I owe him all my heart.
Duke. Indeed, fair lady,
This jesting well becomes a sprightly beauty.
Love prompts to celebrate sublimer rights.
No more memento's; let me press you to me,
And stifle with my kisses——
Mar. Nay, then, within, there!

Enter LEON, JUAN, ALONZO, *and* SANCHIO.

Leon. Did you call, my wife? or you, my lord?
Was it your grace that wanted me? No answer!
How do you, my good lord? What, out of bed!
Methinks you look but poorly on this matter.
Has my wife wounded you? You were well before.
Duke. More hurt than ever; spare your reproach;
I feel too much already.
Leon. I see it, sir—and now your grace shall know,
I can as readily pardon as revenge.
Be comforted; all is forgotten.
Duke. I thank you, sir.
Leon. Wife, you are a right one:
And now, with unknown nations, I dare trust ye.
Juan. No more feigned fights, my lord; they never prosper.

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Please you, sir,
We cannot keep this gross fat man in order:
He swears he'll have admittance to my lady,
And reels about, and clamours most outrageously.
Leon. Let him come up—wife, here's another suitor,
We forgot; he has been sighing in the cellar,
Making my casks his mistresses.
Will your grace permit us to produce a rival?
Duke. No more on that theme, I request, don Leon.
Leon. Here comes the porpus; he's devilish drunk.
Let me stand by.

Enter CACAFOGO *drunk.*

Caca. Where is my *bona roba?* Oh, you're all here. Why, I dont fear snap dragons—impotential, powerfully potioned—I can drink with Hector, and beat him, too. Then, what care I for captains! I'm full of Greek wine; the true, antient courage. Sweet Mrs Margaritta, let me kiss thee—your kisses shall pay me for his kicking.
Leon. What would you?
Caca. Sir!
Leon. Lead off the wretch.
Duke. Most filthy figure, truly.
Caca. Filthy! Oh, you're a prince; yet I can buy all of you, your wives and all.
Juan. Sleep, and be silent.
Caca. Speak you to your creditors, good captain half-pay;
I'll not take thy pawn in.
Leon. Which of the butts is thy mistress?
Caca. Butt in thy belly.
Leon. There are two in thine, I'm sure, it is grown so monstrous,
Caca. Butt in thy face.
Leon. Go, carry him to sleep; [*Exit* CACA.
When he is sober, let him out to rail,
Or hang himself; there will be no loss of him.

Enter PEREZ *and* ESTIFANIA.

Who's this? my Mahound cousin?
Per. Good sir, 'tis very good: would I had a house, too,
For there's no talking in the open air.
You have a pretty seat, you have the luck on't,
A pretty lady, too, I have missed both;
My carpenter built in a mist, I thank him.
Do me the courtesy to let me see it,
See it once more. But I shall cry for anger.
I'll hire a chandler's shop close under ye,
And, for my foolery, sell soap and whip-cord.
Nay, if you do not laugh now, and laugh heartily,
You are a fool, coz.
Leon. I must laugh a little;
And now I've done. Coz, thou shalt live with me,
My merry coz; the world shall not divorce us:

Thou art a valiant man, and thou shalt never want.
Will this content thee?
Per. I'll cry, and then be thankful;
Indeed I will, and I'll be honest to ye;
I'd live a swallow here, I must confess.
Wife, I forgive thee all, if thou be honest,
And, at thy peril, I believe thee excellent.
Estif. If I prove otherwise, let me beg first.
Mar. Hold, this is yours, some recompense for service;
Use it to nobler ends than he, that gave it.
Duke. And this is yours, your true commission, sir.
Now you're a captain.
Leon. You're a noble prince, sir;
And now a soldier.
Juan. Sir, I shall wait upon you through all fortunes.
Alon. And I.
Alt. And I must needs attend my mistress.
Leon. Will you go, sister?
Alt. Yes, indeed, good brother,
I have two ties, mine own blood, and my mistress.
Mar. Is she your sister?
Leon. Yes, indeed, good wife,
And my best sister; for she proved so, wench,
When she deceived you with a loving husband.
Alt. I would not deal so, truly, for a stranger.
Mar. Well, I could chide ye, but it must be lovingly,
And like a sister.
I'll bring you on your way, and feast ye nobly,
For now I have an honest heart to love ye,
And then deliver you to the blue Neptune.
Juan. Your colours you must wear, and wear them proudly,
Wear them before the bullet, and in blood, too.
And all the world shall know we're virtue's servants.
Duke. And all the world shall know, a noble mind
Makes women beautiful, and envy blind.
Leon. All you who mean to lead a happy life,
First learn to rule, and then to have a wife.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

PLAIN DEALER.

ALTERED FROM

WYCHERLY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

MANLY, *a sea captain.*
FREEMAN, *his lieutenant.*
LORD PLAUSIBLE, NOVEL, } *coxcombs.*
VARNISH, *pretended friend to* MANLY.
MAJOR OLDFOX, *suitor to* WIDOW BLACKACRE.
JERRY BLACKACRE, *son to the widow.*
COUNSELLOR QUILLIT.
OAKUM, *servant to* MANLY.
COUNSELLOR PLODDON.
Bookseller.
A Boy.

WOMEN.

OLIVIA, *a jilt.*
FIDELIA, *attached to* MANLY.
WIDOW BLACKACRE.
ELIZA, *related to* OLIVIA.
LETTICE, *maid to* OLIVIA.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—MANLY'S *lodgings.*

MANLY *enters in a morning gown, followed by* LORD PLAUSIBLE.

Man. PRAY, my lord, pray, my lord Plausible, give me leave! I have more of the mastiff than the spaniel in my nature; I own it; besides, I am too old now to learn to play tricks: I cannot fawn, and fetch and carry; neither will I ever practise that servile complaisance, which some people pique themselves on being masters of.

L. Plau. Well, but seriously, my dear friend, this is being singular; will you declare war against general custom; refuse to subscribe to the common forms of good breeding?

Man. Forms indeed, my lord; they are mere forms, and therefore shall not sway me. In short, I will not, as your subscribers to forms do, whisper my contempt or hatred; call a man a fool, or knave, by signs, or mouths over his shoulder, while I have him in my arms.—I will not do as you do.

L. Plau. As I do!—Heaven defend me! upon my honour, I never attempted to abuse, or lessen any one in my life.

Man. What! you were afraid!

L. Plau. No; but seriously I hate to do a rude thing.—No, faith, I speak well of all mankind.

Man. I thought so; but know, that is the worst sort of detraction, for it takes away the reputation of the few good men in the world, by making all alike.—Now I speak ill of most men, because they deserve it.

L. Plau. Well, tell not me, my dear friend, what people deserve; I, like an author in a dedication, never speak well of a man for his sake, but my own: I will not disparage any one, to disparage myself: to speak ill of people behind their backs is not pretty, and to speak ill of them to their faces, would be the most monstrous thing in nature.

Man. So that, if you was to say an unhandsome thing of any of your friends, I suppose you would chuse to do it behind their backs.

L. Plau. Oh certainly, certainly; I would do it behind their backs out of pure good manners.

Man. Very well, my lord: I have not leisure at present to examine into the propriety of your decorums: I confess, I am but an unpolished seafellow. But there is a favour, which, if your lordship would grant me—

L. Plau. A favour, dear sir! you make me the happiest man in the world; pray let me know how I have it in my power to serve you.

Man. No otherwise, my lord, than by leaving me a little to myself; at present, I am really unfit for company.

L. Plau. Perhaps you have business.

Man. If you have any, I would not detain your lordship.

L. Plau. Detain me! dear sir, I came on purpose to pay my respects to you: I heard of your arrival in town last night, and could not be easy. But be free with me; if my company is in the least disagreeable or inconvenient——

Man. I have told your lordship, already, I had rather be alone.

L. Plau. I will lay hold then of some other opportunity of paying my most humble respects to you; and in the mean time—

Enter OAKUM.

Man. Oakum! wait on his lordship down.

L. Plau. Sir, I am your most obedient.

Man. Good-bye to your lordship.

L. Plau. Your most faithful.

Man. Your servant, your servant.

L. Plau. And eternally—

Man. And eternal ceremony!—

L. Plau. You shall use no ceremony, by my life!

Man. I do not intend it.

L. Plau. Where are you going then?

Man. Zounds! to see you out of doors, that I may shut them against more welcomes.

[*Exeunt* MANLY *and* LORD PLAUSIBLE.

Oak. Well said, bully-tar! He came alongside of his match, when he grappled with you, I can tell him that. Zounds, he makes no more of one of these fresh-water sparks, than a three-decker would of a bomb-boat! But he's as brave a heart as ever stept between stem and stern; and so's a sign, by his sinking our fine vessel the other day, rather than let her fall into the hands of the rascally French, when he found three or four of their piccaroons at once were too many for us. Let me see—'Tis just six weeks since we sailed out of Portsmouth harbour, and we had scarce been a month on our cruize, before we fell in with the enemy's squadron—Ah! we have made a base, beaten, short voyage of it.—However, he soon expects to be put into commission again, and I would go with him about the round world, if so be it was his destination; for, thof he's as crusty as any one sometimes, and will be obey'd, there's never a captain in the navy, that's a truer friend to a seaman—Avast though! He steers this way, in company of our merry lieutenant: 'tis fent weather, I doubt: I'll loof up, and get to windward on him. [*Retires.*

Enter MANLY *and* FREEMAN.

Free. But how the devil could you turn a man of his quality down stairs? You use a lord with very little ceremony it seems.

Man. A lord! What, you are one of those, who esteem men only by the value and marks, which fortune hath set upon them, and never consider intrinsic worth! but counterfeit honours will not be current with me; I weigh the man, not his title: it is not the king's inscription can make the metal better or heavier. Your lord is a leaden shilling, which you bend every way, and debases the stamp he bears, instead of being raised by it—And you, rascal, blockhead! did'nt I order you to deny me to every body?

Oak. Yes, your honour; and so I would, but I was just stepped into the back-parlour to play a game at all-fours with our landlady's daughter; and, while we were wrangling about the cards, the little boy let the gentleman up, unknown to us.

Man. Well, be more careful for the future: stand at the stair-foot, and, at your peril, keep all that ask for me from coming up.

Oak. Must no one come up to you, sir?

Man. No man, sir.

Oak. A woman, an't like your honour?

Man. No woman, neither, you impertinent rascal.

Oak. Indeed, your honour, it will be hard for me to deny a woman any thing, since we are so newly come on shore: but I'll let no old woman come up to you.

Man. Would you be witty?—You become a jest as ill as you do a horse—Begone.

[*Exit* OAKUM.

Free. Nay, let the poor rogue have his forecastle jests: a sailor cannot help them in a storm, scarce when a ship's sinking—But what, will you see nobody? not your friends?

Man. Friends! I have only one friend, and he, I hear, is not in town: nay, can have only one; for a true heart admits but of one friendship, as of one love. But in having found that friend, I have a thousand; for he has the courage of men in despair, yet the caution and diffidence of cowards; secrecy of the revengeful, and the constancy of martyrs: one fit to advise, to keep a secret, to fight, to die for his friend—But words are but weak testimonies of his merit, and my esteem: I have trusted him, in my absence, with the care of the woman I love; which is a charge of so tender, so delicate a nature—

Free. Well, but all your good thoughts are not for him alone, I hope! Pray, what do you think of me for a friend?

Man. Of you! Why you are a latitudinarian in friendship; that is, no friend; you will side with all mankind, but suffer for none; you are, indeed, like your lord Plausible, the pink of courtesy, and therefore have no friendship.

Free. No! that's very odd doctrine, indeed.

Man. Look you, I am so much your friend, that I would not deceive you; and therefore must tell you, not only because my heart is taken up, but according to your rules of friendship, I cannot be your friend.

Free. Why, pray?

Man. Because you will say, he, that is a true friend to a man, is a friend to all his friends; but you must excuse me; I cannot wish well to a pack of coxcombs, sharpers, and scoundrels, whom I have seen you treat, I know not how often, as the dearest friends in the world.

Free. What, I suppose you have observed me in the park, and at the coffee-house, doing the business of the several places! But could you really think I was a friend to all those I bowed to, shook hands with, and received in open arms?

Man. You told them you were; nay, and swore it, too; I heard you.

Free. Ay, but, when their backs were turned, did not I tell you the greater part of them were wretched, infamous fellows, whom I despised and hated?

Man. Very true; but what right had I to believe you spoke your heart to me, who professed deceiving so many?

Free. Nay, if you are such a precise adherer to matter of fact, it is in vain to argue with you; yet, surely, you would not have every man wear his opinion upon his sleeve, and find fault and quarrel with all, that he cannot in his conscience approve?

Man. I would have every man speak truth, and neither act the part of a sycophant or a coward.

Free. Yet, pray, sir, believe the friendship I offer you real, whatever I have professed to others—Try me at least.

Man. Why, what would you do for me? However, spare yourself the trouble of professing; for, go as far as you will—here comes one will say as much at least—

Enter FIDELIA, *in men's clothes.*

Don't you love me devilishly, too, my little volunteer? as well as he, or any man can?

Fide. Better than any man can love you, my dear captain: as well as you do truth and honour, sir: as well—

Man. Nay, good young gentleman, enough for shame! Sure you forget that I am an unsuccessful man: that I have met with nothing abroad, but losses and disappointments; and am like to find nothing at home but frowns and vexation! Why do you follow me, then, flatter my vanity now; since, so far from being able to befriend you, I stand in need of a patron myself?

Fide. I never followed reward or preferment, sir, but you alone; and, were you this instant to embark on the most hazardous expedition, I would cheerfully risk my life for the bare pleasure of serving with you.

Man. Nay, hold there, sir; did not I see you, during the engagement, more afraid—

Fide. Yet, do me justice, sir: when we took to our long-boat, on your giving orders to sink the ship, did I shew any signs of dread or weariness; though the waves broke over us on every side, and the night was so dark?—

Man. Ay, ay, you were in haste to get to land: the apprehension of death made you insensible of danger, and so you were valiant out of fear.

Fide. Well, sir, 'tis in vain for me to avow my sentiments, since you are determined not to believe me; but one day or other, perhaps——

Free. Poor lad! you bring tears into his eyes: consider his youth and inexperience, and make some allowances.

Man. What, does he cry?—No more, you milksop! Dry your eyes: I will never make you afraid again; for of all men, if I had occasion, you should not be my second; and when I return to sea——

Fide. You will not leave me behind?

Man. Leave you behind! Ay, ay; you are a hopeful youth for the shore only; you have a smock-face, and an officious readiness about you: you may get yourself recommended to some great man by flattering his valet-de-chambre; or, who knows, some liquorish old woman, or wanton young one, may take a fancy to you, allow you a conditional annuity, and make your fortune that way.

Fide. Sure, sir, you are industrious to find yourself reasons for an aversion to me: do you think, then, I am capable of being the despicable wretch, you describe?

Man. Why, don't I know you to be a coward, sir; a wretch capable of any thing?

Fide. Yet consider, sir; do not turn me off to beggary and ruin: when I came to you, I told you I was helpless and friendless.

Man. Very well, sir—I will provide you with half a score friends, which will help you a little: in the mean time, be gone; go! you will fare better in any place than with me.

Fide. I can fare well no where, lost as I am; I pursue happiness, but at every turn I meet complicated misery! [*Aside.*] [*Exit.*

Enter OAKUM.

Oak. There's a woman below, an please your honour, who scolds and bustles to come up, as much as a seaman's widow at the navy-office; she says her name's Blackacre.

Man. That fiend!

Free. The widow Blackacre, that litigious she-pettifogger, who is at law and difference with all the world! I wish I could make her agree with me in a church. She hath three thousand pounds a-year jointure, and the care of her son; that is, the destruction of his estate.

Man. The lawyers, attornies, and solicitors,

have three thousand pounds a-year, while she is content to be poor to make other people so; for she is as vexatious as her father was, the great Norfolk attorney——

Free. Ay, the devil take him! I am four hundred pounds a-year out of pocket by his knavish practices on an old aunt of mine; though, indeed, there was suspicion of a false deed of conveyance; I once had a design of suing the widow upon it, and something I will now think of seriously—but, hang her! she wont pretend to know me!

Man. Go to her, can't you? When she's in town, she lodges in one of the inns of court, where she breeds her son, and is herself his tutoress in law-French: but bid her come up; she is Olivia's relation, and may make me amends for her visit by giving me some account of her.

Enter MRS BLACKACRE *and* JERRY.

Mrs Black. I never had so much trouble with a judge's door-keeper, as with yours: you should consider, captain Manly, this is term time, and folks have something else to do, besides waiting for admittance to people they have business with.

Man. Well, well, a truce with your exclamations, and tell me something about your cousin. How does Olivia?

Mrs Black. Jerry, give me the subpœna.—It was by mere chance I heard of your being in town, and you are my chief witness: you can't imagine how my cause——

Man. Damn your cause! when did you see Olivia?

Mrs Black. I am no visitor, captain, but a woman of business: or, if ever I visit, 'tis only the Chancery-Lane ladies towards the law; and none of your lazy, good for nothing, fashionable gill-flirts.—Many a fine estate has been lost in families for want of a notable stirring woman, to rummage among the writings: but come, sir, we have no time to lose; and since you won't listen to me, I desire you may hear my son a little; let him put our case to you; for, if the trial comes on to-day, it will not be amiss to have your memory refreshed, and your judgment informed, lest you should give your evidence improperly.—Jerry!

Jer. What's the matter with you now?

Mrs Black. Come, child, put our case to captain Manly——Nay, don't hold down your head and look like a fool; for you can do it very well, if you please.

Jer. I wish I may be hanged, if I ever knew such a woman as you are in my life! I wonder you are not ashamed to make one an antic before strangers this way!

Mrs Black. Jerry, Jerry! don't be perverse, but lay down the bags, and speak out, like a good child, when I bid you.—Lord, sir, it would do you good to hear him sometimes.—Why don't you begin?

Jer. Psha! you are always in such a hurry, there's no such thing as doing nothing for you—What case must I put?

Mrs Black. Our case, that comes on to-day in the Common Pleas: you know well enough, but you will be stubborn! Pray, captain, mark him.

Jer. Hem! hem!—John a Stiles——

Man. You may talk, young lawyer, and put her case, if you think proper; but I shall no more mind you than I would your mother, if I was in your case, when she bid me do a thing to make a fool of myself.

Jer. Look you there now; I told you so.

Mrs Black. Never mind him, Jerry, he only says that to dash you: go on! Bless my soul, I could hear our Jerry put cases all day!

Jer. John a Stiles—no—there are first, Fitz, Pere, and Ayle; no, no, Ayle, Pere, and Fitz—Ayle is seized in fee of Blackacre; John a Stiles disseizes the Ayle; Ayle makes claim, and the dissessors die—Then the Ayle—no the Fitz——

Mrs Black. No, the Pere, sirrah!

Jer. Oh, the Pere—ay, the Pere, sir, and the Fitz—No, the Ayle—No, the Pere and the Fitz—

Man. Damn Pere, Ayle, and Fitz, sir!

Mrs Black. No, you are out, child. Take notice of me, captain—There are Ayle, Pere, and Fitz: Ayle is seized in fee of Blackacre; and being so seized, John a Stiles disseizes the Ayle: Ayle makes claim, and the disseizor dies; then the Pere enters.—The Pere, sirrah, the Pere!—And the Fitz enters upon the Pere; and the Ayle brings his writ of disseizen in the post, and the Pere brings his writ of disseizen in the Pere, and——

Man. 'Sdeath, Freeman, can you listen to this stuff?

Mrs Black. Hold, sir! I must serve you [*Gives a paper, which he throws away*]; you are required, sir, by this, to give your testimony——

Man. I'll be forsworn, to be revenged of you. [*Exit.*

Mrs Black. Get you gone for an unmannerly fellow! But the service is good in law; so he must attend it at his peril.—Come, Jerry, I had almost forgot, we are to meet at the master's before eleven.——Let us mind our business still, child.

Jer. Well, and who hinders you?

Free. Nay, madam, now I would beg you to hear me a little.—A little of my business.

Mrs Black. I have business of my own, sir, calls me away.

Free. My business would prove yours too, madam.

Mrs Black. What, 'tis no Westminster-hall business! would you have my advice?

Free. No, faith; it is a little Westminster abbey business: I would have your consent.

Mrs Black. Fye, fye! to me such language, sir! and in the presence of my dear minor here.

Jer. Ay, ay, mother, he would be taking livery and seizen of your jointure, by digging the turf;

but I'll watch his waters, and so you may tell him. Come along. [*Exeunt* JERRY *and Widow.*

Enter FIDELIA.

Fide. Dear Mr Freeman, speak to the captain for me.

Free. Where is he?

Fide. Within, sir.

Free. Sighing and meditating, I suppose, on his darling mistress—He would never trust me to see her; is she handsome?

Fide. I am not a proper judge.

Free. What is she?

Fide. A gentlewoman, I believe; but of as mean fortune as beauty. You know, sir, the captain made early choice of a sea life, to which the particularity of his disposition afterwards attached him. But, some time since, he determined to quit the navy; and, having conceived a violent passion for this lady, was about to marry, and retire with her into the country.

Free. And what prevented him?

Fide. The offer of a ship to go against the enemies of his country: however, when he came home again, the treaty was to be concluded; and in the mean time, he left his intended wife ten or twelve thousand pounds, lest any thing should happen to him, whilst he was abroad.

Free. He has left her in the care of some friend, has he not? Pray, do you know any thing of him?

Fide. Nothing further than that his name is Varnish; and he is a man, in whom the captain puts the greatest confidence.

Free. But if this Olivia be not handsome, what the devil can he see in her?

Fide. He imagines her, I suppose, the only woman of truth and sincerity in the world.

Free. No common beauties, I must confess—

Fide. But methinks he should have had more than common proofs of them, before he trusted the bulk of his fortune in her hands.

Free. Why, did he leave the sum you mention actually in her custody?

Fide. So I am told.

Free. Then he shewed love to her indeed—But I'll go plead with him for you, and learn something more of this wonderful fair one. [*Exit.*

Fide. Was ever woman in so strange, so cruel a situation? As long as I have worn this disguise, I cannot look at myself without astonishment; but when I consider, that I have run such lengths for a man, who knows not that I love him, and, if he did know it, would certainly reject my passion—I am startled indeed. At the time I formed the bold resolution of going with him to sea, I was sensible his affections were engaged to another: Why, then, did I embark in so rash an adventure? because I loved; and love is apt to buoy itself up with false hopes; he left the object of his desires behind: he took me with him; and, from that favourable circumstance, I suffered myself to be cheated with a thousand fond imaginations—Here he comes, and I must avoid him. Oh, fortune, fortune! I have been indiscreet; yet surely I may be punished for my indiscretion with too great severity. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Enter MANLY, *in his uniform, followed by* FREEMAN.

Man. 'Sdeath! it is past eleven o'clock, and I should have been abroad before nine! But this comes of being pestered with a pack of impertinent visitors. Well, I am going out, and shall not return all day.

Free. What, I suppose you are going to pay your devoirs to some great man now?

Man. And why should you suppose that?

Free. Nay, faith, only because I think it is what you ought to do, and I know it is what those sort of people expect.

Man. Well, but if they expect it from me, they shall be disappointed. I have done nothing to be afraid of, that I need solicit their interest, by way of a screen; and I leave those to dance attendance, who are more supple, and can play the parasite better—If they want, let them come to me—No, I am going at present, where, I dare swear, I shall be a welcome guest; and where I ought to have gone last night, indeed; but I came to town too late for her regular hours.

Free. Oh! I guess where you mean; to the lady I have so often heard you talk of. Methinks I would give a good deal to see this phenomenon. She must needs be mistress of very extraordinary charms, to engage a person of your difficult disposition.

Man. The charms of her person, though in them she excels most of her sex, are her meanest beauties: her tongue, no more than her face, ever knew artifice: she is all sincerity; and hates the creeping, canting, hypocritical tribe, as I do; for which I love her, and I am sure she hates not me; for, as an instance of her inviolable attachment, when I was going to sea, and she found it impracticable to accompany me, she insisted upon my suffering her to swear, that, in my absence, she would not listen to the addresses of any other man; which oath—

Free. You thought she would keep!

Man. Yes; for I tell you she is not like the rest of her sex, but can keep her promise, though she has sworn it.

Free. Ha, ha, ha!

Man. You doubt it, then! Well, I shall be at her house in an hour; come to me there; the volunteer will shew you the way; and we'll try how long your infidelity will be able to resist conviction. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A dressing room.*

Enter OLIVIA, ELIZA, *and* LETTICE.

Oliv. Oh! horrid, abominable! Peace, cousin Eliza, or your discourse will be my aversion—But you cannot be in earnest, sure, when you say you like the filthy world!

Eliz. You cannot be in earnest, sure, when you say you dislike it? Come, come, cousin Olivia, I will never believe, that a place, which has such a variety of charms for other women, should have none for you! Pray, what do you think of dressing and fine clothes?

Oliv. Dressing! it is, of all things, my aversion: I hate dressing: and I declare solemnly—Mercy on us! Come hither, you dowdy——Heavens! what a figure you have made of my head to-day!—Oh, hideous! I can't bear it! Did you ever see any thing so frightful?

Eliz. Well enough, cousin, if dressing be your aversion

Oliv. It is so; and for variety of rich clothes, they are more my aversion.

Lett. That's because you wear them too long, Madam.

Oliv. Insatiable creature! I take my death I have not wore this gown above three times; and I have made up six or seven more within these two months.

Eliz. Then your aversion to them is not altogether so great.

Oliv. Alas! cousin, it is for my woman I wear them.

Eliz. But what do you think of visits—balls?

Oliv. Oh! I detest them!

Eliz. Of plays?

Oliv. I abominate them—Filthy, obscene, hideous things!

Eliz. What say you to the opera in winter, and to Ranelagh and Vauxhall in summer? or, if these want attractions to engage you, what say you to the court?

Oliv. The court, cousin! the court! my aversion! my aversion of all aversions!

Eliz. Well, but prithee——

Oliv. Nay, don't attempt to defend the court; for, if you do, you will make me rail against it.

Eliz. To come nearer to the point, then—pray, what think you of a rich young husband?

Oliv. Oh, cruel! marriage! What a pleasure you have found out! I nauseate the very thoughts of it.

Lett. Mayhap, ma'am, my lady would rather like a generous, handsome, young lover!

Oliv. What do mean, Mrs Impertinence, by talking such stuff in my hearing? A handsome young lover! A lover, indeed! I hate men of all things; and I declare solemnly I would not let one into my doors.

Enter FOOTBOY.

Boy. Madam, here's the gentleman to wait on you.

Oliv. On me, you little blockhead! Do you know what you say?

Boy. Yes, ma'am, 'tis the gentleman, that comes every day to you.

Oliv. Hold your tongue, you little heedless animal, and get out of the room. This country boy, cousin, takes my music-master, mercer, and spruce milliner, for visitors. [NOVEL *speaks within.*

Lett. No, madam, 'tis Mr Novel, I am sure, by his talking so loud; I know his voice, too, madam.

Oliv. You know nothing, you stupid creature! You would make my cousin believe I receive visits—However, if it be your Mr.——

Lett. Mr Novel, madam——

Oliv. Peace, will you! I'll hear no more of him—But if it be your Mr.——I cannot think of his name again—I supposed he followed my cousin hither.

Eliz. No, cousin, I will not rob you of the honour of the visit; it is to you, cousin, for I know him not.

Oliv. Nor I neither, upon my honour, cousin! Besides, have not I told you that visits, and the business of visits, flattery and detraction, are my aversion? Do you then think I would admit such a coxcomb as he; the scandal-carrier of the whole town! more impudently scurrilous than a party libeller, who abuses every person and every thing, and piques himself upon his talents for ridicule!

Eliz. I find you know him, cousin; at least have heard of him.

Oliv. Yes, now I remember, I have heard of him.

Eliz. Well, but if he is such a dangerous coxcomb, for heaven's sake let him not come up! tell him, Mrs Lettice, your lady is not at home.

Oliv. No, Lettice, tell him my cousin is here, and that he may come up: for, notwithstanding I detest the sight of him, you may like his conversation; and I will not be rude to you in my own house. Since he has followed you hither, let him come up, I say.

Eliz. Very fine! Let him go and be hanged, I say, for me! I know him not, nor desire it.—Send him away, Mrs Lettice. [*Exit* LETTICE.

Oliv. Upon my word, she shall not; I must disobey your commands, to comply with your desires. Mr Novel! Mr Novel!

Enter NOVEL.

Nov. I beg ten thousand pardons, madam! perhaps you are busy; I did not know you had company.

Eliz. Yet he comes to me, cousin.

Oliv. Chairs there! Pray, sir, be seated.

Nov. I should have waited on you yesterday evening, according to appointment; but I dined at a place, where there is always such a profusion of good cheer, and so hearty a welcome, that one can never get away, while one has either appetite or patience left—You know that surfeiting piece of hospitality, lady Autumn? Ha, ha, ha! the nauseous old fury at the upper end of her table——

Oliv. Revives the ancient Grecian custom of serving up a death's head with their banquets! Oh, God! I detest her hollow cherry cheeks!—She looks like an old coach new painted, affecting an unseemly smugness, while she is ready to drop in pieces.

Nov. Excellent and admirable simile upon my soul! But do, madam, give me leave to paint her out to you a little, because I am intimately acquainted with the family. You must know she is horridly angry, if I don't dine at her house three times a-week.

Oliv. Nay, for that matter, any one is welcome to partake of her victuals, who will be content to listen to her stories of herself, when she was a young woman, and used to go with her fat Flanders mares, in her father's great gilt chariot, to take the air in Hyde Park. Oh, cousin! I must tell you——

Nov. What, Madam! I thought I was going to tell the lady; but, perhaps, you think nobody has wit enough to draw characters but yourself; in which case, I have done.

Oliv. Nay, I swear, you shall tell us who you had there at dinner.

Nov. With all my heart, madam, if you will condescend to listen to me.

Oliv. Most patiently, sir: pray speak.

Nov. In the first place, then, we had her daughter, whom, I suppose, you have seen.

Oliv. Seen! oh, I see her now! the very disgrace to good clothes, which she always wears to heighten her deformity, not mend it; for she is still most splendidly, gallantly ugly! and looks like an ill piece of daubing in a rich frame.

Nov. Very well, madam! Have you done with her? And can you spare her a little to me?

Oliv. If you please, sir.

Nov. In my opinion, she is like—

Oliv. She is, you would observe, like a great city bride; the greater fortune, but not the greater beauty, for her dress.

Nov. Yet have you done, madam?

Oliv. Pray, sir, proceed.

Nov. Then, she——

Oliv. I was just going to say so—she—

Eliz. I find, cousin, one may have a collection of all one's acquaintance's pictures at your house, as well as at sir Joshua Reynolds's, with this difference only, that his are handsome likenesses; to say the truth, you are the first of the profession of portrait-painters I ever knew without flattery.

Oliv. I draw from the life, cousin; paint every one in their proper colours.

Eliz. Oh! cousin, I perceive you hate detraction!

Oliv. But, Mr Novel, who had you besides at dinner?

Nov. Ladies, I wish you a good morning!

Oliv. 'Psha! how can you be so provoking? Nay, I take my death you shall not go, till you tell us the rest of the company! [*Stopping* NOVEL *who rises.*] Come, sit down again: I long to hear who your men were; for I am sure I am acquainted with some of them.

Nov. We had no men there at all, madam.

Oliv. What! was not sir Marmaduke Gimcrack with you? I'll lay fifty pounds on it! for I know he is courting one of her ladyship's crooked nieces.

Nov. Pray, ma'am, let me go.

Oliv. Nay, I know another of your company, I hold you a wager of it. Come, my lord Plausible dined with you, too, who is, cousin——

Eliz. You need not tell me what he is, cousin; for I know him to be a civil, good-natured gentleman, who talks well of all the world, and is never out of humour.

Oliv. Hold, cousin! I hate detraction: but I must tell you he is a tiresome, insipid coxcomb, without either sense to see faults, or wit to expose them; in fine, he is of all things my aversion, and I never admit his visits beyond my hall.

Nov. No! he visit you! damn him! he's never admitted to any one but worn-out dowagers, and superannuated maidens, who want to be flattered into conceit with themselves; he has often strove to scrape acquaintance with me, but I always took care——

Enter LORD PLAUSIBLE.

Ha! my dear, my dear lord! let me embrace you.

Eliz. Well, this is pleasant!

L. Plau. Your most faithful, humble servant, generous Mr Novel; and, madam, I am your eternal slave, and kiss your fair hands, which I had done sooner, according to your orders——

Oliv. No excuses, my lord, I know you must divide yourself; your company is too general a good to be engrossed by any particular friend.

Eliz. You hate flattery, cousin!

L. Plau. Oh lord, madam! my company! your most obliged, faithful, humble servant! But I might have brought you good company, indeed; for I parted just now at your door with two of the most sensible, worthy men—

Oliv. Who are they, my lord?

Nov. Who do you call the most sensible, worthy men?

L. Plau. Oh, sir, two of the brightest characters of the present age; men of such honour and

virtue. Perhaps, you may know them—Count Levant, and sir Richard Court-Title.

Nov. Court-Title! ha! ha! ha!

Oliv. And count Levant! How can you keep such a wretch company, my lord?

L. Plau. Oh seriously, madam, you are too severe: he is highly caress by every body.

Oliv. Caress, my lord! why he was never three times in company in his life, without being twice kicked out of it.

Nov. And for sir Richard!

L. Plau. He is nice in his connections, and loves to chuse those he converses with.

Oliv. He loves a lord, indeed——

Nov. Or any thing with a title—

Oliv. Though he borrows his money, and never pays him again. Nay, he carries his passion for quality so far, that they say the creature has an intrigue among them; and half starves his poor wife and family, by keeping a correspondence with that overgrown piece of right honourable filthiness, lady Bab Clumsey.

L. Plau. Oh, madam, he frequents her house because it is the tabernacle-gallant, the meeting-house for all the fine ladies and people of fashion about town.

Nov. Mighty fine ladies! There is first—

Oliv. Her honour, as fat as a hostess!

L. Plau. She is somewhat plump, indeed! a woman of a noble and majestic presence.

Nov. Then there's Miss what dye call her—

Oliv. As sluttish and slatternly as an Irish woman bred in France.

L. Plau. She has a prodigious fund of wit; and the handsomest heel, elbow, and tip of an ear, you ever saw.

Nov. Heel and elbow! Ha, ha, ha!

Eliz. I find you see all faults with lover's eyes, my lord!

L. Plau. Oh, Madam, your most obliged, faithful, very humble servant, to command!

Nov. Pray, my lord, are you acquainted with lady Sarah Dawdle?

L. Plau. Yes, sure, sir, very well, and extremely proud I am of the great honour; for she is a person whose wit, beauty, and conduct, nobody can call in question.

Oliv. No!

Nov. No! pray, madam, let me speak.

Oliv. In the first place, can any one be called handsome that squints?

L. Plau. Her eyes languish a little, I own.

Nov. Languish! ha, ha, ha!

Oliv. Languish!

Eliz. Well, this is to be borne no longer: cousin, I have some visits to make this morning, and will take my leave.

Oliv. You will not, sure! nay, you shall not venture my reputation, by leaving me with two men here. You'll disoblige me for ever——

Eliz. If I stay! your servant.

[*Exit.*

MANLY *and footboy speak within.*

Man. Not at home! Not see me! I tell you she is at home, and she will see me——let her know my name is Manly.

Boy. Well, but your honour, my lady's sick, I dare not go to her.

Man. Well, then, I'll go to her.

Boy. Help, Mrs Lettice! help! here's the sea gentleman!

Oliv. What noise is that?

Enter MANLY.

Man. My Olivia! 'Sdeath, what do I see! In close conversation with these!

Oliv. Ha, Manly! this is somewhat unexpected: however, I am prepared for him. [*Aside.*

L. Plau. Most noble and heroic captain, your most obliged, faithful, very humble——

Nov. Captain Manly, your servant.

Man. Away! Madam——

Oliv. Sir!

Man. It seems, madam, as if I was an unwelcome guest here: your footboy would hardly allow me admittance; at first he told me you were not at home. Indeed, I did not expect to find you in such good company.

Oliv. I suppose, sir, my servant had orders for what he did.

L. Plau. Perhaps, madam, Mr Novel and I incommode you; the captain and you may have something to say, so we'll retire.

Oliv. Upon my honour, my lord, you shan't stir; the captain and I have nothing to say to one another, assure yourself, nor ever shall: 'tis only one of his mad freaks, for which you will make allowances; salt-water lovers, you know, will be boisterous now and then.

Man. Confusion!

Nov. We shall have a quarrel here presently: I see she's going to use him damnably.

Man. What am I to think of this behaviour, Madam?

Oliv. Even what you please, good captain.

Man. And is this the reception I meet with after an absence——

Oliv. And is this behaving like a gentleman, to force into a lady's apartment contrary to her inclinations? I suppose it is Wapping breeding: however, you are fitted for your ill manners.

Man. I am fitted for believing you could not be fickle, though you were young; could not dissemble love, though it was for your interest; nor be vain, though you were handsome; nor break your promise, though to a parting lover. But I take not your contempt of me worse than your keeping company with and encouraging these things here.

Nov. Things!

L. Plau. Let the captain rally a little.

Man. Yes, things. Dare you be angry, you thing?

Nov. No, since my lord says you speak in raillery.

Man. And pray, madam, let me ask you, what is it you find about them to entertain you? For example, this spark here: is it the merit of his fashionable impudence, the briskness of his noise, the wit of his laugh, or his judgment and fancy in his solitaire, that engages your esteem?

Nov. Very well, sir! Egad, these captains of ships——

Man. Then, for this gentle piece of tame courtesy——

Oliv. Good, jealous captain, no more of your——

L. Plau. No, madam, let him go on; for, perhaps, he may make you laugh; and I would contribute to your pleasure any way.

Man. Obliging coxcomb!

Oliv. No, noble captain, you cannot think any thing would tempt me more than that heroic title of yours, captain! for you know we women love honour inordinately.

Nov. Ha, ha, ha! I cannot hold; I must laugh at you, faith, Mr Manly!

L. Plau. And i'faith, dear captain, I beg your pardon, and leave to laugh at you, too; though I protest I mean you no hurt——

Man. Peace, you buffoons! And be not you vain, that these laugh on your side; for they will laugh at their own dull jests: but no more of them; for I will only now suffer this lady to be witty.

Oliv. You would not have your panegyric interrupted! I go on, then, to your honour. Is there any thing more agreeable than the pretty oddity of that? Then the greatness of your courage! which most of all appears in your spirit of contradiction: for you dare give all mankind the lye; and your opinion is your only mistress; for you renounce that, too, when it becomes another man's.

L. Plau. Ha, ha, ha!

Nov. Ha, ha, ha!

Man. Why, you impudent, pitiful wretches! You presume, sure, upon your effeminacy, to urge me; for you are all things so like women, it might be thought cowardice to chastise you.

Oliv. No hectoring, good captain!

Man. Or, perhaps, you think this lady's presence secures you; but have a care; she hath talked herself out of all the respect I had for her; and, by using me ill before you, hath given me a privilege of using you so before her—therefore, begone immediately!

Nov. Begone! what!

L. Plau. Nay, worthy, noble, generous captain!——

Man. Begone, I say!

Nov. Well, Madam, we'll step into the next room; you will not stay long with him I suppose. Tal, lal! [*Exeunt* LORD PLAUSIBLE *and* NOVEL.

Oliv. Turn hither your rage, good captain Swagger-huff! and be saucy with your mistress, like a true captain; but be civil to your rivals and betters; and do not threaten any thing but me here; no, not so much as my windows: do not think yourself in the lodgings of one of your suburb mistresses beyond the tower.

Man. Do not you give me the cause to think so! for those less infamous women part with their lovers, just as you did from me, with unforced vows of constancy, and floods of willing tears; but the same winds bear away their lovers and their vows; and for their griefs, if the credulous, unexpected fools return, they find new comforters, such as I found here; the mercenary love of these women, too, suffers shipwreck with their lovers' fortune: you have heard, that chance has used me indifferently, and you do so too. Well, persevere in your ingratitude, falsehood, and disdain; be constant in something; and I promise to be as just to your real scorn, as I was to your feigned love; and henceforward despise, loath, and detest you most faithfully.

Oliv. I'll wait upon you again in a minute.

[*Exit.*

Enter FIDELIA *and* FREEMAN.

Free. How now, captain!

Man. Pray keep out of my way; dont speak to me.

Fide. Dear sir, what's the matter?

Man. Blockhead! Oh, Freeman! I have been so cheated, so abused, by this perfidious——

Free. Nay, sir, you need not tell us, for we have been for some time within hearing in the next room. But now, I hope, you will act as becomes you.

Man. I hope so, too.

Fide. Do you but hope it, sir?

Man. She has restored my reason with my heart.

Free. But there are other things, captain, which, next to a man's heart, he would not part with, and, methinks, she ought to restore, too; I mean your money and jewels, sir; which, I understand, she has.

Man. What's that to you, sir?

Free. Pardon me; whatever belongs to you, I have a share in, I am sure, which I will not lose for want of asking; though you may be too generous, or too angry, now, to do it yourself.

Fide. Nay, then I'll make bold, too——

Man. Hold, you impertinent, officious—how have I been deceived!

Enter OLIVIA.

Free. Madam, excuse this liberty—but we are captain Manly's friends, and have accidentally been witnesses to your disagreement.

Oliv. And what am I to infer from thence, sir?

Free. Why, then, Madam, there are certain

appurtenances to a lover's heart, called jewels, which always go along with it.

Free. And with lovers, madam, have no value, but from the heart they come with—our captain's, it seems, you scorn to keep; much more those worthless things without it. I am confident.

Oliv. I understand you, gentlemen. Captain, your young friend, here, has a very persuading face, I must confess; but you might have asked me yourself for those trifles you left with me, which—hark you a little—for I dare trust you with a secret, you are a man of so much honour I am sure—I say, then, considering the chance of war, the danger of the seas, and being in doubt whether you might ever return again, I have delivered your jewels and money to——

Man. Whom?

Oliv. My husband.

Man. Your husband!

Oliv. Aye, my husband. For, since you could leave me, I am lately and privately married to one, who is a man of so much honour and experience, that I dare not ask him for your things again, to restore them to you, lest he should conclude you never would have parted with them to me on any other score than the exchange of my virtue; which, rather than you would bring into suspicion——

Man. Triumphant impudence! Married!

Oliv. There's no resisting one's destiny, or love, you know.

Man. Damnation!

Oliv. Oh, dont swear! 'Tis true, my husband is now absent in the country; however, he returns shortly; therefore I beg, for your own ease and quiet, and my reputation, you will never see me more.

Man. I wish I never had seen you!

Oliv. You may perceive, by this, how great a dependance I have upon your friendship: I am sensible every man might not be talked to in the same manner; but your uncommon delicacy of thinking will, I am sure, feel for a person in my nice circumstances.

Man. True, perfect woman! and if I could say any thing more injurious to you I would—Leave me; go! lest I should be tempted to do something, which may hereafter make me think as meanly of myself, as I do now of you.

Oliv. Sir, it is a maxim with me never to stay in any place, where my company is disagreeable: I obey you with all willingness—young gentleman, your servant. [*Exit* OLIVIA.

Enter Footboy.

Boy. Here are Madam Blackacre, and Major Oldfox, to wait on my lady.

Man. Do you hear that? Let's be gone before he comes.

Free. Excuse me; the widow is the very game I have in view; I wanted just such an opportunity to attack her——and, if you will take my advice, you'll stay too; if it be only to see this major Oldfox, her supernumerary 'squire, her occasional gentleman usher: he is a character, I assure you.

Man. No; confound him, he is as bad as the cockatrice herself, whom I would avoid as a sinking ship, and the whole sex, for ever.

[*Exit with* FIDELIA.

Enter MRS BLACKACRE, JERRY, *and* MAJOR OLDFOX.

Mrs Black. 'Tis an arrant sea-ruffian! I thought he would have pushed us down, major. Jerry, where's my paper of memorandums? Give it me. So! where's my cousin Olivia, now—my kind relation?

Free. Here's one that would be your kind relation, madam.

Mrs Black. Hey day! who is this wild rude fellow?

Jer. Why, dont you know him? It's the man, that wanted to fall aboard you at Captain Manly's this morning.

Old. Pray be civil to the lady, Mr ———, she is a person of quality—a person, that is, no person——

Free. Yes, but she is a person, that is, a widow. Be you civil to her; because you are to pretend only to be her 'squire, to arm her to her lawyer's chambers: but I will be impudent and forward; for she must love and marry me.

Mrs Black. Marry come up; you saucy, familiar puppy! Marry you! God forgive me! now-a-days, every idle young rascal, with a laced waistcoat, and a bit of black ribbon in his hat, thinks to carry away any widow of the best degree.

Old. No, no, soft! you are a young man, and not fit; besides, others have laid in their claims before you.

Free. Not you, I hope!

Old. Why, not I, sir? Sure I am a much more proportionable match for her than you, sir; I, who am a person of rank and means in the world, and of equal years——

Mrs Black. How's that? you unmannerly—I would have you to know I was born in ann. secun Georgii prim——

Old. Your pardon, madam, your pardon; be not offended—but I say, sir, you are a beggarly younger brother; twenty years younger than she; without any land or stock, but your great stock of impudence: therefore, what pretensions can you have to her?

Mrs Black. And what pretensions have you, major? Go and solicit a brevet for Chelsea Hospital, you old mummy! Air yourself there under the cloisters; smoke your pipe, and make love to your laundress: you shall have a widow with three thousand pounds a year, you shall, you barbarous brute!

Old. How, madam!

Free. Ha, ha, ha!

Jer. Well said, mother! use all suitors thus for my sake.

Mrs Black. A senseless, impertinent, quibbling, scribbling, feeble, paralytic, conceited, ridiculous, pretending, old bellweather!

Jer. Hey! brave mother for calling names!

Mrs Black. Would you make a caudle-maker, a nurse of me? Can't you be bed-rid without a bed-fellow? Won't your swan-skins, furs, flannels, and the scorched trencher, keep you warm there? Would you make me your Scotch warming pan, with a plague to you!

Jer. Ay, you old fobus, and you would be my guardian, would you? to take care of my estate, that half of it should never come to me, by letting leases at pepper-corn rents?

Mrs Black. If I would have married an old man, it is well known I might have married an earl. Nay, what's more, a judge, and been covered the winter nights with the lamb-skins, which I prefer to the ermines of nobles. And do you think I would wrong my poor minor here, for you?

Free. Your minor is a chopping minor; Heaven bless him!

Old. Your minor may be a major of horse or foot for his bigness: and it seems you will have the cheating of your minor yourself.

Mrs Black. Pray, sir, bear witness: cheat my minor! I'll bring my action of the case, for the slander.

Free. Nay, I would bear false witness for you now, widow, since you have done me justice, and thought me the fitter man!

Mrs Black. Fair and softly, sir! 'tis my minor's case more than my own: and now I must do him justice on you. And, first, you are, to my knowledge—for I am not unacquainted with you—a debauched, drunken, hectoring, lewd, gaming, spend-thrift.

Jer. There's for you, bully-rock!

Mrs Black. A worn-out rake at five-and-twenty, both in body and estate: a cheating, lying, cozening, impudent fortune-hunter! and would patch up your own broken income with the ruins of my jointure.

Jer. Ay, and make havock of our estate personal, and of all our gilt plate—I should soon be picking up our silver-handled knives and forks, spoons, mugs, and tankards, at most of the pawnbrokers' between the Hercules pillars and the boatswain at Wapping. And you would be scouring among my trees, and making them play at loggerheads, would you?

Mrs Black. I would have you to know, you pitiful, paltry, lath-backed fellow, if I would have married a young man, it is well known I might have had any young heir in Norfolk; nay, the hopefullest young man this day at the King's Bench bar! I, that am a relict, and executrix of known plentiful assets and parts, who understand myself and the law; and would you have me under covert baron again? No, sir, no covert baron for me.

Free. Well; but, dear madam——

Mrs Black. Fie, fie! I neglect my business with this foolish discourse of love!—Jerry, child, let me see a list of the jury; I am sure my cousin Olivia must have some acquaintance among them: But where is she?

Free. Will you not allow me one word, then?

Mrs Black. No, no, sir; have done, pray.

Old. Ay, pray, sir, have done, and don't be troublesome; since you see the lady has no occasion for you, though you are a younger brother. Ha, ha, ha! [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A view of St James's Park.*

MANLY *enters alone, musing.*

How irksome is restraint to a mind naturally averse to hypocrisy! Yet I, who used to give birth to my thoughts as freely as I conceived them; I, who was wont to speak without reserve to every body; am now endeavouring even to deceive myself. That ungrateful woman, in whom I placed such unlimited confidence! into whose keeping I had given my heart, my judgment, nay, my very senses! 'Sdeath! had a man treated me ill, resentment would at once have cancelled regard, and revenge have prevented vexation; but here, I am obliged to side with my enemy, and increase the injuries she hath done me, by loving her in spite of them.

Enter FIDELIA.

Fide. Sir, have I liberty to speak to you?

Man. What would you say? You see this is no place to talk in; don't trouble me now.

Fide. I shall not detain you long, sir; and you may bear to hear two or three words from me, though you do hate me, as you have often said.

Man. I must confess I hate a flatterer: why will you not learn to be a man, and scorn that mean, that sneaking vice?

Fide. Perhaps I am to blame, sir; but I do not come to offend you at present—I have something to tell you, if you will vouchsafe to listen to me. Who do you think I met on the other side of the park just now, sir?

Man. Nay, how should I know? Prithee, kind impertinence, leave me. You are as hard to

shake off, as that obstinate, effeminate mischief, love.

Fide. Love, sir!—did you name love?

Man. No, no! Prithee away! Begone!—I had almost discovered my shame, my weakness; which must draw on me the derision even of this boy.

Fide. There is something, sir, that makes you uneasy: am I not worthy to be acquainted with the cause?

Man. What cause, child? Nothing makes me uneasy; a little involuntary thoughtfulness, that's all. But you say you met somebody in the park just now; who was it?

Fide. Why, really, sir, on second thoughts, I don't know how to mention her name to you; but it was that creature, that wretch, that——

Man. That who? Who is it you are going to speak of now, that you preface your discourse with all this bitterness of invective?

Fide. Why, sir, that monster of ingratitude, Olivia!

Man. Olivia!

Fide. Yes, sir.

Man. Well, and how?

Fide. Nay, not much, sir; only she called me over to her as I was crossing the Mall, and would feign have had me gone home to her house, where she had something to communicate; but, for my part, I could hardly bear to look at her, much less afford her an opportunity for conversation.—Pray, sir, don't you think she has a most forbidding countenance?

Man. I cannot say I ever observed it.

Fide. Then her shape is by no means one of the best.

Man. Indeed!

Fide. But I hope, sir, your eyes are now as open to her deformities, as they must be to her perfidiousness; and that you will never think of her any more.——But why do I mention that?—You never can think of her without bringing your good sense, nay, your reputation, in question: for after such unworthy, such infamous usage——

Man. Confusion! Who told you, sir, she had used me ill?

Fide. Why, sir, was not I witness?

Man. 'Sdeath, sirrah, if ever I hear you mutter such a word again, I'll shake you into atoms! How am I exposed and rendered contemptible? It is enough, that I think I have nothing to complain of. I am perfectly well satisfied with her conduct.—Do you mark!—perfectly well satisfied.

Fide. Very well, sir, I have done.

Man. Oh, the curse of being conscious of a weakness one is ashamed to divulge! Hold, sir! Come hither. Have you resolution enough to endure the torture of a secret; for such to some is insupportable.

Fide. I would keep it as safe as if your dear precious life depended upon it.

Man. It concerns more than my life—my honour.

Fide. Doubt me not, sir.

Man. And do not discover it by too much fear of discovering—Do ye mark?—But, above all things, take care, that Freeman find it not out.

Fide. I warrant you, sir.

Man. Then, know, I love Olivia; doat on her: her ingratitude and disdain, like oil thrown into the flames, have made my passion burn the fiercer.

Fide. Oh, Heavens!

Man. You say she met you just now, and wanted you to go home with her, in order to communicate something: who knows what that might be?—Perhaps she hath repented her behaviour this morning—Perhaps it was the result of passion, of affectation, or was meant to try me: in short, I can assign a thousand reasons for it, besides that one of change in her affections; for, I am sure, once she loved me.

Fide. Hang her, dissembling creature! Love you! It was only for her interest, then.

Man. Well, well, no matter; but, I tell you, I know better: I am sure once she did love me.

Fide. Indeed, sir, she never cared for you.

Man. Will you have done, sir!

Fide. Besides, sir, did she not tell you, she was married?

Man. Well, well, but that might be artifice, too——'Sdeath, sir! will you listen to me, or go about your business, and never let me see you more?

Fide. I beg pardon, sir.

Man. I say you shall go to her house, and hear what this business is.

Fide. I go to her house, sir? I would sooner go——

Man. No hesitating, sir! I say you must: she lives but in the next street.

Fide. Indeed, sir, I cannot go there.

Man. No, sir!

Fide. Besides, sir, consider: you scorned her this morning.

Man. I know not what I did this morning: I dissembled this morning.——What! are you not gone yet?

Fide. Well, sir, now I think on it, I will go: for, perhaps, this is a sting of conscience; and she hath a mind to make some recompense for her ill usage of you, by returning your money and jewels: methinks I feign would have them out of her hands.

Man. Stay, sir; if she drops the least hint of any such thing, I charge you, come away immediately, and do not stay even to give her an answer.

Fide. Well, but, dear sir, only let me speak one word——

Man. I will not hear a syllable: you will find me in Westminster-hall: begone!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Westminster-hall—A crowd of people, serjeants, counsellors, and attorneys, walking busily about.*

Enter MRS BLACKACRE *in the middle of half a dozen lawyers,* JERRY *following, with a green bag.*

Mrs Black. Offer me a reference, you saucy blockhead! Do you know who you speak to? Are you a solicitor in chancery, and offer a reference? Mr Serjeant Plodden, here is a fellow has the impudence to offer me a reference!

Plod. Who is that has the impudence to offer a reference within these walls?

Mrs Black. Nay, for a splitter of causes to do it!

Plod. No, madam; to a lady, learned in the law as you are, the offer of a reference were to impose upon you.

Mrs Black. No, never fear me for a reference, Mr Serjeant—But come, have not you forgot your brief? Are you sure you shall not make the mistake of——Hark you——

Enter MAJOR OLDFOX *and Bookseller.*

———Come, Mr Splitcause, pray go see, when my cause in chancery comes on; and go speak with Mr Quillet in the King's Bench, and Mr Quirk in the Common Pleas, and see how matters go there.

Old. Madam, I have the pleasure to bid you good-morrow once again; and may all your causes go as prosperously as if I myself was to be the judge of them!

Mrs Black. Sir, excuse me, I am busy, and cannot answer compliments in Westminster-hall. Go, Mr Splitcause, and come to me again at the bookseller's.

Old. No, sir, come to the lady at the other bookseller's. If you please, madam, I'll attend you thither.

Mrs Black. And why to the other bookseller's, major?

Old. Because, madam, he is my bookseller.

Mrs Black. To sell you lozenges for your cough, or salve for your corns? What else can a major deal with a bookseller for?

Old. Madam, he publishes for me.

Mrs Black. Publishes! oh, that is true, I forgot—you are an author.

Old. Now and then, madam, now and then—the good of one's country, you know.

Mrs Black. And pray, major, what are your books upon?

Old. Deign you, madam, to peruse one of them! There is a thing of mine lately come out; and I'll assure you, a certain great person, whom I presented it to, was pleased to pay me a compliment in the Court of Requests.

Book. Do you want any thing, madam? We have all the plays, magazines, and new pamphlets——

Mrs Black. Have you the Lawyer's Magazine?

Book. We have no law books at all, madam.

Mrs Black. No! you are a pretty bookseller!

Old. Come hither, young man—Has your master got any of my last pamphlet left?

Book. Yes, sir, we have got enough of them; we never had above two or three called for, besides what you took away yourself.

Old. May be so, may be so; the thing is not sufficiently known yet. Well, let me see a couple. [*Gets them.*] It is entitled, madam, "A Letter to a certain great Man on the present Posture of Affairs;" and if you will please to accept of one *ex dono auctoris*——

Jer. Hoh, hoh, hoh! [*Laughing at a pamphlet behind.*]

Mrs Black. Jerry, what have you got there?

Jer. Why—nothing——

Mrs Black. Nothing! Let me look at that book—Rochester's Jests! A very pretty study, truly. Give him the Young Clerk's Guide.

Old. No, no; give the young gentleman my Treatise upon Military Discipline.

Mrs Black. Away with such trash! Do you want to send him to the devil headlong? I should have him teazing me, to-morrow or next day, to buy him an ensign's commission. I would as lief he should read a play!

Jer. Well, and what if I did! There's very good discourse to be got out of plays, for all you.

Mrs Black. Sirrah, sirrah! Don't let me hear such a word out of your mouth. What has spoiled most of the attornies' clerks in London, but turning critics, and running every night to the playhouses at half price? and do you want to follow their example?—Stay, Jerry—Is not that Mr What d'ye call him goes yonder, he that offered to sell me a suit in chancery for five hundred pounds, for an hundred down, and only paying the clerk's fees?

Jer. Yes, that's he.

Mrs Black. It is the cheapest thing I ever heard of—Stay here, and have a care of the bags, while I go and talk with him. Have a care of the bags, I say—— [*Exit.*

Jer. Have a care of the fiddle's end, I say: Gad, I am sure I lead a dog's life with you.

Enter FREEMAN.

Free. So, here's a limb of my widow, that used to be inseparable from her: she can't be far—— How now, major!

Old. What do you mean by that, sir! Who are you, sir? What are you, sir?

Free. Nay, my dear Don Choleric, don't snap my nose off.

Old. Sir, you are a very impertinent fellow, sir!—And, sir—'squire, where's your mother?

Jer. Oh, what, you were so intent upon reading your works, you let her give you the slip, did you?

Well, yonder she is, talking to that weazle-faced man in the big wig—hobble after her.

Old. An unmannerly, insignificant, ignorant!—I shall take notice of you, Mr Sea-Lieutenant, I shall take notice of you! [*Exit.*

Jer. Look you, master, I'll tell you what it is—I'll buy that book of choice sayings from you, if so be you'll take half a crown for it, and stay till lawyer Splitcause comes to lend me the money to pay you.

Free. Lend you! Here, I'll pay him—I am sorry, squire, a man of your estate should want money.

Jer. Why, I am not at age yet, you must understand.

Free. At age! You are at age already, man, to have spent a fortune: there are younger than you, who, to my knowledge, have kept their girls these three years; ruined half a dozen tradesmen, and lost as many thousand pounds at play. But what is the reason, 'squire, that you will not give your consent to my marrying your mother?

Jer. Why you would not be such a fool, would you?

Free. Why I would not be a fool, if I could help it: but has not she a good jointure?

Jer. A good jointure! If she has, she knows what to do with it: she will let no body have a finger in the pie but herself, I can tell you that. Come a little this way—Why, you would not believe what an old plague my mother is; she'll never allow me sixpence in my pocket; so that I am ashamed to go into company, because I have not wherewithal to call for a glass of wine, and do as the rest do. And, for a wench!—I was but making a little fun with our laundress's daughter upon the staircase, the other night, and she threatened to send the poor girl to Bridewell.

Free. Sure!

Jer. Upon my word she did! Oh, you don't know what a woman she is.

Free. Well, but 'squire, methinks this might easily be remedied: if I was you, I would go to law with her.

Jer. Law! Lord help your head! Why she is as big a lawyer as any in our inn; and would not desire better sport—Besides, I would not care to do that, for fear she should marry out of spite, and cut down my trees. I should hate to see my father's wife kissed and slopped by another man—and our trees are the purest, nice, shady, even twigs!

Free. Come, 'squire, let your mother and your trees fall, as she pleases, rather than go of this fashion all your life—But you shall be able to deal with her the right way.

Jer. Nay, if I had any friend to stand by me, I would shew her a trick worth two of it, I can tell you that.

Free. Suppose I was to be your friend! Look you, 'squire, I don't use to profess much; however, there's a trifle for your present occasions.

Jer. Oh, Lord, Sir! two guineas! Do you lend me this? Is there no trick in it? Well, sir, I'll give you my bond for security.

Free. No, no, you have given me your face for security; any one would swear you do not look like a cheat: and come to me whenever you will, and you shall have what money you please of me.

Jer. By my soul he's a curious fine gentleman! but may I depend upon you? Will you stand by me?

Free. Here's my hand.

Jer. That's enough. Never stir, but the next cross word my mother gives me, but I'll leave her directly, and come off to you—But now I have got money, I'll go pay the man at the gate two shillings I owe him, for I believe the poor soul wants it; and his wife has been two or three times at chambers to dun me. [*Exit.*

Enter MANLY, Mrs BLACKACRE, *and* MAJOR OLDFOX.

Man. Confound your cause! Can't you lose it without me? which you are like enough to do, if it be, as you say, an honest one: I'll suffer for it no longer.

Mrs Black. Nay, but, captain, you are my chief witness—And Mr Splitcause tells me we are pricked down for the next hearing. Lord! methinks you should take pleasure in walking here, as half you see now do: for they have no business here, I assure you.

Man. Yes, but I assure you, then, their business is to persecute me——'Sdeath! I can't turn but one puppy or other has me by the sleeve, with impertinent inquiries or fulsome compliments: I have been acting the sign of the salutation this half hour, with a bowed body and my hat off, to one of your law serjeants yonder; while he was loading me with professions of service and friendship, though, in all probability, he cared not if I was at the devil; and I was wishing him hanged out of my way.

Mrs Black. Well, well, sir, compose yourself a little, and every thing shall be made agreeable. Jerry, why, Jerry!—Mercy on me, major, did not you leave my son here?

Old. Yes, madam, but perhaps the young gentleman is stepped aside.

Mrs Black. Jerry Blackacre!

Free. Your son will be here in a minute, madam; he's only just gone out of the hall about a little business.

Mrs Black. Out of the hall! Gads my life!—Out of the hall!

Free. Don't make yourself uneasy, madam; I'll answer for it he'll come to no mischief.

Mrs Black. Sir, I don't direct my discourse to you—But I'll so rate this careless jackanapes—Come along, major, and help me to look for him.

[*Exeunt all but* MANLY *and* FREEMAN.

Free. Well, sir, how have you past your time, since you came here? You have had a great deal of patience, sure.

Man. Patience, indeed! for I have drawn but one quarrel and two law-suits upon me.

Free. The devil! How could you quarrel here?

Man. How could I refrain?—But let's get off, for I see another quarrel coming upon me.

Free. What do you mean?

Man. Ask no questions, but walk this way.

Enter NOVEL.

Nov. Hey! captain! captain Manly!

Man. What now?

Nov. I beg pardon; but I thought it was you. Have you been in the house hearing the debates? What are they upon to-day?

Man. Considering what passed between you and me at our last interview, sir, I cannot help being a little astonished at the familiarity of this salutation.

Nov. Pho, pho! a mere trifle. Don't mention it—It has been a very fine morning, sir.

Free. Yes, sir, the weather has been tolerable.

Nov. It was very cold yesterday.

Free. I believe it might, sir.

Nov. Captain, what do you think brings me to Westminster-hall?

Man. Why, I suppose somebody has thrashed you lately for being impertinent, and you are come to take the law of them.

Nov. No, that's not it. But I suppose you have heard——

Man. Heard what?

Nov. Why, that I am to be played the devil with; costs and damages, and the Lord knows what.

Man. No, really, I have heard nothing about the matter; but what is it? though I am sure you are in the wrong before you tell me.

Nov. Why, you must know, sir—Ha, ha, ha! Upon my soul it is so ridiculous a circumstance, that I can hardly think of it without laughing.—You must know, sir, I was some time ago at the house of a considerable merchant in the city, where a certain lady's name was brought up; and, in the course of the conversation, I happened to mention some things which I had heard, and which all the world believe to be fact, egad! However, as you may guess, I did not imagine the discourse would have gone any further.

Free. But I suppose the lady had a friend in company, sir.

Nov. Oh, sir! I know how the matter came about now—Yes, yes, the woman of the house was her sister-in-law, which I never dreamt of: the intolerable Jezebel went and told her every thing that passed: an attorney came the next morning to serve me with a copy of a writ; and now they have brought me here to make me prove my words, as they call it.

Man. And pray, sir, what was it you said of the lady?

Nov. Nothing, nothing!—some story that I heard about her cuckolding her husband; that was all.

Man. I hope she may trounce you severely; nay, and I hope what you said of her was true; that you may be made the more glaring example.

Nov. Well, but my dear creature! how can you be so inhuman to any person, that never did you any injury?

Man. Because I would have such mischievous triflers as you are punished for your tattling and effeminacy: I would have you taught the difference between satire and defamation; and learn some other topic for your nonsensical conversations, besides the character and conduct of the absent: you male members of the tea-table, who are, if possible, worse enemies to women, than they are to one another.

Nov. Well upon my honour, this is pleasant! especially from you, who are remarkable for abusing all the world.

Man. Do you hear him, Freeman? Plain-dealing may well be in disrepute, when 'tis confounded with impudence and scandal: but if I stay here any longer, I find I shall be tempted to beat him.

Free. Nay, prithee don't leave us.

Man. Yes, yes, I must; I shall bring myself into another scrape else: besides, I see a person just now come into the hall, that looks for me—Stand out of the way. [*Exit.*

Nov. This is a sad brutish fellow, sir; I wonder you will keep him company.

Free. Why, faith, sir, I don't know how it is; I think I am bewitched to him, for my part—and yet, hang him! he has some good qualities, too, when one comes to be thoroughly acquainted with him.

Nov. Ay, sir! Pray, what may they be, for I never could find them out?

Free. Why, I think 'tis generally agreed, sir, that he has a tolerable good understanding.

Nov. Why, really, I have heard people say so; and yet, to me, he has always appeared the stupidest animal breathing.

Free. Then as to courage.—It must be allowed he is brave.

Nov. He is quarrelsome, if you please; but his bravery, I fancy, will admit of some dispute. You have heard, no doubt, of his late affair with the French?

Free. Ay, sir; what of that?

Nov. Why, I should not care to have my name mentioned as the author of such a thing; but I assure you there are some very odd reports fly about; and this, I believe, you may depend upon, that he will be brought to a court-martial for his behaviour on that occasion.

Free. I am glad to hear this, sir, with all my heart; for, you must know, I happened to be a partner in the action you mention.

Nov. Were you, sir?

Free. Yes, faith; but I was ignorant, till now, of the dangerous situation we were in; however, I am extremely obliged to you for your intelligence, as I dare swear the captain will be—

Nov. Yonder goes my attorney—I'll just speak two or three words to him, and be back with you again in an instant.

Free. Hold, sir! we must not part so. You must go along with me, sir, and tell this story to captain Manly.

Nov. Sir, I have not time at present—I—there's a gentleman beckons me, owes a thousand pounds, and goes out of town to-morrow morning—Mr— [*Exit.*

Free. Ha, ha, ha! Well, we shall meet again.

Enter JERRY BLACKACRE.

How now, 'squire, what's the matter?

Jer. Nothing: I don't care; nothing's the matter: but if ever I go home again with her, I wish I may never stir! You said you would stand by me.

Free. Well, and so I will. Who has injured you?

Jer. Why, my mother: she caught me at the place there, changing the money you gave me, and flew at me like any mad, and pulled my hair, and called me all the names that ever she could think of—But if I don't be up with her! you will see! and if you won't take me with you, I'll go for a soldier.

Free. Take you with me, 'squire! do you desire to go with me?

Jer. Yes, 'tis all my desire.

Free. How shall I act in this affair? 'gad, 'twill be a good stroke towards making something of the widow in earnest; at least, of getting my right out of her hands.—[*Aside.*]—Well, 'squire, I'll tell you what, if you are really serious—

Jer. Oh, Lord! yonder she is coming in at the gate with that old fellow: if you will come, come away; for I won't stay any longer to be beat and abused by her.

Free. Nay, since that's the case, have with you, my boy.

Jer. Ay, and now let's see how she'll be able to help herself. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the gate of Westminster-hall.*

Enter, from within, MANLY *and* FIDELIA, *and on the opposite side,* MRS BLACKACRE *and* MAJOR OLDTON.

Mrs Black. A villain! a rascal! I'll teach him better manners than to talk saucily to his mother!—These are pretty doings, are they not? My son flies in my face; and when I go to correct him for it, he tells me, truly, he'll leave me, and go to the mate of your ship, who has offered to take him.

Man. Well, and what's that to me? You must tie your calf up, if you are afraid of his being stolen.

Mrs Black. But which way did he run, major? May be he is gone to that seducing villain already; and he has got my writings with him, all that concerns my estate, my jointure, my husband's deed of gift, and the evidences for all my suits now depending.

Man. I am glad of that; for, if you have lost your evidence, your cause can't go on, and I am at liberty.

Old. Mr Jerry went off in a great passion, madam; I hope he won't commit any rash action, to do himself a mischief.

Mrs Black. No, no, I know him better than so; he will never be *felo de se* that way: but he may go and chuse a guardian of his own head, and so be *felo de ses bens*; for he has not chosen one yet.

Man. Which I hope he may, with all my heart!

Mrs Black. Oh, do you so, sir? then it seems you are in the plot.—Well, look to it; I'll play fast and loose with you all yet, if there be law, and my minor and writings are not forthcoming. I'll bring my action of *detinue* or *trover*—but I'll first go and seek—

Man. Well, I shall not stay here any longer.

Mrs Black. Stir a step, stir a step, at your peril, till the courts are broke up, and I'll serve you with a rule of contempt.

[*Exeunt* MRS BLACKACRE *and* MAJOR OLDTON.

Man. Now, sir, go on.—You have been with Olivia, you say.

Fide. Yes, sir, I have seen and spoke with her.

Man. Well, and she received you kindly?

Fide. Kinder than you would think, sir.

Man. That's well—come, now, let me hear what she said to you.

Fide. Said to me, sir?

Man. Ay, what was her business with you? Come, come! Why don't you speak? You are so tedious! What was it she had to communicate?

Fide. Modesty, sir, prevents my entering into particulars; I need only tell you, that her business with me has proved of the most extraordinary kind; I am so shocked at the thoughts of her behaviour, I cannot say more.

Man. Confusion!

Fide. I assure you, sir, I would not impose upon you by the forgery of a falsehood, and cannot wrong her by any report of her, she is so wicked.

Man. Wicked! 'Sdeath, had she the impudence!

Fide. Impudence! Oh, sir!

Man. But what! How did she accost you?

Fide. When I came to the house, sir, I was

conducted into her dressing-room, where I found her alone; and I took it for granted she would have begun immediately with talking of you and your late difference with her; but, instead of that, sir, I had hardly sat down, when she gave me to understand she had desired to see me on my own account only; and was so bold, and so forward—

Man. But in what terms did she express herself?

Fide. Her tongue, I confess, was silent, sir; but her eyes conveyed such things—

Man. Eyes! Eyes!—What, then, you have only had eye kindness from her; and your vanity has helped you, in this construction, so much to the lady's disadvantage?

Fide. Not so, sir—At first, indeed, her eyes, chiefly, were the interpreters of her thoughts; but, finding they spoke a language I could not, or would not, understand, she threw off the restraint, made a tender of her passion in direct terms; and, in short, sir, offered to prostitute that love to me, at half an hour's acquaintance, which you have deserved whole years in vain.

Man. I'll not believe it—It is a damned lie of your own contrivance; come, I know 'tis a lie.

Fide. I am sorry you should think so, sir: but, however unlikely it may appear, I can give you proof.

Man. Proof!

Fide. Yes, sir; for I have seemed half consenting to her solicitations, and made a kind of promise to pay her a visit this night, at twelve o'clock, when the family shall be asleep.

Man. Ha!

Fide. For which purpose she has shewn me a back way into her apartment, where a lamp always burns; for she will have no light in her chamber, because her woman lies in an adjoining closet—Nay, more, sir; she has given me the key of the garden, to let myself in with, which I have brought off.

Man. The key of the garden! Let me see it.—I know it well; and have a thousand times gone, by the passage you mention, to our private interviews: I imagined it led to paradise, and an angel of purity inhabited there; but I must think of that no more—Did she say nothing to you of this husband of her's?

Fide. Yes, sir; she is actually married, and her husband gone out of town; but she expects him very soon; and that, I suppose, made her more urgent with me to come to night.

Man. And can you think of disappointing a lady upon such an occasion?

Fide. I, sir!—I should disappoint her more by going.

Man. How so?

Fide. Her impudence and infidelity to you, sir, has made me loath her.

Man. Well, sir, but I say the lady shall not be disappointed.

Fide. Not disappointed, sir!—If ever I go near her again, may you think me as false to you as she is! hate and renounce me!

Man. Well, well, if you won't, leave the matter to me; I'll take care—

Fide. You, sir!—You take care, sir!—Pray give me that odious key again, and let me return it with the contempt, the detestation—

Man. No, sir; this key is the instrument of revenge, which fortune hath put into my hand; and, by Heaven, I'll make use of it.

Fide. Revenge, sir!—what revenge? Disdain is best revenged by scorn; and faithless love by loving another.

Man. Perhaps it may, where the object has once been esteemed; but, I now begin to think, I had never any share in her affections; and, therefore, I'll take another method.

Fide. And what is your design, sir?

Man. Not a word more; here's Freeman coming towards us: we will disengage ourselves from him as soon as we can, and talk of this affair further.

Enter FREEMAN.

Free. The most whimsical accident has happened to me here to-day, captain; the most unexpected, unaccountable—Ha, ha, ha!

Man. What, the great boy has rose in rebellion against the tyranny of his widow-mother, and put himself under your protection! Have a care, Freeman; though she is a fiend, and I wish her at the devil, we are still to have a regard to justice.

Free. Then we are to do ourselves justice, sure; which, I promise you, is all the use I shall make of the 'squire's revolt in my favour. Where shall we dine?

Man. I was just thinking of it—Where can we dine?

Free. Will you go to the King's Arms?

Man. Why, I don't much care if I do: but it must be upon one condition.

Free. Name it.

Man. That you shall not attempt to pin yourself upon me after dinner; I must positively have the whole evening at my own disposal; for my young volunteer and I have particular business.

Free. That's sufficient, sir; you know you always make your own terms with me.

Man. Come then, young gentleman, lead the way. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—MANLY'S *lodgings.*

MANLY *enters in a surtout coat, followed by* FIDELIA.

Man. THEN Freeman betrayed no marks of surprise at being told I was gone abroad so early! and you are positive he had not the least suspicion of my being out all night!

Fide. I believe not, sir.

Man. So much the better. I have been sitting at the coffee-house these three hours, lest knocking at the door at an unseasonable time might alarm the family—Help me off with my coat—and now shut the door, and bolt it, that no body may come in upon us unawares.

Fide. Heigh ho!

Man. What's the matter with you?

Fide. Nothing, sir.

Man. You have been crying!

Fide. I have not been very well, sir.

Man. Come, you are a good lad; don't let your spirits sink; I'll be your friend; you shall fare as I do; let that content you.

Fide. I desire no better, sir.

Man. Take the pen and ink, and sit down there—I am now convinced that what you told me yesterday was truth; and Olivia is the vilest, and most profligate of her sex.

Fide. Are you convinced, sir?—Are you indeed convinced? Then I hope——

Man. Speak softly—I suppose I need not tell you where I have been!

Fide. Sir!

Man. I say, I suppose I need not tell you, where I have been since we parted; I have been with Olivia; and she has bestowed on me a thousand caresses, which I returned with seemingly an equal ardour.

Fide. Lord, sir, I am vastly sick of a sudden!

Man. You are a coward—What ails you?

Fide. I don't know, sir, I never was so oddly taken in my life; but it will away again.

Man. Listen to me, then, and be surprised yet more—I have passed myself upon Olivia for you!

Fide. For me, sir!

Man. Yes—Darkness, and the particularity of our situation, favoured the deceit; and I was cautious not to undeceive her, by speaking but little, and that softly; and leaving her this morning before it was light.

Fide. Surely, sir, you will never go near this abominable woman more!

Man. That we'll consider of—In part, my revenge is satisfied.

Fide. Well, sir, what are your commands with me?

Man. Hear me! I would have you go immediately, and write Olivia a very tender billet-doux; deplore the necessity, which forced you from her this morning, so much against your inclination; and appoint another meeting with her, at her own house, this evening, as soon as it shall be dusk.

Fide. Out of revenge, I suppose, sir!

Man. It is so—for I intend to go there.

Fide. Sir, my life is devoted to your service; but, however meanly you may think of me, I cannot descend so low as to the infamous office you would lay upon me.—Excuse me, sir, I cannot act the part of a pander.

Man. Your principles of honour I do not dislike, if they are sincere; but I tell you, you are mistaken in the matter.

Fide. Indeed, sir, I am not; I see all plain enough; but, upon my knees, I beg, if you have the least regard for yourself, renounce this woman; give her up, and never————

Man. What am I to think of your behaviour? Sure you would have me believe you love her yourself; which, indeed, I have all along suspected.

Fide. Indeed, sir, it is all my concern for your safety.

Man. Methinks you might trust that to my care—but, once for all, I desire I may have no more impertinent disputing or advice—you have reason to know I am unalterable.

Fide. Sir, you must give up either Olivia or me!

Man. Why so, sir? What have you and Olivia to do with one another?

Fide. Well, sir, let me hear your commands.

Man. I have already told them to you—I would have you write this letter, to make the appointment; you shall keep it in person; and when you have been with her some time, I will come in at the back door, which you shall purposely leave open, and catch you together.

Fide. Well, sir, and what then?

Man. Why then, sir, I will upbraid her falsehood, confront her impudence, boast of the triumph I have had over her, and never see her more.

Fide. And is this really all you intend, sir?

Man. All.

Fide. I think you can have no kindness left for Olivia now, sir; I think you can't—You don't love her the least bit, captain, do you?

Man. Love her! Damn her! I think of her with abhorrence.

Fide. Then, I will go and write the letter directly, sir.

Enter [*Speaks within*] Well, well, I will introduce you.

Man. Do so—and open the door, for I think I hear Freeman in the next room.

[*Exit* FIDELIA.

Enter FREEMAN *and* MAJOR OLDFOX.

Free. Captain, here's a gentleman who is ambitious of being ranked amongst the number of your acquaintance.—This, sir, is major Oldfox, at once the votary of Mars and Apollo, and equally an ornament to the pen and the sword.

Old. Sir, I am your most———

Man. What do you mean by bringing the old fool to me?—Why will you, Freeman, take these liberties?

Free. Excuse me; upon my soul I could not avoid it.——The captain is a whimsical man, major; but I suppose you know his humour.

Old. Ay, ay, I have heard, and like him the better.—Captain, I honour you; you are a great man, sir: your late behaviour against the enemy has proved you such, and I shall be proud of being better known to you: as Mr Freeman has intimated, I am an humble admirer of the arts, and now and then throw my thoughts upon paper: *nequeo dormire*, as the poet says.

Man. And what then, sir?

Old. Nay, good captain, take me along with you.—I suppose you would not be displeased to have the particulars of your late action laid in a proper manner before the public; and, if so, I should be glad to drink a bottle, and have a little discourse with you about it—That's all, sir.

Man. Ha, ha, ha!

Old. He is an odd man, Mr Freeman.

Free. But ingenious, major.

Old. Ay, ay—Pray, captain, do you ever read the Royal Chronicle?

Man. No.

Old. Nor the Imperial Magazine?

Man. Neither.

Old. That's much, that's much, indeed; neither the Royal Chronicle, the Imperial Magazine, nor—! There are often very excellent pieces make their appearance in those publications, Mr Freeman.

Free. So there are, major, so there are—and I believe I can guess to whom the public is indebted for a good many of them! What say you? Eh?—Don't I know the signum—three stars and a dash?

Old. No, Mr Freeman; no, upon my honour, sir! That was my mark formerly; but now, all my things are signed Philanthropos.

Free. You are not author of that soliloquy in blank verse, in the papers the other day?

Old. What! an address to the land-carriage fish-office?

Free. Ay.

Old. Why, did you like it?

Free. As good as Milton!

Old. Mr Freeman, my dear soul! I am extremely sorry, that any thing should happen between us; but, as I said before, I hope that is all forgotten; and you will henceforward look upon me as your friend. It was I that writ it. But mum! between ourselves.

Man. Hark you, old gentleman, it seems you have taken it into your head you can write, and are turned author; shall I tell you what I once said to an acquaintance of mine, who was possessed of the same unaccountable whim?

Old. Well, sir, and what was that?

Man. Why, faith, I told him very plainly he was making himself an ass.

Old. Mr Freeman, I shall be glad to see you at my house, to eat a bit of mutton with me, and to have a little conversation about a matter I shall tell you. Sir, your servant! [*Exit.*

Free. You took a very sure way to get rid of an author, by advising him not to write. But you are grown a very early man, sure; I was here two hours ago, and was told you were gone out.

Man. Aye, and I should have staid out, if I had known what company you intended to bring me.

Free. As to that, don't be angry; the major, you must know, is the widow's harbinger, who is coming in pursuit of her son; and he and I having a little quarrel, I had a mind to make it up with him, by doing what he said he would consider as the greatest obligation—introducing him to you.

Man. Well, and what have you done with your charge?

Free. Stay and you shall see: I have rigged him out with the remains of my ship-wrecked wardrobe: he has been under your sea valet de chambre's hands. By Jupiter! that is his mother's knock at the door. Stay, and I'll fetch him.

Man. No—you know I cannot easily laugh; but I desire once more you will take care, and bring yourself into no disagreeable circumstances by this business. [*Exit.*

SCENE II—*Covent-Garden Piazza.*

Enter Mrs BLACKACRE *and Major* OLDFOX.

Old. But will you not walk in, madam?

Mrs Black. No, major, no; I shall not put my foot into his house, since I have not my lawyer with me. I called on counsellor Quillit, but he's attending a trial for an assault.

Old. Well, but, madam, this is a strange place to transact business in.

Mrs Black. Major, you are an ignoramus!—do you know, that as I have no search-warrant, execution, or other legal authority, if I was to go into his house, he might bring his writ for a forcibly entry on the premises. I served a person so once myself.

Old. Well, madam, I have sent the servant to call him out; and that you mayn't think the time long 'till he comes, I'll just read you over

a little fancy, that came into my head this morning.

Mrs Black. Lord, major, how can you trouble me with such cursed stuff, when you see how I am perplexed and plagued here?

Old. Nay, in troth, I must have your opinion of a satire I am going to publish; it is a lash for the reviewers: in which I give such a character—

Mrs Black. Nay, if you talk of characters, look at my last suit in chancery, which gives such a character of my adversary, makes him as black as the very devil.

Old. Then, here's the outlines of what I once intended for a pamphlet——"The coffee-house man's case on the late rise of news-papers, humbly addressed to both Houses of Parliament."

Enter FREEMAN *and* JERRY.

Mrs Black. What do I see? Jerry Blackacre, my minor, in red breeches! Oh, Jerry, Jerry! have I lost all my good inns of court-breeding upon you, then? and will you go breeding yourself at coffee-houses and bagnios?

Jer. Aye, aye! what then? perhaps I will, and what's that to you? Here's my guardian and tutor, now that I am out of your huckster's hands.

Mrs Black. How! you have not chose him for your guardian yet?

Jer. Yes, but I have though; and I'll do any thing he bids me, and I'll go all over the world with him, to ordinaries or bagnios, or any where else.

Mrs Black. Do not go to ordinaries and bagnios, good Jerry!

Jer. Why, have you had any dealings there? you never had any ill by them, had you? but if I have left you, you may thank yourself; for you used me so barbarously, I was weary of my life.

Mrs Black. But consider, Jerry, you are but an infant; however, if you will go home with me again, and be a good child, you shall see——

Free. I beg your pardon, madam; this young gentleman is now under my care; and it is my duty, in quality of his guardian——

Mrs Black. Why, you villain, would you part mother and minor? rob me of my child and my writings? but you shall find that there is law; and in the case of ravishment of guard—Westm. the second—

Old. Well, but madam, by what I can find, this has been all the young gentleman's own doing. Come, squire, pray be ruled by your mother and friends.

Jer. Yes, I'll be ruled by my friends, and therefore not by my mother. I'll chuse him for my guardian till I am at age—nay, may be for as long as I live.

Mrs Black. Will you so, you wretch? and when you are of age, you will sign, seal, and deliver, too, will you?

Jer. Yes, I will.

Mrs Black. Oh! do not squeeze wax, son! rather go to ordinaries and bagnios, than squeeze wax. If thou dost that, farewell the goodly manor of Blackacre, with all its woods and underwoods, and appurtenances whatever!

Free. Come, madam, don't afflict yourself: 'tis true, this young gentleman, of his own free-will, has chosen me for his guardian: however, he's not out of your power; and might I flatter myself with hopes of being in the mother's good graces——

Mrs Black. I understand you, sir; no, if one of us must be ruined, e'en let it be him, if he won't be ruled by me. What say you, booby, will you be ruled?

Jer. Let me alone, can't you?

Mrs Black. Will you chuse him for a guardian, whom I refuse for a husband?

Jer. Aye, to chuse, I thank you! for I have taken leave of lawyering and pettifogging!

Mrs Black. Pettifogging, you profane! have you so?—Pettifogging! then you shall take your leave of me, and your estate, too; you shall be an alien to me and it for ever—Pettifogging!

Jer. Oh, but if you go there, we have the deeds and settlements, I thank you! would you cheat me of my estate?

Mrs Black. No, no; I will not cheat your little brother Bob; for you were not born in wedlock; you was——

Jer. What quirk has she got in her head, now?

Mrs Black. I say you cannot, shall not, inherit the Blackacre estate: you are but my base child, and, according to law, cannot inherit it.—Nay, you are not so much as a bastard eigne.

Jer. What! am I, then, mother, the son of a——?

Mrs Black. The law says—

Free. Madam, we know what the law says—but have a care of what you say! do not let your passion to ruin your son, ruin your reputation.

Mrs Black. Hang reputation, sir! am not I a widow? have no husband, nor intend to have any?

Jer. But have you no shame left in you, mother?

Mrs Black. No, no, sir! Come, major, let us make haste to the prerogative court.

[*Exeunt.*

Free. Nay, but, madam—We must not let her go so, 'squire!

Jer. Nay, the devil can't stop her, if she has a mind to it. But I'll tell you what, master guardian-lieutenant, we will go and advise with three attornies, two proctors, two solicitors, and a sharp dog in White-friars, and sure all they will be too hard for her! for I fear, honest guardian of mine, you are too good a joker to have any law in your head.

Free. You are in the right on't, 'squire; I understand no law, especially that against bastards—

which custom is against, I am sure; for more people get estates by being so, than lose them.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—OLIVIA's *lodgings.*

Enter OLIVIA, *with* VARNISH *booted and spurred, as just come off a journey.*

Oliv. Lord bless me, my dear! you came upon me so unawares, you quite startled me—feel how my heart beats!

Var. Beats!—you seem startled, indeed! And yet, surely, you expected somebody, when you met me so kindly in the dark passage!

Oliv. Why, I thought it was your step, and could not refrain from coming out of my chamber; and yet I did not know how to believe it either, because it was so much sooner than your letters bid me look for you.

Var. And yet you began with upbraiding me for having staid beyond my time. Let me tell you, madam, this conduct is mysterious, and requires explanation.

Oliv. What explanation, my soul? you misunderstood my words. I upbraid you with having staid too long from me; and you shall never be absent so long from me again, you shan't indeed; by this kiss you shan't! But, my dearest, I have strange news to tell you—since you went, Manly's returned.

Var. Fortune forbid!

Oliv. He met with the French fleet; fought, and afterwards sunk his ship. He was here with me yesterday.

Var. You did not own our marriage to him!

Oliv. I told him I was married, to get rid of him; but to whom, is yet a secret to all the world: and I used him so abominably ill, that his pride, I believe, will prevent his troubling me any further.

Var. I hope it has given him a surfeit of the shore, and will send him to sea again; be you sure only to keep our great secret: in the mean time, I will lead the easy fool by the nose, as I used to do; and, whilst he stays, rail with him at you; and, when he is gone, laugh with you at him. By that time, too, I shall have settled some affairs, which I have now on hand, and shall not care who knows of our marriage. As for the notes and jewels, which he left with you, if he should want to recover them by law, you may plead a gift; but I fancy we are pretty safe as to that, for I know the particularity of his temper so well—

Oliv. Yet, let us be cautious, my love—Have you taken the thousand guineas, he lodged in my name, out of the banker's hand?

Var. No—where was the necessity?

Oliv. The greatest in the world. Do not confide too much in his generosity: I am well informed a much smaller sum would be acceptable to him at present; and, no doubt, his necessity will make him ready enough to take money, wherever he can claim any thing like a property.

Var. I believe you are in the right, and I will take care to remove them to-morrow.

Oliv. To-morrow! for Heaven's sake stay not till then; he may receive them before to-morrow. Go this night—immediately.

Var. You advise well, and I will only stay to rest myself a little.

Oliv. Rest yourself, when you come back. Pray, dear Varnish, don't trifle upon such an important occasion. Go this very instant!

Var. Well, well, I'll go now directly—a hackney coach will take me to Fleet-street, and back again, in an hour.

Oliv. If you stay till midnight, no matter. Make haste, dearest! I am impatient till you are out of the house. [*Exit* VAR.

I shan't recover myself a good while, this unexpected visit has so flurried me! Who could have thought of his coming—a beast!—And at so critical a juncture!—And yet, if he had stayed a few moments longer, he might have taken me still more at a disadvantage—My conduct is mysterious, and requires explanation! Sure he intends to give himself the airs of being jealous—I wish I had never married him! He is of a cruel and dangerous temper; and, had I not luckily thought of the money, as an expedient to send him out again, I know not what might have happened, had he and my young friend met—

Enter FIDELIA.

Ah, heavens!

Fide. I hope I don't frighten you, madam.

Oliv. Oh, is it you? No, no; but I am the strangest timorous creature!—Well, you can excuse a woman's weakness; indeed I have given you too great proofs of mine——I hope you are not one of those capricious conquerors who despise a victory for being too easily gained!

Fide. I hope, madam—

Oliv. Nay, I know you will say to the contrary, and I shall believe you: though the hurry you were in to leave me, and your unkind behaviour, in hardly speaking to me, might make one of a less jealous temper suspect—

Fide. Upon my word, madam!——

Oliv. I am satisfied; you will tell me, no doubt, your letter contained a sufficient apology for that; and, to convince you I desire no other, if you are as sincere as I am, I will, this moment, put into your possession what, in many parts of the world, will be a magnificent fortune. In short, I am ready to forsake friends, country, reputation, and fly with you—

Fide. This offer, madam, does me so great an honour—

Oliv. Honour! Why will you make use of that cold expression? But methinks you look grave upon it! must I have the mortification to find that your passion is less violent than mine?

Fide. Pardon me, madam; but the violence of your passion may presage its change; and I must needs be afraid your affections would soon cool to me, since you could once grow indifferent to so worthy a gentleman as captain Manly.

Oliv. Oh, mention not his name!

Fide. Why, madam, did not you love him?

Oliv. Never. How could you think it?

Fide. Because he thought it; who is a man of that excellent understanding, and nice discernment—

Oliv. Hang him, untractable, surly brute! Some private reasons, indeed, made me outwardly accommodate myself to his tramontane humour; and he had vanity enough to think I liked him.

Fide. Bless my soul, madam! Vanity! Why, he is very well to be liked, I hope.

Oliv. Ha, ha, ha!

Fide. Indeed, madam, you don't do well to speak so disrespectfully of the captain.

Oliv. Why, you dear, friendly creature, you could not be a greater advocate for him, if you were one of his mistresses stept into breeches!

Fide. His mistresses, madam? I don't know what you mean. To be sure, I have great obligations to the captain, and don't like to hear him abused—but—

Oliv. Come, come, let us talk no more of him, that is the best way—What say you, shall we go sit in the next room? I have prepared a little collation there.

Fide. Are we not better here, madam?

Oliv. No, no; I'll conduct you; give me your hand.

Fide. I would rather stay where we are, if you please, madam.

Oliv. Why so?

Fide. I do not know, madam; I think it is more airy here.

Oliv. Airy! Is any thing the matter with you?

Fide. I am afraid I am going to have one of my fits.

Oliv. What fits?

Fide. Oh, madam, I am very subject to fits; and sometimes lie in a trance for an hour together.

Oliv. Ay!

Fide. Yes, indeed, madam; but, if you will let me alone where I am, perhaps I may not have one.

Oliv. Oh, stay, I will run into the next room, and fetch you some spirits; I would not, for the world, you should be seized here. [*Exit.*

Fide. Mercy on us, what shall I do! I wish the captain would come and deliver me from this odious woman; she will certainly discover me, if I stay much longer. I wish I was well out of the house!

Enter OLIVIA.

Oliv. Undone, undone!

Fide. How, madam! Where?

Oliv. Ask no questions, but get out the back way as fast as you can; my husband's coming!

Fide. Your husband, madam!

Oliv. Ay, ay; he came in just before you did; I thought he was gone abroad again, but I saw him this moment cross the hall, and he followed me up stairs—Oh, heavens, here he is!—This way. [*Exit.*

Fide. Hold, madam!—She has clapt the door after her, and the bolt is shot! What will become of me?

Enter VARNISH.

Var. So, now I am somewhat of a more decent figure to go abroad; while the fellow has been getting me a coach, I have made a shift to alter my dress a little.—Ha! who have we here! Nay, by the Lord, you shan't slip by me!

Fide. Pray, sir, do not be rude.

Var. Rude, you rascal! Who are you? And what brings you into this house?

Fide. I did not come to do you any harm, sir.

Var. You come here to do no good, I am certain. But now I see who it was my wife expected, and what occasioned her extraordinary trepidation. Damn you, sirrah, I have a mind to cut your throat. Come, draw!

Fide. Oh, pray sir, don't draw your sword—pray, sir, don't!

Var. How, a coward! yet dare to do a man the greatest injury in the world! but your want of courage shall not save your life.

Fide. Hold, sir, hold! Do not terrify me, and I will satisfy you I could not injure you.

Var. Now, quickly, then! What have you to say?

Fide. I am a woman, sir; a very unfortunate woman!

Var. Ha! a very handsome one, I am sure. It is so—But why in this masquerade?—Well, no matter.

Fide. I hope, sir, you are so much a man of honour as to let me go, now I have satisfied you.

Var. Let you go, madam!

Fide. Yes, sir; you may guess my misfortune to be love, by my disguise; and I dare swear, you will not urge me further on secrets, which concern my honour.

Var. Oh, no, madam, by no means—But I thought I saw my wife turn short upon the stairs just now, and run up in a great hurry before me. Has she not been with you?

Fide. Yes, sir

Var. Well, and where is she gone?

Fide. Out of the house, I believe, sir.

Var. And why so, madam?

Fide. I know not, sir: perhaps, because she would not be forced to discover me to you; or, to guard me from suspicions, that you might not discover me yourself.

Var. Well, madam, at any rate I am obliged

to her for having left me alone with so charming a creature. Lovely, bewitching woman!

Fide. What do you mean? Help, ho!

Var. 'Tis in vain to cry out—no one dares to help you; I am lord here.

Fide. Tyrant here!—But, if you are the master of this house, which I have taken for a sanctuary, do not violate it yourself.

Var. No, I'll preserve you in it, and nothing shall hurt you: I will be as true to you as your disguise, but you must trust me.

Fide. You don't look like a villain, sir—Help! help!

Enter FOOTBOY.

Var. You saucy rascal, how durst you!—

Boy. I come, sir, to let you know the coach is at the door.

Var. Damn the coach!—Well, madam, I shall leave you for a little while; perhaps, when I come back, I shall find you in a better humour. Here, sir, help me in with this fellow, this dishonourer of my family.

Boy. Fellow! Your honour said she was a woman.

Var. No matter, sir; must you prate?

Fide. Oh, Heavens! Is there—

Var. Come, madam, since you will yield to me no other way, you shall, at least, be my prisoner till I have leisure to examine you further—In there, in—I will know you better before I part with you, my pretty masquerader, or you shall have more strength and cunning than I think you have. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—ELIZA'S *Lodgings.*

Enter OLIVIA, ELIZA, *and* LETTICE.

Oliv. AH, cousin! nothing troubles me, but that I have given the malicious world its revenge, and reason now to talk as freely of me as I used to do of it.

Eliz. Faith, then, let not that trouble you: for to be plain, cousin, the world cannot talk worse of you than it did before.

Oliv. How, cousin! I'd have you to know, before this faux-pas, this trip of mine, the world could not talk of me.

Lett. Oh, Lud, madam, here is my master!

Oliv. Whither shall I run? Save, protect me from him!

Enter VARNISH.

Var. Nay, nay, come!

Oliv. Oh, sir! forgive me.

Var. Yes, yes, I can forgive your being alone with a woman in man's clothes, but have a care of a man in woman's clothes!

Oliv. A woman in man's clothes! What does he mean! [*Aside.*]

Var. Come, come, you need not have lain out of your house for this: but perhaps you were afraid, when I was warm with suspicions, you must have discovered who she was.

Oliv. Who she was! Sure he dissembles only to get me into his power; or perhaps my young spark has imposed upon him! [*Aside.*]

Var. Come, what's the matter with you? If I must not know who she was, I am satisfied without—Come hither.

Oliv. Sure you do know her; she has told you herself, I suppose.

Var. No, I might have known her better, but I was obliged to go to the banker's; and so locked her into your chamber, with a design to examine her when I came back; but in the mean time she got away, by tying the window-curtains to the balcony, by which she slid down into the street—for you must know I jested, and made her believe I should be rude with her, which she apprehended, I suppose, in earnest.

Oliv. Then she got from you?

Var. Yes.

Oliv. And is quite gone?

Var. Yes.

Oliv. I am glad on't—otherwise you had been rude with her. But how durst you go so far, as to make her believe you would? Let me understand that, sir! What! there is guilt in your face!—You blush, too!—Nay, then, I see how things have happened—Oh, you base fellow!

Eliz. So, so!

Var. Nay, hear me!—Prithee—I swear—

Oliv. I have heard already too many of your false oaths and vows, especially your last in the church: Wicked man! and wretched woman that I am!

Var. My dear!—

Oliv. My devil!—

Var. Come, prithee be appeased——and go home: I have been so uneasy all day, not knowing where to find you—I'll give you every satisfaction.

Oliv. Satisfaction!

Var. Yes, do but go home, and I'll thoroughly satisfy you—and then, too, we'll have a fit of laughing at Manly, whom I am going to find at the King's Arms, where I hear he dined—Go, dearest, go home.

Eliz. A very pretty turn indeed, this!

Var. Now, cousin, since, by my wife, I have the honour and privilege of calling you so, I have something to beg of you, too; which is, not to take notice of our marriage to any person whatever yet a while, for some reasons very import-

ant to me; and, next, that you will do my wife the honour to go home with her, and me the favour to use that power, you have with her, in our reconcilement.

Eliz. That, I dare promise, sir, will be no hard matter. Your servant. [*Exeunt* VARNISH *and* LETTICE.]——Well, cousin, this I confess was a reasonable hypocrisy; you were the better for it.

Oliv. What hypocrisy?

Eliz. Why, this last deceit of your husband was lawful, since in your own defence.

Oliv. What deceit? I would have you to know I never deceived my husband.

Eliz. You do not understand me: I say this was an honest come off, and a good one. But what sort of a gallant must this be, who could so dexterously pass himself for a woman?

Oliv. What do you mean by a gallant, and passing for a woman?

Eliz. What do you mean? You see your husband took him for a woman.

Oliv. Whom?

Eliz. Hey-day! why the man he found with you; for whom, last night, you were so much afraid; and who you told me—

Oliv. Lord, you rave sure!

Eliz. Why, you did not tell me last night?—

Oliv. I know not what I might tell you last night in a fright.

Eliz. Ay, what was that fright for?—For a woman!—Tie, this fooling is insipid, 'tis offensive.

Oliv. And fooling with my honour will be more offensive. Did you not hear my husband say—

Eliz. Come, you need not fear, I'll keep your secret.

Oliv. My secret! I'd have you to know, I have no need of confidantes, though you value yourself on being a good one.

Eliz. Admirable confidence!

Oliv. Confidence! Is this language to me? Nay, then, I'll never see your face again! Lettice, where are you? Let us be gone from this censorious, ill woman. [*Exit* OLIV.

Eliz. Your very humble servant, my sweet, good cousin! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Tavern.*

MANLY *and* FREEMAN *discovered, drinking at a table.*

Free. What, then, you were going to her yesterday evening?

Man. I did, as I tell you, intend it; but, being detained on the way by an old ship-mate, just as I had got to the corner of the street, I met the volunteer, breathless, and almost frightened out of his wits, who gave me this whimsical relation of his adventure with her husband.

Free. Whimsical indeed! Damn it—the fellow must be an ideot!

Man. I am not sorry the affair has happened, however; for, upon second thoughts, the discovery I have to make should be public, and before a number of witnesses—she must be made as infamous as she is guilty.

Free. Well, I am your man at any mad work; so here's my service to you—but I must now go look a little after my charge; I have disposed of him in the next room, with lord Plausible, and Mr. Novel, who have been here to day, at the expence of a young Creole, at a turtle feast.

Man. Go your ways, then, I won't detain you; but, I say, you know Olivia's house, and will be sure not to let slip the hour.

Free. I warrant you.

Man. And come straight up to her chamber, without more ado; and bring your charge, and my fellow Oakum, and whoever else you please; the greater your company the better. Here, take the watch—'Tis now five o'clock, and at half an hour after seven precisely—

Free. You need not doubt my diligence; I am an old blood, and can naturally beat up a wench's quarters that won't be civil to my friend—Shan't we break her windows, too?

Man. No, no; be punctual only.

[*Exit* FREEMAN.

Enter VARNISH.

How!—Nay, here's a friend indeed! And he, that has him in his arms, can know no wants.

Var. Dear sir! and he, that is in your arms, is secure from all fears whatever: nay, our nation is secure by your defeat at sea; and the French, that fought against you, have proved enemies to themselves only, in bringing you back to us.

Man. Fie, fie—this from a friend? And yet, from any other 'twere insufferable. I thought I should never have taken any thing ill from you.

Var. A friend's privilege is to speak his mind, though it be ill taken.

Man. But your tongue need not tell me you think too well of me; I have found it from your heart, which spoke in actions, your unalterable heart. But Olivia is false, my friend; which I suppose is no news to you.

Var. Why, no—it is not.

Man. But could not you keep her true to me?

Var. Not for my life, sir.

Man. But could you not perceive it at all before I went? Could she so deceive us both?

Var. I must confess, the first time I knew it, was three days after your departure, when she received the money you had left in Fleet-street, in her name; and her fears, it seems, did not hinder her from counting it. You must trust her with all, like a true, generous lover!

Man. And she, like a mean—

Var. Jilting—

Man. Traitorous—

Var. Base—

Man. Damned—

Var. Mercenary strumpet!

Man. Ay, a mercenary strumpet, indeed! for

she made me pay her before I had her.

Var. How!—Why, have you had her?

Man. Have I!—

Var. Nay, she deserves you should report it.

Man. Report it!—By Heaven, 'tis true!

Var. How?—sure not!

Man. I do not use to lie, nor you to doubt me.

Var. When?

Man. The night before last.

Var. Confusion!

Man. But, what—you wonder at it! nay, you seem to be angry too.

Var. I cannot but be enraged against her, for her usage of you;—damned, infamous, common jade!

Man. But you do not, for so great a friend, take pleasure enough in your friend's revenge, methinks!

Var. Yes, yes, I am glad to know it, since it is so.

Man. You cannot tell who that rascal, her cuckold, is?

Var. No.

Man. She would keep it from you, I suppose.

Var. Yes, yes.

Man. You would laugh, if you knew but all the circumstances of my gaining her: come, I'll tell you.

Var. Damn her! I don't care to hear any more of her.

Man. Well, you shall hear it presently, then; and, in the mean time, prithee go to her, but not from me, and try if you can get her to lend me an hundred pounds of my money; which I am at present in great want of. You may, perhaps, have some influence with her; and I suppose there is no recovering it by law.

Var. Not any; think not of it; nor by this way neither.

Man. What have you in your head, that makes you seem so unquiet?

Var. Only this base, impudent woman's falsehood.

Man. Oh, my dear friend, be not you too sensible of my wrongs, for then I shall feel them, too, with more pain, and think them insufferable.

Var. But why can't you go to Olivia yourself? methinks she, that granted you the last favour, as they call it, should not deny you any thing.—I understand not that point of kindness, I confess.

Man. No, you do not understand it, and I have not time to let you know all now: but anon, at supper, we'll laugh at leisure together at Olivia's cuckold, who took a young fellow, that goes betwixt his wife and me, for a woman.

Var. Ha!

Man. Senseless, easy rascal! 'twas no wonder she chose him for a husband. She thought him, I thank her, fitter than me for that blind, bearing office.

Var. Take a young fellow for a woman, say you?—'Sdeath, 'tis impossible I could be mistaken! [*aside*] Sure, he must be a dolt indeed!

Man. Oh, a very buzzard! Did you ever hear so ridiculous a circumstance?

Var. Never, never.

Man. Well, but, my dear friend, I must be gone immediately, in order to meet Olivia again to-night.

Var. To-night! It cannot be, sure?

Man. 'Tis not two hours since I made my young man write to her for that purpose; and she appointed half an hour after seven precisely—In short, I am, and I am not, to meet her.—It is a riddle, but shall be explained.

Var. But don't you apprehend the husband?—

Man. He, snivelling guil, a thing to be feared!—A husband—the tamest of creatures!

Var. Very fine!

Man. But I must go to my appointment; you'll meet me here at supper, and then we'll have our laugh out. [*Exit.*

VARNISH *alone.*

Ay, I will meet with you, but it shall be at Olivia's—Sure, it cannot be! she behaves so calmly, with that honest, modest assurance, it cannot be true—And yet he does not use to lie——But then, the woman in man's clothes, whom he calls a man—Well, but I know her to have been a woman—But then, again, his appointment from her to meet with him to-night: I am distracted more with doubt than jealousy. Well, I have no way but to go home immediately, put on a riding-suit, and pretend, to my wife, the same business, which carried me out of town last, requires me to go post to Oxford again to-night: then, if the appointment he boasts of be true, it is sure to hold; and I shall have an opportunity either of clearing her, or revenging myself on both. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Another room in the same tavern. Tables and chairs.*

Enter MAJOR OLDTON, MRS BLACKACRE, *and afterwards* COUNSELLOR QUIBBLE.

Old. But how is it possible, madam, that you can prove your son has no right to his father's estate?

Mrs Black. Let me alone for that, sir; I will get a lawyer shall prove black's white, if occasion be. But suppose I prove it by his father's will; I have a will, sir; or can have one made: and how is it he can help himself?

Old. Nay, then, indeed———

Mrs Black. Yes, yes, I will shew the villain, that he took the wrong sow by the ear, when he meddled with me: I will lead him such a dance, major, as he never was led in his life; and make him pay the piper into the bargain. Come, counsellor, we shall be quite snug here.—Major, you are sure it was at this house the villain appointed us to meet him?

Old. Yes, yes, madam, I am very sure; and have left orders below accordingly.

Mrs Black. Well, I suppose he will be for coming to a compromise; but there is no harm in being prepared.—Mr Quillet, let us sit down.

Coun. Just as you please, madam; sit or let it alone; it is the same thing to me.

Mrs Black. I say, counsellor, in part I have already told you what I would have done. With regard to this testament, there are three things to be considered———

Coun. Ay, madam, we will consider them.

Mrs Black. Well, but hear me out; don't snap one up so—I say there are three things to be considered. First, to prove whether the testator was *compos mentis.* Secondly, whether he was *inops concilii.* And, thirdly, whether there was a sufficient *probat*——

Coun. Nay, nay, but, madam, this is all unnecessary.

Mrs Black. Unnecessary! What do you mean? Was it not so ruled—Catling, 15th Edward the First, folio B? Was it not afterwards confirmed in the Exchequer-chamber, upon error, from *banco regis?* Look at your reports, sir—Crook James, 114.

Coun. Lackaday, Mrs Blackacre, you are really talking in the clouds—have got quite out of your sphere!—I tell you, there was no devise till the 27th Henry VIII.

Mrs Black. I say there was, sir.

Coun. You mean, Mrs Blackacre, there was devise in common-law, but not in *secundum statutum;* so that your quotation is quite foreign to the purpose: in fine, the whole is nonsense, and I see you know nothing of the law.

Mrs Black. No, sir! but I will shew you that I do know something of the law; and I will lay you five hundred pounds to your nosegay, that I know more of the law than you do; and you shall be instructed!

Coun. Not by you, madam; not by you! Send your solicitor to me; there is your paper of memorandums.

Mrs Black. Impertinent! My paper of memorandums! Odds my life! Return me my fee, too, then; my five guineas that I gave you!

Coun. Don't put yourself in a passion, Mrs Blackacre; I am always calm. As to your fee, I shall not return it; for, if it was double the sum, I have had trouble enough for it.

Mrs Black. Trouble! Major, did you ever see such usage as this?

Coun. To be short with you, madam, you are a person, whose affairs I do not chuse to meddle with; for your causes are such as have been set on the left side of the book any time these six years; and, since your evidence at the last Hilary sittings was pilloried, my lord chief-justice talks of making an order, that you shall not teaze his court any more.

Mrs Black. Make an order! Make an order against me, that I should not teaze! No, no, they know which side their bread is buttered on better than that. Ecod! if it was not for me, many a one, that is saucy enough in the courts, would make but a scurvy figure out of them.

Coun. Come, come, madam, that affair of the evidence was very black.

Mrs Black. It is false, sir! It was all a prejudice, because he was an Irishman: but, if there was any roguery in it, did not you draw his instructions?

Coun. You deluded, you deceived me——But guard your expressions, Mrs Blackacre; guard your expressions; have a care of an action of scandal.

Mrs Black. Odds my life, is this language to me, you puny upstart of the law! You green bag carrier! You murderer of unfortunate causes! The clerk's ink is scarce off your fingers! What a shame it is, that women should not plead their causes themselves, and not be obliged to employ such ignorant mongrels!

Coun. Well, madam, very well! Take notice, you are in the hands of the law. I call you to witness, sir, that this woman has attacked my reputation. Depend upon it, the bench shall hear of you, and my lord chief-justice determine, which is the best lawyer, you or I. [*Exit.*

Mrs Black. I have not patience! I will have him caned! I will have him caned in the courts, if it costs me ten thousand pounds—an impudent, saucy—make a rule against me!—And you, major, sitting there, with your mouth open—are you a man, a soldier! to wear a sword by your side, and see me treated—Oh, I wish I had a sword!

Old. Do not make yourself uneasy, madam; I warrant we will be up with him! I will write an essay against him in the newspapers; I can get any thing put in for five shillings and sixpence.

Mrs Black. Go, go, you are a silly old ass.

Enter Waiter.

Waiter. What is the matter, madam?

Mrs Black. Nothing, nothing; go down stairs. Make a rule against me! Odds my life! I wish they durst! Egad, the parliament should hear of it!

Enter FREEMAN, *Bailiffs, and* JERRY.

Jer. O law! My mother quarrelling with the waiter.—What is the matter here? won't she pay her reckoning?

Free. Bailiffs, execute your writ; there is your prisoner.

Bail. We arrest you in the king's name, at the suit of Mr Freeman, guardian to Jeremiah Blackacre, esq. in an action of ten thousand pounds.

Mrs Black. How, how! in a choke bail action?

Free. Yes, yes; you are taken indeed, madam; and we have discovered your equitable design of providing us with a forged will.

Mrs Black. Undone, undone! no man was

ever too hard for me till now.—Oh, Jerry! child, wilt thou vex the mother, that bore thee?

Jer. Ay, for bearing me before wedlock, as you say: but I will teach you to call a Blackacre a bastard, though you are never so much my mother.

Mrs Black. Well, I am undone! not one trick left! Cruel sir, a word with you, I pray.

Free. In vain, madam; you have no way to release yourself now, but by the bonds of matrimony.

Mrs Black. How, sir, how! matrimony! that were but to sue out an habeas corpus, for a removal from one prison to another.

Free. Bailiffs, away with her!

Mrs Black. Oh, stay, sir! can you be so cruel as to bring me under covert baron again, and put it out of my power to sue in my own name? but I see, sir, your aim in all this; and, if you think proper, to make us both easy, I will, out of my jointure, secure you an annuity of three hundred pounds a year, and pay your debts; and that's all you younger brothers desire to marry a widow for, I am sure.

Free. Now, madam, you are come to the point I wanted to bring you to: but you shall find I will not be behind hand with you in generosity; I believe I need not tell you, widow, that I have suffered some injuries from your family, and there is now an estate in it, which lawfully and honestly belongs to me.

Mrs Black. Why, sir, I do remember something, and if you will be so good as to let me speak to my attorney———

Free. As for that, madam, there is no occasion—the land in question brings in about four hundred pounds a year; secure me that, and your person and your son, you are welcome to dispose of as you please.

Jer. What! I hope, master guardian, you are not making agreements without me!

Free. No, no. First, widow, you must say no more, that he is a bastard; have a care of that: and then he must have a settled exhibition of one hundred pounds a year, and a nag of assizes, kept by you, but not upon the common.

Mrs Black. Well, I can grant all this.

Jer. Aye, aye, fair words butter no cabbage: but, guardian, make her sign—sign and seal; or otherwise, if you knew her as well as I, you would not trust her word for a farthing.

Free. I warrant you, 'squire. Come, my lawyer, with writings ready drawn, is within, and in haste.

Mrs Black. Make a rule against me! a paltry jackanapes! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—OLIVIA's *house.* OLIVIA *seated at a table, with candles, and a small cabinet.*

Oliv. Sure, no intrigue was ever attended with so many odd circumstances as this of mine: I always knew Varnish was a silly fellow, but I thought he had too much experience to mistake a man for a woman. I am glad I picked a quarrel with Eliza, however; because, now, people will never believe I was in her power, but take for malice whatever she may say to my disadvantage. But 'tis just the hour I appointed my young sailor. And, as if my husband had not committed blunders enough already, he is again conveniently gone out of town, to give me a better opportunity of entertaining him: but I married him for a convenience. Hold, don't I hear somebody treading softly along the passage!

Enter FIDELIA, *through the back scene.*

Who's there? my dear!

Fide. My life!

Oliv. Well, this is kind; now, I think, you really love me, because you are punctual to your assignation. I was afraid the misadventure, when you was here last, would have frightened you from coming any more; and then I should have been so unhappy———

Fide. Why, really, madam, I was under some apprehensions.

Oliv. Go, you little coward! you a son of Neptune, and talk of fear! but stay, I'll lock the door, though there be no occasion for it, but to keep out your fears, and those ugly fits you tell me you are subject to.

Man. [*At the door.*] You have impudence enough to give me fits, and make revenge still impotent.

Oliv. What do you say?

Fide. Madam!

Oliv. I thought I heard you speak—come—sit down here—what makes you so pensive?

Fide. I am thinking, madam, if your husband should surprise us again!

Oliv. There's no danger; he's ten miles out of town by this time; however, don't mention his name, lest it should prove ominous.

Fide. Well, but wont you give me the satisfaction of telling you how I abused him last?

Oliv. I have heard enough of it: I hate any discourse, when he, or Manly, must be part of the subject. No, let me rather resume the conversation I began yesterday—Are you willing to go off with me?

Fide. Whither, madam?

Oliv. Any where—to Lapland, or India—I repeat it once more—I have a sufficient fortune to make us happy. [*Trampling without.*

Fide. Hist! don't I hear a noise?

Oliv. No, no. [*Trampling.*

Fide. Pray, madam, listen: I am sure I hear the motion of feet upon the stairs.

Oliv. I tell you it is no such thing. [*Trampling.*

Fide. Hark! it grows louder.

Oliv. Be silent, then—there's somebody tampering with the lock of the door. Step gently this way—[VARNISH *speaks within*]—Death and

confusion, 'tis my husband! I heard him speak to the footboy—he has sent him round to bar the garden gate.

Fide. I thought, madam, your husband was out of town, you said.

Oliv. No, no, 'tis he. Fool that I was, to trust in his pretended ignorance, or think his reconcilement real! he has laid this train purposely for my undoing. He has stopt the only passage we could get out by; and I know his revengeful temper so well, if he finds us here, he'll murder us. Let us escape your way by the balcony: here, take this cabinet, it contains jewels and bank notes to a considerable value; here, put out the candles, while I go into the next room and pull down the curtains.

[*Exit.*

Enter MANLY.

Fide. This cabinet, I believe, is yours, sir.

Man. It is mine now, indeed; and shall never escape from me again, at least to her.

Fide. Did you ever hear such a wretch, sir?

Man. A wretch! why she makes love like a devil in a play. But she wanted to elope with you, sir; you never told me that!

Fide. Oh, sir, I have not told you half her wickedness; [*loud noise*] but they are breaking open the door. What shall I do, sir?

Man. Stay where you are, and fear nothing. Now we shall see who this happy man is she calls husband.

Enter VARNISH.

Var. With much labour and forcing, I have at last gained admittance: but now, to find out the occasion of all this privacy and barricading—I heard people talk in the room, I am sure—Ha! what's here?

Man. Sword and dark lantern, villain, are some odds; however, I believe I shall be able to deal with you—don't be frightened, my little volunteer.

Fide. Only for your life, sir.

Var. Damnation! two at once—but I'll make sure of one of them at least.

Fide. Murder! help! murder!

Enter OLIVIA, *and then* FREEMAN, LORD PLAUSIBLE, *and* NOVEL.

Oliv. What means this uproar? Distraction! my husband has got in! then we shall have murder indeed. Oh stay, you must not kill one unable to defend himself! lights! lights!

Enter footboy, with lights.

Man. Now, sir, where are you? Freeman, look to the door.—Hold, my dearest, after so much kindness past between us, I cannot part with you yet—Freeman, let no body out; for, notwithstanding your lights, we are still in the dark, till this gentleman turns his face—How! Varnish! Are you the happy man?—You! You!—Speak, I say—But your guilty silence tells me all. Well, I will not upbraid you; let your own reflections be your punishment—Fare ye well, sir!

Free. Look yonder, captain, to the volunteer; he is hurt, and I believe fainting.

Fide. No, sir, 'tis only my fright, not yet well over: I shall recover here in the next room.

Man. My boy hurt?

Enter MRS BLACKACRE *and* JERRY.

Mrs Black. I dare swear there is something going forward contrary to the statute; and as, in that remarkable case, Stokes plaintiff, against Jenkins and other defendants—But I'll take minutes; for perhaps one side or other may chuse to bring it into the courts.

Jer. Well, my mother will never let the law alone, I see that; for when she's at a loss for wherewithal to go herself, she's for setting other people at it.

Man. Oh Heaven!—Freeman, come here!

Free. How now? What's the matter?

Man. More miracles still—The volunteer's a woman!

All. A woman!

Fide. Dear captain, spare my blushes; yet, wherefore should I be ashamed of a virtuous and generous passion? Yes, I am a woman, I own it; and, through love for the worthiest of men, have attempted to follow him in this disguise; partly out of fear to disclose my sentiments, for I knew of his engagements to that lady; and the constancy of his nature, which nothing but herself could have changed.

Man. Dear madam, I desired you to bring me out of confusion, and you have given me more: I know not what to speak to, or how to look upon you; the sense of my rough and ill usage gives me more pain, now it is over, than you felt when you suffered it: but, if my affections, once prostituted to such a woman—

Oliv. My breast burns with fury, indignation, disdain, and must have vent. Coxcomb, idiot, brute! But think not long to triumph, for I go to have such vengeance on ye—

L. Plau. Madam, will you permit me the honour of your fair hand?

Oliv. Take it. [*Strikes him, and Exit.*

Nov. Ha, ha, ha! There's for your gentleman-ushership, my lord! Well, what do you think of her now? Did not I always tell you she was a jilt?

L. Plau. Take it from me, Mr Novel, she's a lady of great virtue and delicacy; though, indeed, I could not have believed her fingers to have been quite so hard.

Mrs Black. But, pray, captain Manly, a word with you. Is not this my cousin Olivia's house and furniture? And do you eject her,

seize on her goods and chattels *vi et armis?* Ecod, if I was she, I'd make demand—bring my trover.

Man. Good Mrs Blackacre, be pacified: if your cousin had her deserts, the law would be her greatest enemy. And now, madam, let me beg of you to accept of this, and, with it, my heart; both, I confess, too small a recompense for your merit; for you deserve the Indian world, and I would go thither, out of covetousness, for your sake.

Fide. Your heart, sir, is a present of that value, I can never make any return for it: but I can give you back such a present as this, which I got by the death of my father, a gentleman of the north, whose only child I was; [*gives a paper.*] therefore left me in the present possession of 2000l. a year. The name of my family is Grey; my other, Fidelia; the rest of my story you shall know, when I have fewer auditors.

Man. Nay, madam, you now take from me all power of making you any compliment on my part. I was going to tell you, that, on your account only, I would forego the pleasures of a retirement I have long wished for, and be reconciled again to the world, which was grown odious to me: but if I should, I doubt my friend here would say it was your estate made me friends with it.

Free. I must confess I should; for I think most of our quarrels to the world are just such as we sometimes have to a handsome woman, only because she won't grant us as many favours as we could wish.

Man. Nay, if you are a Plain Dealer, too, give me your hand; and, for your two sakes, though I have been so lately deceived in both sexes, I will believe there are still in the world good-natured friends who are not prostitutes, and handsome women worthy to be friends.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

DOUBLE DEALER.

BY

CONGREVE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

MASKWELL, *a villain; pretended friend to* MELLEFONT, *gallant to* LADY TOUCHWOOD, *and in love with* CYNTHIA.
LORD TOUCHWOOD, *uncle to* MELLEFONT.
MELLEFONT, *promised to, and in love with* CYNTHIA.
CARELESS, *his friend.*
LORD FROTH, *a solemn coxcomb.*
BRISK.
SIR PAUL PLYANT, *an uxorious, foolish, old knight, brother to* LADY TOUCHWOOD, *and father to* CYNTHIA.

WOMEN.

LADY TOUCHWOOD, *in love with* MELLEFONT.
CYNTHIA, *daughter to* SIR PAUL, *by a former wife, promised to* MELLEFONT.
LADY FROTH, *a great coquet; pretender to poetry, wit, and learning.*
LADY PLYANT, *insolent to her husband, and easy to any pretender.*

Chaplain, Boy, Footmen, and Attendants.

Scene—A gallery in LORD TOUCHWOOD'S *house, with chambers adjoining.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A gallery in* LORD TOUCHWOOD'S *house, with chambers adjoining.*

Enter CARELESS, *crossing the stage, with his hat, gloves, and sword in his hands, as just risen from table;* MELLEFONT *following him.*

Mel. NED, Ned, whither so fast! What, turned flincher! Why, you will not leave us?

Care. Where are the women? I am weary of guzzling, and begin to think them the better company.

Mel. Then thy reason staggers, and thou art almost drunk.

Care. No, faith, but your fools grow noisy; and, if a man must endure the noise of words without sense, I think the women have more musical voices, and become nonsense better.

Mel. Why, they are at the end of the gallery, retired to their tea and scandal, according to their ancient custom after dinner. But I made a pretence to follow you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many opportunities this evening.

Care. And here is this coxcomb most critically come to interrupt you.

Enter BRISK.

Brisk. Boys, boys, lads, where are you? What, do you give ground? Mortgage for a bottle, ha? Careless, this is your trick; you are always spoiling company by leaving it.

Care. And thou art always spoiling company by coming into it.

Brisk. Pooh, ha, ha, ha! I know you envy me. Spite, proud spite, by the gods! and burning envy. I'll be judged by Mellefont here, who gives and takes raillery better, you or I. Pshaw, man; when I say you spoil company by leaving it, I mean you leave nobody for the company to laugh at. I think there I was with you, ha! Mellefont?

Mel. O' my word, Brisk, that was a home thrust—you have silenced him.

Brisk. Oh, my dear Mellefont, let me perish, if thou art not the soul of conversation, the very essence of wit, and spirit of wine——The deuce take me, if there were three good things said, or one understood, since thy amputation from the body of our society—Heh! I think that's pretty, and metaphorical enough: Egad, I could not have said it out of thy company—Careless, ha!

Care. Hum, what is it?

Brisk. O, *mon cœur!* What is it! Nay, gad, I will punish you for want of apprehension: the deuce take me, if I tell you.

Mel. No, no, hang him, he has no taste—But, dear Brisk, excuse me, I have a little business.

Care. Prithee, get thee gone: thou see'st we are serious.

Mel. We'll come immediately, if you'll but go in, and keep up good humour and sense in the company: Prithee do—they'll fall asleep else.

Brisk. Egad so they will——Well, I will, I will; gad you shall command me from the zenith to the nadir. But the deuce take me, if I say a good thing till you come. But, prithee, dear rogue, make haste, prithee make haste, I shall burst else. And yonder your uncle, my lord Touchwood, swears he will disinherit you, and sir Paul Plyant threatens to disclaim you for a son-in-law, and my lord Froth won't dance at your wedding to-morrow; nor the deuce take me, I won't write your epithalamium—and see what a condition you are like to be brought to.

Mel. Well, I will speak but three words, and follow you.

Brisk. Enough, enough. Careless, bring your apprehension along with you. [*Exit* BRISK.

Care. Pert coxcomb!

Mel. Faith, 'tis a good-natured coxcomb, and has very entertaining follies—You must be more humane to him; at this juncture it will do me service. I'll tell you, I would have mirth continued this day at any rate; though patience purchase folly, and attention be paid with noise.—There are times, when sense may be unseasonable, as well as truth. Prithee, do thou wear none to-day; but allow Brisk to have wit, that thou mayst seem a fool.

Care. Why, how now, why this extravagant proposition?

Mel. O, I would have no room for serious design, for I am jealous of a plot. I would have noise and impertinence keep my Lady Touchwood's head from working: for hell is not more busy than her brain, nor contains more devils than that imagination.

Care. I thought your fear of her had been over. Is not to-morrow appointed for your marriage with Cynthia, and her father sir Paul Plyant come to settle the writings this day, on purpose?

Mel. True; but you shall judge, whether I have not reason to be alarmed. None, besides you and Maskwell, are acquainted with the secret of my aunt Touchwood's violent passion for me. Since my first refusal of her addresses, she has endeavoured to do me all ill offices with my uncle; yet has managed them with that subtilty, that to him they have borne the face of kindness, while her malice, like a dark lanthorn, only shone upon me, where it was directed. Still it gave me less perplexity to prevent the success of her displeasure, than to avoid the importunities of her love; and, of two evils, I thought myself favoured in her aversion: but, whether urged by her despair, and the short prospect of time she saw to accomplish her designs; whether the hopes of revenge, or of her love, terminated in the view of this my marriage with Cynthia, I know not; but this morning she surprised me in my bed.

Care. Was there ever such a fury! It is well nature has not put it into her sex's power to ravish. Well, bless us! proceed. What followed?

Mel. What at first amazed me; for I looked to have seen her in all the transports of a slighted and revengeful woman: but when I expected thunder from her voice, and lightning in her eyes, I saw her melted into tears, and hushed into a sigh. It was long before either of us spoke; passion had tied her tongue, and amazement mine. In short, the consequence was thus: she omitted nothing, that the most violent love could urge, or tender words express; which, when she saw had no effect, but still I pleaded honour and nearness of blood to my uncle, then came the storm I feared at first; for, starting from my bedside like a fury, she flew to my sword, and, with much ado, I prevented her doing me or herself a mischief: having disarmed her, in a gust of passion she left me, and in a resolution, confirmed by a thousand curses, not to close her eyes, till they had seen my ruin.

Care. Exquisite woman! But, what the devil! does she think thou hast no more sense than to get an heir to disinherit thyself? for, as I take it, this settlement upon you is with a proviso, that your uncle have no children.

Mel. It is so. Well, the service you are to do me will be a pleasure to yourself. I must get you to engage my lady Plyant all this evening, that my pious aunt may not work her to her interest; and, if you chance to secure her to yourself, you may incline her to mine. She is handsome, and

knows it; is very silly, and thinks she has sense; and has an old fond husband.

Care. I confess a very fair foundation for a lover to build upon.

Mel. For my lord Froth, he and his wife will be sufficiently taken up with admiring one another, and Brisk's gallantry, as they call it. I will observe my uncle myself; and Jack Maskwell has promised me to watch my aunt narrowly, and give me notice upon any suspicion. As for sir Paul, my wise father-in-law that is to be, my dear Cynthia has such a share in his fatherly fondness, he would scarce make her a moment uneasy, to have her happy hereafter.

Care. So, you have manned your works; but I wish you may not have the weakest guard, where the enemy is strongest.

Mel. Maskwell, you mean; pr'ythee why should you suspect him?

Care. Faith I cannot help it; you know I never liked him; I am a little superstitious in physiognomy.

Mel. He has obligations of gratitude to bind him to me; his dependence upon my uncle is through my means.

Care. Upon your aunt, you mean.

Mel. My aunt!

Care. I am mistaken, if there be not a familiarity between them you do not suspect, notwithstanding her passion for you.

Mel. Pooh, pooh; nothing in the world but his design to do me service; and he endeavours to be well in her esteem, that he may be able to effect it.

Care. Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken: but your aunt's aversion, in her revenge, cannot be any way so effectually shewn, as in bringing forth a child to disinherit you. She is handsome and cunning, and naturally wanton. Maskwell is flesh and blood at best, and opportunities between them are frequent. His affection to you, you have confessed, is grounded upon his interest; that you have transplanted; and, should it take root in my lady, I do not see what you can expect from the fruit.

Mel. I confess the consequence is visible, were your suspicions just.—But see, the company is broke up; let us meet them.

Enter Lord TOUCHWOOD, *Lord* FROTH, *Sir* PAUL PLYANT, *and* BRISK.

Lord Touch. Out upon't, nephew——leave your father-in-law, and me, to maintain our ground against young people!

Mel. I beg your lordship's pardon—we were just returning——

Sir Paul. Were you, son? Gadsbud, much better as it is—Good, strange! I swear I'm almost tipsy——t'other bottle would have been too powerful for me—as sure as can be it would.—We wanted your company, but Mr. Brisk—where is he? I swear and vow he's a most facetious person—and the best company.——And my lord Froth, your lordship is so merry a man, he, he, he!

Lord Froth. O foy, sir Paul, what do you mean? Merry! O barbarous! I'd as lieve you called me fool.

Sir Paul. Nay, I protest and vow now, 'tis true; when Mr. Brisk jokes, your lordship's laugh does so become you, he, he, he!

Lord Froth. Ridiculous! sir Paul, you're strangely mistaken; I find champagne is powerful. I assure you, sir Paul, I laugh at nobody's jest but my own, or a lady's; I assure you, sir Paul.

Brisk. How? how, my lord? What, affront my wit! Let me perish, do I never say any thing worthy to be laughed at?

Lord Froth. O foy, don't misapprehend me: I don't say so; for I often smile at your conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality, than to laugh; 'tis such a vulgar expression of the passion! every body can laugh. Then, especially, to laugh at the jest of an inferior person, or when any body else of the same quality does not laugh with one. Ridiculous! to be pleased with what pleases the crowd! Now, when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

Brisk. I suppose that's because you laugh at your own jests, 'egad, ha, ha, ha!

Lord Froth. He, he, I swear though! your raillery provokes me to a smile.

Brisk. Ay, my lord, it's a sign I hit you in the teeth, if you shew them.

Lord Froth. He, he, he! I swear that's so very pretty, I can't forbear.

Lord Touch. Sir Paul, if you please we'll retire to the ladies, and drink a dish of tea to settle our heads.

Sir Paul. With all my heart.—Mr. Brisk, you'll come to us——or call to me when you joke—I'll be ready to laugh incontinently.

[*Exeunt Lord* TOUCH. *and Sir* PAUL.

Mel. But does your lordship never see commedies?

Lord Froth. O yes, sometimes; but I never laugh.

Mel. No!

Lord Froth. Oh no—never laugh, indeed, sir.

Care. No! Why, what d'ye go there for?

Lord Froth. To distinguish myself from the commonalty, and mortify the poets;—the fellows grow so conceited, when any of their foolish wit prevails upon the side-boxes.—I swear——he, he, he! I have often constrained my inclinations to laugh——he, he, he! to avoid giving them encouragement.

Mel. You are cruel to yourself, my lord, as well as malicious to them.

Lord Froth. I confess I did myself some violence at first, but now I think I have conquered it.

Brisk. Let me perish, my lord, but there is

something very particular in the humour; 'tis true, it makes against wit, and I'm sorry for some friends of mine that write; but 'egad, I love to be malicious.—Nay, deuce take me, there's wit in't, too——and wit must be foiled by wit; cut a diamond with a diamond; no other way, 'egad.

Lord Froth. Oh, I thought you would not be long before you found out the wit.

Care. Wit! In what? Where the devil's the wit in not laughing, when a man has a mind to't?

Brisk. O lord, why, can't you find it out?——Why, there 'tis, in the not laughing——Don't you apprehend me?——My lord, Careless is a very honest fellow; but hark ye—you understand me, somewhat heavy, a little shallow, or so.—Why, I'll tell you now: suppose, now, you come up to me——Nay, pr'ythee, Careless, be instructed. Suppose, as I was saying, you come up to me, holding your sides, and laughing, as if you would——Well—I look grave, and ask the cause of this immoderate mirth—You laugh on still, and are not able to tell me——Still I look grave, not so much as smile.————

Care. Smile, no; what the devil should you smile at, when you suppose I can't tell you?

Brisk. Pshaw, pshaw, pry'thee don't interrupt me.—But I tell you, you shall tell me—at last—But it shall be a great while first.

Care. Well; but pr'ythee don't let it be a great while, because I long to have it over.

Brisk. Well, then, you tell me some good jest, or very witty thing, laughing all the while as if you were ready to die——and I hear it, and look thus.——Would not you be disappointed?

Care. No: for if it were a witty thing, I should not expect you to understand it.

Lord Froth. O foy, Mr. Careless, all the world allows Mr. Brisk to have wit; my wife says he has a great deal. I hope you think her a judge.

Brisk. Pooh, my lord, his voice goes for nothing.—I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—Take it t'other way. Suppose I say a witty thing to you?

Care. Then I shall be disappointed, indeed.

Mel. Let him alone, Brisk; he is obstinately bent not to be instructed.

Brisk. I'm sorry for him, the deuce take me.

Mel. Shall we go to the ladies, my lord?

Lord Froth. With all my heart;——methinks we are a solitude without them.

Mel. Or, what say you to another bottle of champagne?

Lord Froth. O, for the universe, not a drop more, I beseech you. Oh, intemperate! I have a flushing in my face already.

[*Takes out a pocket glass, and looks in it.*

Brisk. Let me see, let me see, my lord! I broke my glass that was in the lid of my snuff-box. Hum! Deuce take me, I have encouraged a pimple here too. [*Takes the glass, and looks.*

Lord Froth. Then you must mortify him with a patch; my wife shall supply you. Come, gentlemen; allons! here is company coming.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter Lady TOUCHWOOD *and* MASKWELL.

Lady Touch. I'll hear no more——Y'are false and ungrateful; come, I know you false.

Mask. I have been frail, I confess, madam, for your ladyship's service.

Lady Touch. That I should trust a man, whom I had known betray his friend!

Mask. What friend have I betrayed? or to whom?

Lady Touch. Your fond friend Mellefont, and to me———Can you deny it?

Mask. I do not.

Lady Touch. Have you not wronged my Lord, who has been a father to you in your wants, and given you being? Have you not wronged him in the highest manner, in his bed?

Mask. With your ladyship's help, and for your service, as I told you before. I cannot deny that, neither. Any thing more, madam?

Lady Touch. More! audacious villain. Oh, what's more is most my shame——Have you not dishonoured me?

Mask. No, that I deny: for I never told in all my life; so that accusation's answered——On to the next.

Lady Touch. Death! do you dally with my passion? Insolent devil! But have a care——provoke me not; for, by the eternal fire, you shall not escape my vengeance! Calm villain! how unconcerned he stands, confessing treachery and ingratitude! Is there a vice more black!—Oh, I have excuses, thousands, for my faults: fire in my temper; passions in my soul, apt to every provocation; oppressed, at once, with love and with despair: but a sedate, a thinking villain, whose black blood runs temperately bad, what excuse can clear?

Mask. Will you be in temper, madam? I would not talk not to be heard. I have been [*She walks about disordered.*] a very great rogue for your sake, and you reproach me with it; I am ready to be a rogue still, to do you service: and you are flinging conscience and honour in my face, to rebate my inclinations. How am I to behave myself? You know I am your creature, my life and fortune in your power; to disoblige you brings me certain ruin. Allow it, I would betray you, I would not be a traitor to myself! I do not pretend to honesty, because you know I am a rascal: but I would convince you, from the necessity of my being firm to you.

Lady Touch. Necessity, impudence! Can no gratitude incline you, no obligations touch you? Were you not in the nature of a servant, and have not I, in effect, made you lord of all, of me, and of my lord? When, in that humble love, me

languishing, that adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engaged?

Mask. Fixed, rooted in my heart, whence nothing can remove them; yet you——

Lady Touch. Yet, what yet?

Mask. Nay, misconceive me not, madam, when I say I have had a generous and faithful passion, which you had never favoured but through revenge and policy.

Lady Touch. Ha!

Mask. Look you, madam, we are alone. Pray contain yourself, and hear me. You know you loved your nephew, when I first sighed for you; I quickly found it; an argument that I loved: for with that art you veiled your passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous eyes. This discovery made me bold, I confess it; for, by it, I thought you in my power. Your nephew's scorn of you added to my hopes; I watched the occasion, and took you, just repulsed by him, warm at once with love and indignation; your disposition, my arguments, and happy opportunity, accomplished my design; I prest the yielding minute, and was blest. How I have loved you since, words have not shewn; then, how should words express?

Lady Touch. Well, mollifying devil!——And have I not met your love?

Mask. Your zeal, I grant, was ardent, but misplaced; there was revenge in view; that woman's idol had defiled the temple of the god, and love was made a mock-worship——A son and heir would have edged young Mellefont upon the brink of ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for prevention.

Lady Touch. Again provoke me! Do you wind me like a larum, only to rouse my stilled soul for your diversion? Confusion!

Mask. Nay, madam, I am gone, if you relapse ——What needs this? I say nothing but what you yourself, in open hours of love, have told me. Why should you deny it? Nay, how can you? Is not all this present heat owing to the same fire? Do you not love him still? How have I this day offended you, but in not breaking off his match with Cynthia? which, ere to-morrow, shall be done ———had you but patience.

Lady Touch. How! what said you, Maskwell? ——Another caprice to unwind my temper?

Mask. By Heaven, no! I am your slave, the slave of all your pleasures; and will not rest till I have given you peace, would you suffer me.

Lady Touch. Oh, Maskwell! in vain do I disguise me from thee: thou knowest me, knowest my soul——married to-morrow! Despair strikes me! Yet my soul knows I hate him, too: let him but once be mine—

Mask. Compose yourself, you shall possess and ruin him, too—Will that please you?

Lady Touch. How, how? thou dear, thou precious villain, how?

Mask. You have already been tampering with my Lady Plyant.

Lady Touch. I have; she is ready for any impression I think fit.

Mask. She must be thoroughly persuaded that Mellefont loves her.

Lady Touch. She is so credulous that way naturally, and likes him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can persuade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling design; for her first conversing with Mellefont will convince her of the contrary.

Mask. I know it—I don't depend upon it—— But it will prepare something else; and gain us leisure to lay a stronger plot——If I gain a little time, I shall not want contrivance.

One minute gives invention to destroy,
What, to rebuild, will a whole age employ.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter Lady FROTH *and* CYNTHIA.

Cyn. Indeed, madam! Is it possible your ladyship could have been so much in love?

Lady Froth. I could not sleep; I did not sleep one wink for three weeks together.

Cyn. Prodigious! I wonder want of sleep, and so much love, and so much wit as your ladyship has, did not turn your brain.

Lady Froth. O my dear Cynthia, you must not rally your friend—but really, as you say, I wonder, too—but then I had a way. For, between you and I, I had whimsies and vapours—but I gave them vent.

Cyn. How, pray, madam?

Lady Froth. O, I writ, writ abundantly——Do you never write?

Cyn. Write, what?

Lady Froth. Songs, elegies, satires, encomiums, panegyrics, lampoons, plays, or heroic poems.

Cyn. O lord, not I, madam; I am content to be a courteous reader.

Lady Froth. O inconsistent! in love, and not write! If my lord and I had been both of your temper, we had never come together—— O bless me! what a sad thing would that have been, if my lord and I should never have met!

Cyn. Then, neither my lord nor you would ever have met with your match, on my conscience.

Lady Froth. O' my conscience no more we should; thou say'st right——for sure my Lord Froth is as fine a gentleman, and as much a man of quality! Ah! nothing at all of the common air——I think I may say he wants nothing but a

blue ribband and a star, to make him shine the very phosphorus of our hemisphere. Do you understand those two hard words? If you don't, I'll explain them to you.

Cyn. Yes, yes, madam, I am not so ignorant—At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your instructions. [*Aside.*

Lady Froth. Nay, I beg your pardon; but being derived from the Greek, I thought you might have escaped the etymology——But I am the more amazed, to find you a woman of letters, and not write! Bless me! how can Mellefont believe you love him?

Cyn. Why, faith, madam, he, that won't take my word, shall never have it under my hand.

Lady Froth. I vow Mellefont's a pretty gentleman, but methinks he wants a manner.

Cyn. A manner! What's that, madam?

Lady Froth. Some distinguishing quality; as, for example, the *bel air* or *brillant* of Mr Brisk; the solemnity, yet complaisance of my lord; or something of his own that should look a little *je ne scai quoi;* he is too much a mediocrity, in my mind.

Cyn. He does not indeed affect either pertness or formality, for which I like him——Here he comes.

Enter Lord FROTH, MELLEFONT, *and* BRISK.

Impertinent creature! I could almost be angry with her now. [*Aside.*

Lady Froth. My lord, I have been telling Cynthia how much I have been in love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now. Ah! it makes my heart leap; I vow I sigh when I think on't:—My dear lord! ha, ha, ha, do you remember, my lord?

[*Squeezes him by the hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.*]

Lord Froth. Pleasant creature! Perfectly well. Ah! that look! Ay, there it is; who could resist!——'Twas so my heart was made a captive at first, and ever since it has been in love with happy slavery.

Lady Froth. O that tongue, that dear deceitful tongue! that charming softness in your mien and your expression! and then your bow! Good, my lord, bow as you did when I gave you my picture; here, suppose this my picture—[*Gives him a pocket glass.*]—Pray mind, my lord; ah! he bows charmingly. Nay, my lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now. [*He bows profoundly low, then kisses the glass.*]

Lord Froth. I saw myself there, and kissed it for your sake.

Lady Froth. Ah! gallantry to the last degree—Mr Brisk, you are a judge; was ever any thing so well bred as my lord?

Brisk. Never any thing but your ladyship, let me perish.

Lady Froth. O prettily turned again; let me die but you have a great deal of wit——Mr. Mellefont, don't you think Mr Brisk has a world of wit?

Mel. O yes, madam.

Brisk. O dear, madam——

Lady Froth. An infinite deal!

Brisk. Oh Heavens, madam——

Lady Froth. More wit than any body.

Brisk. I am everlastingly your humble servant, deuce take me, madam.

Lord Froth. Don't you think us a happy couple?

Cyn. I vow, my lord, I think you the happiest couple in the world.

Lord Froth. I hope Mellefont will make a good husband, too.

Cyn. 'Tis my interest to believe he will, my lord.

Lord Froth. D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my wife? I am afraid not.

Cyn. I believe he'll love me better.

Lord Froth. Heavens! that can never be; but why do you think so?

Cyn. Because he has not so much reason to be fond of himself.

Lord Froth. O your humble servant for that, dear madam. Well, Mellefont, you'll be a happy creature.

Mel. Ay, my lord, I shall have the same reason for my happiness that your lordship has; I shall think myself happy.

Lord Froth. Ah, that's all.

Brisk. [*To Lady* FROTH.] Your ladyship is in the right; but, 'egad, I'm wholly turned into satire. I confess I write but seldom, but when I do——keen Iambics, 'egad. But my lord was telling me, your ladyship has made an essay toward an heroic poem.

Lady Froth. Did my lord tell you? Yes, I vow, and the subject is my lord's love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare swear you won't guess——*The Syllabub!* ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Because my lord's title's Froth, 'egad; ha, ha, ha, ha! deuce take me, very *à propos,* and surprizing, ha, ha, ha!

Lady Froth. He, he! ay, is not it?—And then I call my lord Spumosa; and myself—what do ye think I call myself?

Brisk. Lactilla, may be—'Egad I cannot tell.

Lady Froth. Biddy, that's all; just my own name

Brisk. Biddy! 'Egad very pretty—Deuce take me, if your ladyship has not the art of surprizing the most naturally in the world—I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the poem.

Lady Froth. O, you must be my confident; I must ask your advice.

Brisk. I'm your humble servant, let me perish—I presume your ladyship has read Bossu?

Lady Froth. O yes, and Rapine, and Dacier upon Aristotle and Horace.—My lord, you must not be jealous! I'm communicating all to Mr Brisk.

Lord Froth. No, no, I'll allow Mr Brisk; come, have you nothing about you to shew him, my dear?

Lady Froth. Yes, I believe I have. Mr Brisk, will you go into the next room, and there I'll shew you what I have.

[*Exeunt* LADY FROTH *and* BRISK.

Lord Froth. I'll walk a turn in the garden, and come to you. [*Exit* LORD FROTH.

Mel. You are thoughtful, Cynthia.

Cyn. I am thinking, though marriage makes man and wife one flesh, it leaves them still two fools: and they become more conspicuous by setting off one another.

Mel. That's only, when two fools meet, and their follies are opposed.

Cyn. Nay, I have known two wits meet, and, by the opposition of their wit, render themselves as ridiculous as fools. 'Tis an odd game we are going to play at; what think you of drawing stakes, and giving over in time?

Mel. No, hang it, that's not endeavouring to win, because it is possible we may lose; since we have shuffled and cut, let us e'en turn up trump now.

Cyn. Then, I find it is like cards; if either of us have a good hand, it is an accident of fortune.

Mel. No, marriage is rather like a game at bowls: fortune indeed makes the match, and the two nearest, and sometimes the two farthest are together, but the game depends entirely upon judgment.

Cyn. Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

Mel. Not at all; only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment.

Enter SIR PAUL PLYANT *and* LADY PLYANT.

Sir Paul. Gads bud! I am provoked into a fermentation, as my lady Froth says; was ever the like read of in story?

Lady Ply. Sir Paul, have patience; let me alone to rattle him up.

Sir Paul. Pray your ladyship give me leave to be angry—I'll rattle him up, I warrant you, I'll firk him with a *certiorari*.

Lady Ply. You firk him! I'll firk him myself. Pray, sir Paul, hold you contented.

Cyn. Bless me, what makes my father in such a passion!—I never saw him thus before.

Sir Paul. Hold yourself contented, my lady Plyant—I find passion coming upon me by inflation, and I cannot submit as formerly; therefore, give way.

Lady Ply. How now! will you be pleased to retire, and—

Sir Paul. No, marry, will I not be pleased: I am pleased to be angry, that is my pleasure at this time.

Mel. What can this mean?

Lady Ply. Gads my life, the man's distracted! why, how now, who are you? What am I? Slidikins, can't I govern you? What did I marry you for? Am I not absolute and uncontroulable? Is it fit a woman of my spirit and conduct should be contradicted in a matter of this concern?

Sir Paul. It concerns me, and only me:—Besides, I am not to be governed at all times. When I am in tranquillity, my lady Plyant shall command sir Paul; but, when I am provoked to fury, I cannot incorporate with patience and reason;—as soon may tigers match with tigers, lambs with lambs, and every creature couple with its foe, as the poet says.—

Lady Ply. He's hot-headed still! 'tis in vain to talk to you; but, remember, I have a curtain-lecture for you, you disobedient, headstrong brute.

Sir Paul. No, 'tis because I won't be headstrong, because I won't be a brute, and have my head fortified, that I am thus exasperated.—But I will protect my honour, and yonder is the violator of my fame.

Lady Ply. 'Tis my honour that is concerned, and the violation was intended to me.—Your honour! you have none but what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please—therefore, don't provoke me.

Sir Paul. Hum! gads-bud, she says true--Well, my lady, march on, I will fight under you, then; I am convinced as far as passion will permit.

[LADY PLYANT *and* SIR PAUL *come up to* MELLEFONT.

Lady Ply. Inhuman and treacherous———

Sir Paul. Thou serpent, and first tempter of womankind———

Cyn. Bless me, sir! Madam, what mean you?

Sir Paul. Thy, Thy, come away, Thy, touch him not; come hither, girl; go not near him; there is nothing but deceit about him; snakes are in his peruke, and the crocodile of Nilus is in his belly; he will eat thee up alive.

Lady Ply. Dishonourable, impudent creature!

Mel. For Heaven's sake, madam, to whom do you direct this language?

Lady Ply Have I behaved myself with all the decorum and nicety, befitting the person of sir Paul's wife? Have I preserved my honour, as it were, in a snow-house for these three years past? Have I been white and unsullied even by sir Paul himself?

Sir Paul. Nay, she has been an invincible wife, even to me, that's the truth on't.

Lady Ply. Have I, I say, preserved myself like a fair sheet of paper, for you to make a blot upon?

Sir Paul. And she shall make a simile with any woman in England.

Mel. I am so amazed, I know not what to say.

Sir Paul. Do you think my daughter, this pretty creature—gads-bud, she's a wife for a cherubin! Do you think her fit for nothing but to be a stalking horse, to stand before you, while you take aim at my wife? Gadsbud, I was never an-

gry before in my life, and I'll never be appeased again.

Mel. Hell and damnation! this is my aunt; such malice can be engendered no where else. [*Aside.*

Lady Ply. Sir Paul, take Cynthia from his sight; leave me to strike him with the remorse of his intended crime.

Cyn. Pray, sir, stay! hear him; I dare affirm he's innocent.

Sir Paul. Innocent! Why, hark'ee, come hither, Thy; hark'ee, I had it from his aunt, my sister Touchwood—Gads-bud, he does not care a farthing for any thing of thee, but thy portion; why, he's in love with my wife; he would have tantalized thee, and made a cuckold of thy poor father; and that would certainly have broke my heart—I am sure, if ever I should have horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly; I should die of them, like a child that was cutting his teeth—I should, indeed, Thy—therefore, come away; but Providence has prevented all; therefore, come away when I bid you.

Cyn. I must obey.

[*Exeunt* SIR PAUL *and* CYNTHIA.

Lady Ply. Oh, such a thing! the impiety of it startles me—to wrong so good, so fair a creature, and one that loves you tenderly—'Tis a barbarity of barbarities, and nothing could be guilty of it——

Mel. But the greatest villain imagination can form, I grant it; and next to the villainy of such a fact, is the villainy of aspersing me with the guilt. How? Which way was I to wrong her? For yet I understand you not.

Lady Ply. Why, gads my life, cousin Mellefont, you cannot be so peremptory as to deny it, when I tax you with it to your face; for, now sir Paul is gone, you are *corum nobus.*

Mel. By Heaven, I love her more than life, or——

Lady Ply. Fiddle, faddle, don't tell me of this and that and every thing in the world, but give me mathemacular demonstration—answer me directly—But I have not patience—Oh! the impiety of it, as I was saying, and the unparalleled wickedness! O merciful father! How could you think to reverse nature so, to make the daughter the means of procuring the mother?

Mel. The daughter to procure the mother!

Lady Ply. Ay, for though I am not Cynthia's own mother, I am her father's wife, and that's near enough to make it incest.

Mel. Incest! O! my precious aunt, and the devil in conjunction! [*Aside.*

Lady Ply. O reflect upon the horror of that, and then the guilt of deceiving every body; marrying the daughter, only to make a cuckold of the father; and then seducing me, debauching my purity, and perverting me from the road of virtue, in which I have trod thus long, and never made one trip, not one *faux pas*; O consider it! what would you have to answer for, if you should provoke me to frailty? Alas! humanity is feeble, Heaven knows! very feeble, and unable to support itself.

Mel. Where am I? Is it day? and am I awake? Madam——

Lady Ply. And nobody knows how circumstances may happen together;—to my thinking, now, I could resist the strongest temptation—but, yet, I know, 'tis impossible for me to know whether I could or not; there's no certainty in the things of this life.

Mel. Madam, pray give me leave to ask you one question.——

Lady Ply. O lord, ask me the question! I'll swear I'll refuse it; I'll swear I'll deny it, therefore don't ask me; nay, you shan't ask me; I swear I'll deny it. O gemini, you have brought all the blood into my face; I warrant I am as red as a turky-cock; O fye! cousin Mellefont.

Mel. Nay, madam, hear me; I mean——

Lady Ply. Hear you? no, no; I'll deny you first, and hear you afterwards. For one does not know how one's mind may change upon hearing.—Hearing is one of the senses, and all the senses are fallible; I won't trust my honour, I assure you; my honour is infallible and uncomatible.

Mel. For Heaven's sake, madam—

Lady Ply. O name it no more—Bless me, how can you talk of Heaven, and have so much wickedness in your heart? May be you don't think it a sin!—they say, some of you gentlemen don't think it a sin!—may be it is no sin to them that don't think it so; indeed, if I did not think it a sin! but still my honour, if it were no sin!—but then to marry my daughter for the conveniency of frequent opportunities—I'll never consent to that; as sure as can be I'll break the match.

Mel. Death and amazement!—Madam, upon my knees——

Lady Ply. Nay, nay, rise up; come, you shall see my good-nature. I know love is powerful, and nobody can help his passion: 'tis not your fault, nor, I swear, it is not mine!—How can I help it, if I have charms? And how can you help it, if you are made a captive? I swear it is pity it should be a fault—but my honour—well, but your honour too—but the sin!—well, but the necessity—O lord, here's somebody coming, I dare not stay.—Well, you must consider of your crime, and strive as much as can be against it—strive, be sure—but don't be melancholic, don't despair—but never think that I'll grant you any think; O lord, no;—but be sure you lay aside all thoughts of the marriage; for though I know you don't love Cynthia, only as a blind for your passion to me, yet it will make me jealous—O Lord, what did I say? Jealous! no, no, I can't be jealous, for I must not love you—therefore, don't hope—but don't despair neither—O, they're coming, I must fly. [*Exit.*

Mel. [*after a pause.*] So then—spite of my

care and foresight, I am caught, caught in my security.—Yet this was but a shallow artifice, unworthy of my Machiavelian aunt. There must be more behind; this is but the first flash, the priming of her engine; destruction follows hard, if not most presently prevented.

Enter MASKWELL.

Maskwell, welcome! Thy presence is a view of land, appearing to my shipwrecked hopes; the witch has raised the storm, and her ministers have done their work; you see the vessels are parted.

Mask. I know it; I met sir Paul towing away Cynthia. Come, trouble not your head; I'll join you together to-morrow morning, or drown between you in the attempt.

Mel. There is comfort in a hand stretched out to one that is sinking, though never so far off.

Mask. No sinking, nor no danger——Come, cheer up; why, you do not know, that while I plead for you, your aunt has given me a retaining fee;—nay, I am your greatest enemy, and she does but journey-work under me.

Mel. Ha! how is this?

Mask. What do ye think of my being employed in the execution of all her plots? Ha, ha, ha! by Heaven, it is true; I have undertaken to break the match; I have undertaken to make your uncle disinherit you, to get you turned out of doors, and to——ha, ha, ha! I can't tell you for laughing——Oh! she has opened her heart to me——I am to turn you a grazing, and to—ha, ha, ha!—marry Cynthia myself: There's a plot for you!

Mel. Ha! O see, I see my rising sun! light breaks through clouds upon me, and I shall live in day——O my Maskwell! how shall I thank or praise thee! thou hast outwitted woman.——But tell me, how couldst thou thus get into her confidence? Ha! how? But was it her contrivance to persuade my lady Plyant into this extravagant belief?

Mask. It was; and, to tell you the truth, I encouraged it for your diversion: though it make you a little uneasy for the present, yet the reflection of it must needs be entertaining——I warrant she was very violent at first.

Mel. Ha, ha, ha! ay, a very fury; but I was most afraid of her violence at last. If you had not come as you did, I do not know what she might have attempted.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha! I know her temper.——Well, you must know, then, that all my contrivances were but bubbles; till, at last, I pretended to have been long secretly in love with Cynthia; that did my business; that convinced your aunt I might be trusted; since it was as much my interest as her's to break the match: then she thought my jealousy might qualify me to assist her in her revenge. And, in short, in that belief told me the secrets of her heart. At length, we made this agreement; if I accomplish her designs (as I told you before), she has engaged to put Cynthia, with all her fortune, into my power.

Mel. She is most gracious in her favour.—Well, and dear Jack, how hast thou contrived?

Mask. I would not have you stay to hear it now: for I don't know but she may come this way; I am to meet her anon; after that, I will tell you the whole matter: be here, in this gallery, an hour hence; by that time, I imagine, our consultation may be over.

Mel. I will; till then, success attend thee!

[*Exit.*

Mask. Till then, success will attend me; for when I meet you, I meet the only obstacle to my fortune. Cynthia, let thy beauty gild my crimes; and whatsoever I commit of treachery or deceit shall be imputed to me as a merit. Treachery! What treachery? Love cancels all the bonds of friendship, and sets men right upon their first foundations. Duty to kings, piety to parents, gratitude to benefactors, and fidelity to friends—are different and particular ties; but the name of rival cuts them all asunder, and is a general acquittance—Rival is equal; and love, like death, an universal leveller of mankind. Ha! but is there not such a thing as honesty? Yes, and whosoever has it about him, bears an enemy in his breast: for your honest man, as I take it, is that nice, scrupulous, conscientious person, who will cheat nobody but himself; such another coxcomb as your wise man, who is too hard for all the world, and will be made a fool of by nobody but himself. Ha, ha, ha! well, for wisdom and honesty, give me cunning and hypocrisy. Oh, it is such a pleasure to angle for fair-faced fools! Then, that hungry gudgeon, Credulity, will bite at any thing—Why, let me see, I have the same face, the same words and accents, when I speak what I do think, and when I speak what I do not think—the very same—and dear dissimulation is the only art not to be known from nature.

Why will mankind be fools, and be deceived?
And why are friends' and lovers' oaths believed?
When each, who searches strictly his own mind,
May so much fraud and power of baseness find.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter LORD TOUCHWOOD, *and* LADY TOUCHWOOD.

Lady Touch. My lord, can you blame my brother Plyant, if he refuse his daughter upon this provocation? The contract is void, by this unheard of impiety.

Lord Touch. I don't believe it true; he has better principles—Pho, 'tis nonsense. Come, come, I know my lady Plyant has a large eye, and would centre every thing in her own circle; 'tis not the first time she has mistaken respect for love, and made sir Paul jealous of the civility of an undesigning person, the better to bespeak his security in her unfeigned pleasures.

Lady Touch. You censure hardly, my lord; my sister's honour is very well known.

Lord Touch. Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little trick, wrought by some pitiful contriver, envious of my nephew's merit.

Lady Touch. Nay, my lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so: but that will require some time; for, in such a case as this, demonstration is necessary,

Lord Touch. There should have been demonstration of the contrary, too, before it had been believed——

Lady Touch. So, I suppose, there was.

Lord Touch. How? Where? When?

Lady Touch. That I cannot tell; nay, I don't say there was—I am willing to believe as favourably of my nephew as I can.

Lord Touch. I don't know that. [*Half aside.*

Lady Touch. How? Don't you believe that, say you, my lord?

Lord Touch. No, I don't say so—I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his defence.

Lady Touch. His defence! Bless me, would you have me defend an ill thing?

Lord Touch. You believe it, then?

Lady Touch. I don't know; I am very unwilling to speak my thoughts in any thing that may be to my cousin's disadvantage. Besides, I find, my lord, you are prepared to receive an ill impression from any opinion of mine which is not consenting with your own: but, since I am like to be suspected in the end, and 'tis a pain any longer to dissemble, I own it to you: In short, I do believe it, nay, and can believe any thing worse, if it were laid to his charge——Don't ask me my reasons, my lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

Lord Touch. I am amazed! Here must be something more than ordinary in this. [*Aside.*] Not fit to be told me, madam? You have no interest wherein I am not concerned; and, consequently, the same reasons ought to be convincing to me, which create your satisfaction or disquiet.

Lady Touch. But those which cause my disquiet I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good my lord, don't press me.

Lord Touch. Don't oblige me to press you.

Lady Touch. Whatever it was, it is past; and that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented; therefore, let me beg of you to rest satisfied———

Lord Touch. When you have told me, I will—

Lady Touch. You won't.

Lord Touch. By my life, my dear, I will.

Lady Touch. What if you cannot?

Lord Touch. How? Then, I must know; nay, I will. No more trifling—I charge you tell me—By all our mutual peace to come; upon your duty———

Lady Touch. Nay, my lord, you need say no more to make me lay my heart before you; but don't be thus transported; compose yourself; it is not of concern to make you lose one minute's temper; it is not, indeed, my dear. Nay, by this kiss you shall not be angry. O Lord! I wish I had not told you any thing. Indeed, my lord, you have frighted me. Nay, look pleased, I will tell you.

Lord Touch. Well, well.

Lady Touch. Nay, but will you be calm?—Indeed, it is nothing but———

Lord Touch. But what?

Lady Touch. But will you promise me not to be angry?—Nay, you must—not to be angry with Mellefont—I dare swear he is sorry; and, were it to do again, would not——

Lord Touch. Sorry, for what? 'Death! you rack me with delay.

Lady Touch. Nay, no great matter, only——Well, I have your promise—Pho, why, nothing; only your nephew had a mind to amuse himself sometimes with a little gallantry towards me. Nay, I cannot think he meant any thing seriously, but methought it looked oddly.

Lord Touch. Confusion and hell, what do I hear!

Lady Touch. Or, may be, he thought he was not enough akin to me upon your account, and had a mind to create a nearer relation on his own; a lover, you know, my lord—ha, ha, ha! Well, but that's all. Now you have it; well, remember your promise, my lord, and don't take any notice of it to him.

Lord Touch. No, no, no—Damnation!

Lady Touch. Nay, I swear you must not—A little harmless mirth—only misplaced, that's all. But if it were more, it is over now, and all is well. For my part, I have forgot it; and so has he, I hope; for I have not heard any thing from him these two days.

Lord Touch. These two days! Is it so fresh? Unnatural villain! 'Death, I will have him stripped, and turned naked out of my doors this moment, and let him rot and perish, incestuous brute!

Lady Touch. Oh, for Heaven's sake, my lord, you will ruin me, if you take such public notice of it; it will be a town-talk: consider your own, and my honour—Nay, I told you, you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

Lord Touch. Before I have done, I will be satisfied. Ungrateful monster! How long?

Lady Touch. Lord! I don't know——I wish my lips had grown together when I told you—Almost a twelvemonth—Nay, I won't tell you any more till you are yourself. Pray, my lord, don't let the company see you in this disorder—Yet, I confess, I cannot blame you; for I think I was never so surprised in my life. Who would have thought my nephew could have so misconstrued my kindness—But will you go into your closet, and recover your temper. I will make an excuse of sudden business to the company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my lord, let me beg you do now: I will come immediately, and tell you all——Will you, my lord?

Lord Touch. I will—I am mute with wonder.

Lady Touch. Well, but go now; here is somebody coming.

Lord Touch. Well, I go—You won't stay, for I would hear more of this. [*Exit.*

Lady Touch. I follow instantly——So.

Enter MASKWELL.

Mask. This was a master-piece, and did not need my help—though I stood ready for a cue to come in and confirm all, had there been occasion.

Lady Touch. Have you seen Mellefont?

Mask. I have; and am to meet him here about this time.

Lady Touch. How does he bear his disappointment?

Mask. Secure in my assistance, he seemed not much afflicted, but rather laughed at the shallow artifice, which so little time must, of necessity, discover. Yet he is apprehensive of some farther design of yours, and has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your plot; yet I would have you use caution and expedition.

Lady Touch. Expedition indeed; for all we do must be peformed in the remaining part of this evening, and before the company break up, lest my lord should cool, and have an opportunity to talk with him privately——My lord must not see him again.

Mask. By no means; therefore, you must aggravate my lord's displeasure to a degree that will admit of no conference with him——What think you of mentioning me?

Lady Touch. How?

Mask. To my lord, as having been privy to Mellefont's design upon you; but still using my utmost endeavours to dissuade him: though my friendship and love to him has made me conceal it, yet you may say, I threatened, the next time he attempted any thing of that kind, to discover it to my lord.

Lady Touch. To what end is this?

Mask. It will confirm my lord's opinion of my honour and honesty, and create in him a new confidence in me, which (should this design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming another plot that I have in my head—to cheat you as well as the rest. [*Aside.*

Lady Touch. I'll do it.

Mask. Excellent! You had best go to my lord, keep him as long as you can in his closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please; your guests are so engaged in their own follies and intrigues, they'll miss neither of you. When shall we meet?

Lady Touch. At eight this evening, in my chamber; there, rejoice at our success, and toy away an hour in mirth. [*Exit.*

Mask. I will not fail. I know what she means by toying away an hour well enough. Pox, I have lost all my appetite to her; yet she's a fine woman, and I loved her once. Should she smoke my design upon Cynthia, I were in a fine pickle. She has a damned penetrating head, and knows how to interpret a coldness the right way; therefore, I must dissemble ardour and ecstacy, that's resolved: Ha! yonder comes Mellefont thoughtful. Let me think: meet her at eight—hum—ha! by Heaven I have it—if I can speak to my lord before—I will deceive them all, and yet secure myself; 'twas a lucky thought! Well, this double-dealing is a jewel. Here he comes! now for me———

[MASKWELL, *pretending not to see him, walks by him, and speaks as it were to himself.*]

Enter MELLEFONT, *musing.*

Mercy on us! what will the wickedness of this world come to?

Mel. How now, Jack? What, so full of contemplation that you run over!

Mask. I'm glad you are come, for I could not contain myself any longer, and was just going to give vent to a secret, which nobody but you ought to drink down. Your aunt is just gone from hence.

Mel. And having trusted thee with the secrets of her soul, thou art villainously bent to discover them all to me, ha?

Mask. I am afraid my frailty leans that way—but I dont know, whether I can, in honour, discover them all.

Mel. All, all, man. What, you may, in honour, betray her as far as she betrays herself. No tragical design upon my person, I hope.

Mask. No, but it is a comical design upon mine.

Mel. What dost thou mean?

Mask. Listen, and be dumb——we have been bargaining about the rate of your ruin——

Mel. Like any two guardians to an orphan heiress—Well.

Mask. And whereas pleasure is generally paid with mischief, what mischief I do is to be paid with pleasure.

Mel. So, when you've swallowed the potion, you sweeten your mouth with a plumb.

Mask. You are merry, sir, but I shall probe your constitution. In short, the price of your banishment is to be paid with the person of ——

Mel. Of Cynthia, and her fortune—why, you forget you told me this before.

Mask. No, no—so far, you are right; and I am, as an earnest of that bargain, to have full and free possession of the person of———your aunt.

Mel. Ha! Pho, you trifle.

Mask. By this light, I am serious; all raillery apart—I knew 'twould stun you: this evening, at eight, she will receive me in her bed-chamber.

Mel. Hell and the devil! is she abandoned of all grace—why? the woman is possessed——

Mask. Well, will you go in my stead?

Mel. By Heaven, into a hot furnace sooner!

Mask. No, you would not—it would not be so convenient, as I can order matters.

Mel. What do you mean?

Mask. Mean! not to disappoint the lady, I assure you—Ha, ha, ha! how gravely he looks—come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only thing that Providence could have contrived to make me capable of serving you, either to my inclination, or your own necessity.

Mel. How, how, for Heaven's sake, dear Maskwell?

Mask. Why thus—I'll go according to appointment; you shall have notice, at the critical minute, to come and surprize your aunt and me together; counterfeit a rage against me, and I will make my escape through the private passage from her chamber, which I will take care to leave open: 'twill be hard, if then you can't bring her to any conditions. For this discovery will disarm her of all defence, and leave her entirely at your mercy: nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

Mel. Let me adore thee, my better genius! by Heaven, I think it is not in the power of Fate to disappoint my hopes——my hopes! my certainty.

Mask. Well, I'll meet you here within a quarter of eight, and give you notice.

[*Exit* MASKWELL.

Mel. Good fortune ever go along with thee.

Enter CARELESS.

Care. Mellefont, get out of the way; my lady Plyant's coming, and I shall never succeed, while thou art in sight—though she begins to tack about; but I made love a great while to no purpose.

Mel. Why, what's the matter? she is convinced that I don't care for her.

Care. I cannot get an answer from her, that does not begin with her honour, or her virtue, her religion, or some such cant. Then, she has told me the whole story of sir Paul's nine year's courtship; how he has lain, for whole nights together, upon the stairs before her chamber-door; and that the first favour he received from her was a piece of an old scarlet petticoat for a stomacher; which, since the day of his marriage, he has, out of a piece of gallantry, converted into a night-cap, and wears it still with much solemnity on his anniversary wedding night.

Mel. That I have seen, with the ceremony thereunto belonging—for, on that night, he creeps in at the bed's feet, like a gulled bassa that has married a relation of the grand signior. I wonder he never told you his grievances; he will, I warrant you.

Care. Excessively foolish! but that, which gives me most hopes of her, is her telling me of the many temptations she has resisted.

Mel. Nay, then you have her; for a woman's bragging to a man, that she has overcome temptations, is an argument, that they were weakly offered, and a challenge to him to engage her more irresistibly. 'Tis only an enhancing the price of the commodity, by telling you how many customers have underbid her.

Care. Nay, I dont despair—but still she has a grudging to you—I talked to her t'other night at my lord Froth's masquerade, when I am satisfied she knew me, and I had no reason to complain of my reception; but I find women are not the same bare-faced, and in masks—and a vizor disguises their inclinations as much as their faces.

Mel. Here they come. I'll leave you. Ply her close, and by and by clap a billet-doux into her hand: for a woman never thinks a man truly in love with her, till he has been fool enough to think of her out of her sight, and to lose so much time as to write to her.

[*Exit* MELLEFONT.

Enter SIR PAUL *and* LADY PLYANT.

Sir Paul. Shan't we disturb your meditation, Mr Careless? You would be in private?

Care. You bring that along with you, sir Paul, that shall be always welcome to my privacy.

Sir Paul. O, sweet sir! you load your humble servants, both me and my wife, with continual favours.

Lady Ply. Sir Paul, what a phrase was there! You will be making answers, and taking that upon you, which ought to lie upon me: that you should have so little breeding to think Mr Careless did not apply himself to me! Pray, what have you to entertain any body's privacy? I swear

and declare, in the face of the world, I am ready to blush for your ignorance.

Sir Paul. I acquiesce, my lady; but don't snub so loud.

[*Aside to her*

Lady Ply. Mr Careless, if a person, that is wholly illiterate, might be supposed to be capable of being qualified to make a suitable return to those obligations, which you are pleased to confer upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualified in all those circumstances, I am sure I should rather attempt it than any thing in the world—[*Courtesies*]—for I am sure there is nothing in the world that I would rather. [*Courtesies.*] But I know Mr Careless is so great a critic, and so fine a gentleman, that it is impossible for me——

Care. Oh, Heavens! Madam, you confound me.

Sir Paul. Gad's bud, she is a fine person—

Lady Ply. O lord! sir, pardon me: we women have not those advantages: I know my own imperfections—but, at the same time, you must give me leave to declare, in the face of the world, that nobody is more sensible of favours and things; for, with the reserve of my honour, I assure you, Mr Careless, I don't know any thing in the world I would refuse to a person so meritorious——You'll pardon my want of expression.

Care. Oh, your ladyship is abounding in all excellence, particularly that of phrase.

Lady Ply. You are so obliging, sir.

Care. Your ladyship is so charming.

Sir Paul. So, now, now; now, my lady.

Lady Ply. So well bred.

Care. So surprizing.

Lady Ply. So well drest, so *bonne mien*, so eloquent, so unaffected, so easy, so free, so particular, so agreeable——

Sir Paul. Aye, so, so, there.

Care. O lord! I beseech you, madam, don't—

Lady Ply. So gay, so graceful, so good teeth, so fine shape, so fine limbs, so fine linen, and I don't doubt but you have a very good skin, sir.

Care. For Heaven's sake, madam—I am quite out of countenance.

Sir Paul. And my lady's quite out of breath; or else you should hear——Gad's bud, you may talk of my lady Froth.

Care. O fy, fy! not to be named of a day—my lady Froth is very well in her accomplishments—but it is, when my lady Plyant is not thought of—if that can ever be.

Lady Ply. Oh, you overcome me—that is so excessive.

Sir Paul. Nay, I swear and vow that was pretty.

Care. Oh, sir Paul, you are the happiest man alive. Such a lady! that is the envy of her own sex, and the admiration of ours!

Sir Paul. Your humble servant; I am, I thank Heaven, in a fine way of living, as I may say, peacefully and happily, and I think need not envy any of my neighbours, blessed be Providence——Aye, truly, Mr Careless, my lady is a great blessing; a fine, discreet, well-spoken woman as you shall see—if it becomes me to say so; and we live very comfortably together; she is a little hasty sometimes, and so am I; but mine is soon over; and then, I am so sorry—Oh, Mr Careless, if it were not for one thing———

Enter Boy, with a letter.

Lady Ply. How often have you been told of that, you jackanapes?

Sir Paul. Gad so, gads-bud——Tim, carry it to my lady; you should have carried it my lady first.

Boy. 'Tis directed to your worship.

Sir Paul. Well, well, my lady reads all letters first——Child, do so no more; d'ye hear, Tim?

Boy. No, and please you. [*Exit.*

Sir Paul. A humour of my wife's; you know women have little fancies——But as I was telling you, Mr Careless, if it were not for one thing, I should think myself the happiest man in the world; indeed, that touches me near, very near.

Care. What can that be, sir Paul?

Sir Paul. Why, I have, I thank Heaven, a very plentiful fortune, a good estate in the country, some houses in town, and some money, a pretty tolerable personal estate; and it is a great grief to me, indeed it is, Mr Careless, that I have not a son to inherit this. 'Tis true, I have a daughter, and a find dutiful child she is, though I say it, blessed be Providence I may say; for indeed, Mr Careless, I am mightily beholden to Providence—A poor unworthy sinner—But if I had a a son, ah! that's my affliction, and my only affliction; indeed, I cannot refrain tears, when it comes into my mind. [*Cries.*

Care. Why, methinks that might be easily remedied; my lady is a fine likely woman.

Sir Paul. Oh, a fine likely woman as you shall see in a summer's day———Indeed she is, Mr Careless, in all respects.

Care. And I should not have taken you to have been so old———

Sir Paul. Alas! that's not it, Mr Careless: ah! that's not it; no, no; you shoot wide of the mark a mile; indeed you do; that's not it, Mr Careless; no, no; that's not it.

Care. No? what can be the matter, then?

Sir Paul. You'll scarcely believe me, when I shall tell you——my lady is so nice——It is very strange, but it is true: too true——she is so very nice, that I don't believe she would touch a man for the world.———Indeed, it is true, Mr Careless, it breaks my heart——I am her husband, as I may say;

though far unworthy of that honour, yet I am her husband: but alas-a-day! I have no more familiarity with her person—than with my own mother——no, indeed.

Care. Alas-a-day! this is a lamentable story; my lady must be told of it; she must, in faith, sir Paul; 'tis an injury to the world.

Sir Paul. Ah! would to Heaven you would, Mr Careless! you are mightily in her favour.

Care. I warrant you; what! we must have a son some way or other.

Sir Paul. Indeed, I should be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, Mr Careless.

Lady Ply. Here, sir Paul, it is from your steward; here's a return of 600l. you may take fifty of it for the next half-year.

[*Gives him the letter.*

Enter LORD FROTH *and* CYNTHIA.

Sir. Paul. How does my girl? Come hither to thy father, poor lamb; thou art melancholic.

Lord Froth. Heaven, sir Paul, you amaze me of all things in the world——You are never pleased but when we are all upon the broad grin; all laugh and no company; ah! then 'tis such a sight to see some teeth——sure you are a great admirer of my lady Whifler, Mr Sneer, and sir Laurence Loud, and that gang.

Sir Paul. I vow and swear she is a very merry woman; but I think she laughs a little too much.

Lord Froth. Merry! O lord, what a character that is of a woman of quality——You have been at my lady Whifler's upon her day, madam?

Cyn. Yes, my lord—I must humour this fool.

[*Aside.*

Lord Froth. Well and how? hee! What is your sense of the conversation?

Cyn. O, most ridiculous, a perpetual concert of laughing without any harmony; for sure, my lord, to laugh out of time, is as disagreeable as to sing out of time, or out of tune.

Lord Froth. Hee, hee, hee! right; and then my lady Whifler is so ready—she always comes in three bars too soon—And then, what do they laugh at? For you know laughing without a jest is as impertinent, hee! as———

Cyn. As dancing without a fiddle.

Lord Froth. Just, in faith! that was at my tongue's end.

Cyn. But that cannot be properly said of them; for I think they are all in good nature with the world, and only laugh at one another; and you must allow they have all jests in their persons, though they have none in their conversation.

Lord Froth. True, as I am a person of honour——For Heaven's sake let us sacrifice them to mirth a little.

Enter Boy, and whispers SIR PAUL.

Sir Paul. Gad so—Wife, Wife! my lady Plyant! I have a word—

Lady Ply I am busy, sir Paul; I wonder at your impertinence———

Care. Sir Paul, harkee! I am reasoning the matter you know: Madam, if your Ladyship please, we'll discourse of this in the next room.

[*Exeunt* LADY PLYANT *and* CARELESS.

Sir Paul. O ho! I wish you good success; I wish you good success. Boy, tell my lady, when she has done, I would speak with her below. [*Exit* SIR PAUL.

Enter LADY FROTH *and* BRISK.

Lady Froth. Then, you think that episode between Susan the dairy-maid, and our coachman, is not amiss; you know, I may suppose the dairy in town, as well as in the country.

Brisk. Incomparable, let me perish! But then, being an heroic poem, had you not better call him a charioteer? Charioteer sounds great: besides, your ladyship's coachman having a red face, and you comparing him to the sun——And you know the sun is called Heaven's charioteer.

Lady Froth. Oh, infinitely better! I am extremely beholden to you for the hint; stay, we'll read over those half a score lines again. [*Pulls out a paper.*] Let me see here; you know what goes before———the comparison, you know.

[*Reads.*]

'For as the sun shines every day,
'So, of our coachman, I may say.'

Brisk. I am afraid that simile won't do in wet weather——Because you say the sun shines every day.

Lady Froth. No, for the sun it won't, but it will do for the coachman; for you know there's most occasion for a coach in wet weather.

Brisk. Right, right; that saves all.

Lady Froth. Then, I don't say the sun shines all the day, but that he peeps now and then; yet he does shine all the day too, you know, though we don't see him.

Brisk. Right, but the vulgar will never comprehend that.

Lady Froth. Well, you shall hear—Let me see. [*Reads.*]

'For as the sun shines every day,
'So of our coachman I may say;
'He shews his drunken fiery face,
'Just as the sun does, more or less.'

Brisk. That's right; all's well, all's well. More or less.

Lady Froth. [*Reads.*]

'And when at night his labour's done,
'Then too, like Heaven's charioteer, the sun:'

Ay, charioteer does better.

'Into the dairy he descends,
'And there his whipping and his driving ends.
'There, he's secure from danger of a bilk,
'His fare is paid him, and he sets in milk.'

For Susan, you know, is Thetis, and so———

Brisk. Incomparable well and proper, 'egad—But I have one exception to make——Don't you think bilk (I know it is good rhyme) but don't you think bilk and fare too like a hackney coachman?

Lady Froth. I swear and vow I am afraid so ———And yet our Jehu was a hackney coachman, when my lord took him.

Brisk. Was he? I am answered, if Jehu was a hackney coachman—You may put that in the marginal notes, though, to prevent criticism—Only, mark it with a small asterism, and say—Jehu was formerly a hackney coachman.

Lady Froth. I will; you'll oblige me extremely to write notes to the whole poem.

Brisk. With all my heart and soul, and proud of the vast honour, let me perish.

Lord Froth. Hee, hee, hee! my dear, have you done?———Won't you join with us? we were laughing at my lady Whifler and Mr Sneer.

Lady Froth.———Ay, my dear———Were you? Oh filthy Mr Sneer! he's a nauseous figure, a most fulsamic fop! foh!——He spent two days together in going about Covent-Garden to suit the lining of his coach with his complexion.

Lord Froth. O silly! yet his aunt is as fond of him as if she had brought the ape into the world herself.

Brisk. Who, my lady Toothless? O, she's a mortifying spectacle! she's always chewing the cud, like an old ewe.

Cyn. Fy, Mr Brisk! eringo is for her cough.

Lady Froth. I have seen her take them, half-chewed, out of her mouth to laugh, and then put them in again—Foh!

Lord Froth. Foh!

Lady Froth. Then she is always ready to laugh when Sneer offers to speak—and sits in expectation of his no jest, with her gums bare, and her mouth open———

Brisk. Like an oyster at low ebb, 'egad—Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Froth. Then, that t'other great strapping lady——I cannot hit of her name; the old fat fool that paints so exorbitantly.

Brisk. I know whom you mean—But deuce take me, I cannot hit of her name neither——Paints, d'ye say? Why, she lays it on with a trowel——Then she has a great beard that bristles through it, and makes her look as if she were plastered with lime and hair, let me perish.

Lady Froth. Oh, you made a song upon her, Mr Brisk.

Brisk. He! 'egad so I did——My lord can sing it. 'Tis not a song neither——It is a sort of an epigram, or rather an epigrammatic sonnet; I don't know what to call it, but it is satire.

LORD FROTH *sings.*

Ancient Phillis has young graces.
'Tis a strange thing, but a true one:
Shall I tell you how?
She herself makes her own faces,
And each morning wears a new one,
Where's the wonder now?

Brisk. Short, but there is salt in it; my way of writing, 'egad.

Enter Footman.

Lady Froth. How now?

Foot. Your Ladyship's chair is come.

Lady Froth. Is nurse and the child in it?

Foot. Yes, Madam. [*Exit.*

Lady Froth. O, the dear creature! let us go see it.

Lord Froth. I swear, my dear, you'll spoil that child with sending it to and again so often; this is the seventh time the chair has gone for her to-day.

Lady Froth. O la! I swear it's but the sixth—and I han't seen her these two hours——The poor dear creature——I swear, my lord, you don't love poor little Sappho,——Come, my dear Cynthia, Mr Brisk, we'll go see Sappho, though my lord won't.

Cyn. I'll wait upon your ladyship.

Brisk. Pray, madam, how old is lady Sappho?

Lady Froth. Three quarters; but I swear she has a world of wit, and can sing a tune already. My lord, won't you go? Won't you? What, not to see Saph? Pray, my lord, come see little Saph. I know you could not stay.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter CARELESS *and* LADY PLYANT.

Lady Ply. I swear, Mr Careless, you are very alluring—and say so many fine things—and nothing is so moving to me as a fine thing. Well I must do you this justice, and declare, in the face of the world, never any body gained so far upon me as yourself; with blushes I must own it, you have shaken, as I may say, the very foundation of my honour—Well, sure, if I escape your importunities, I shall value myself as long as I live, I swear.

Care. And despise me. [*Sighing.*

Lady Ply. The last of any man in the world, by my purity! now you make me swear—O, gratitude forbid, that I should ever be wanting in a respectful acknowledgment of an entire resignation of all my best wishes for the person and parts of so accomplished a person, whose merit challenges much more, I am sure, than my illiterate praises can description!——

Care. [*In a whining tone.*] Ah, heavens, madam! you ruin me with kindness; your charming tongue pursues the victory of your eyes, while, at your feet, your poor adorer dies.

Lady Ply. Ah! very fine.

Care. [*Still whining.*] Ah! why are you so fair, so bewitching fair? O, let me grow to the ground here, and feast upon that hand! O, let me press it to my heart, my trembling heart! the nimble movement shall instruct your pulse, and teach it to alarm desire. Zoons, I am almost at the end of my cant, if she does not yield quickly. [*Aside.*

Lady Ply. O, that is so passionate and fine, I cannot bear it—I am not safe if I stay, and must leave you.

Care. And must you leave me! Rather let me languish out a wretched life, and breathe my soul beneath your feet——I must say the same thing over again, and cannot help it. [*Aside.*

Lady Ply. I swear I am ready to languish, too ——O my honour! Whither is it going? I protest you have given me the palpitation of the heart.

Care. Can you be so cruel?

Lady Ply. O rise! I beseech you, say no more till you rise—Why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported I did not see it—— Well, to shew you how far you have gained upon me, I assure you, if sir Paul should die, of all mankind there is none I would sooner make my second choice.

Care. O Heaven! I cannot outlive this night without your favour——I feel my spirits faint; a general dampness overspreads my face; a cold deadly dew already vents through all my pores, and will to-morrow wash me, for ever, from your sight, and drown me in my tomb.

Lady Ply. O, you have conquered, sweet, melting, moving sir! you have conquered—What heart of marble can refrain to weep, and yield to such sad sayings. [*Cries.*

Care. I thank Heaven, they are the saddest that I ever said—Oh! [*Aside.*

Lady Ply. Oh, I yield myself all up to your uncontroulable embraces!—say, thou dear dying man, when, where, and how?

Care. 'Slife, yonder's sir Paul! but if he were not come, I am so transported, I cannot speak— This note will inform you.

[*Gives her a note. Exit.*

Enter SIR PAUL *and* CYNTHIA.

Sir Paul. Thou art my tender lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt—But endeavour to forget this Mellefont.

Cyn. I would obey you to my power, sir; but if I have not him, I have sworn never to marry.

Sir Paul. Never to marry! Heavens forbid! Must I neither have sons nor grandsons? Must the family of the Plyants be utterly extinct for want of issue male? Oh, impiety! But did you swear? did that sweet creature swear! ha? How durst you swear without my consent, ah? Gadsbud, who am I?

Cyn. Pray don't be angry, sir; when I swore, I had your consent, and therefore I swore.

Sir Paul. Why, then, the revoking my consent does annul, or make of none effect, your oath; so you may unswear it again—The law will allow it.

Cyn. Ay, but my conscience never will.

Sir Paul. Gads-bud, no matter for that; conscience and law never go together; you must not expect that.

Lady Ply. Ay, but sir Paul, I conceive, if she has sworn, do ye mark me, if she has once sworn, it is most unchristian, inhuman, and obscene, that she should break it. I'll make up the match again, because Mr Careless said it would oblige him. [*Aside.*

Sir Paul. Does your ladyship conceive so?— Why, I was of that opinion once, too——Nay, if your ladyship conceives so, I am of that opinion again; but I can neither find my lord nor my lady, to know what they intend.

Lady Ply. I am satisfied that my cousin Mellefont has been much wronged.

Cyn. [*Aside.*] I am amazed to find her of our side, for I am sure she loved him.

Lady Ply. I know my lady Touchwood has no kindness for him; and besides, I have been informed by Mr Careless, that Mellefont had never any thing more than a profound respect— That he has owned himself to be my admirer, it is true; but he was never so presumptuous to entertain any dishonourable notion of

things; so that, if this be made plain—I don't see how my daughter can, in conscience, or honour, or any thing in the world——

Sir Paul. Indeed, if this be made plain, as my lady, your mother says, child——

Lady Ply. Plain! I was informed of it by Mr Careless— And I assure you Mr Careless is a person—that has a most extraordinary respect and honour for you, sir Paul.

Cyn. [*Aside.*] And for your ladyship, too, I believe, or else you had not changed sides so soon; now I begin to find it.

Sir Paul. I am much obliged to Mr Careless, really; he is a person that I have a great value for, not only for that, but because he has a great veneration for your ladyship.

Lady Ply. O la! no, indeed, sir Paul; it is upon your account.

Sir Paul. No, I protest and vow, I have no title to his esteem, but in having the honour to appertain, in some measure, to your ladyship; that's all.

Lady Ply. O la! now, I swear and declare it shall not be so; you are too modest, sir Paul.

Sir Paul. It becomes me, when there is any comparison made between——

Lady Ply. O fy, fy, sir Paul! you will put me out of countenance——Your very obedient and affectionate wife, that's all—And highly honoured in that title.

Sir Paul. Gads-bud, I am transported! Give me leave to kiss your ladyship's hand.

Lady Ply. My lip, indeed, sir Paul, I swear you shall.

[*He kisses her, and bows very low.*

Sir Paul. I humbly thank your ladyship—I don't know whether I fly on ground, or walk in air——Gads-bud, she was never thus before——Well, I must own myself beholden to Mr Careless—As sure as can be, this is all his doing—something that he has said; well, it is a rare thing to have an ingenious friend. Well, your ladyship is of opinion, that the match may go forward

Lady Ply. By all means—Mr Careless has satisfied me of the matter.

Sir Paul. Well, why then, lamb, you may keep your oath; but have a care of making rash vows; come hither to me, and kiss papa.

Lady Ply. I swear and declare, I am in such a twitter to read Mr Careless's letter, that I cannot forbear any longer—But though I may read all letters first by prerogative, yet I will be sure to be unsuspected this time. Sir Paul!

Sir Paul. Did your ladyship call?

Lady Ply. Nay, not to interrupt you, my dear—Only lend me your letter, which you had from your steward to-day: I would look upon the account again, and may be increase the allowance.

Sir Paul. There it is, madam. Do you want a pen and ink? [*Bows and gives the letter.*

Lady Ply. No, no; nothing else, I thank you, sir Paul—So now, I can read my own letter under the cover of his. [*Aside.*

Sir Paul. He! and wilt thou bring me a grandson at nine months end?—He! A brave chopping boy? I will settle a thousand pounds a-year upon the rogue as soon as ever he looks me in the face; I will, gads-bud. I am overjoyed to think I have any of my family that will bring children into the world. For I would fain have some resemblance of myself in my posterity, eh, Thy! heh! Make the young rogue as like me as you can.

Cyn. I am glad to see you so merry, sir.

Sir Paul. Merry! Gads-bud, I am serious! I will give thee five hundred pounds for every inch of him that resembles me. Ah! this eye, this left eye! this has done execution in its time, girl; why, thou hast my leer, hussy, just thy father's leer. Let it be transmitted to the young rogue by the help of imagination—Why, 'tis the mark of our family, Thy; our house is distinguished by a languishing eye, as the house of Austria is by a thick lip. Ah! when I was of your age, hussy, I would have held fifty to one I could have drawn my own picture—Gads-bud, but I could have done—not so much as you neither——but——nay, don't blush——

Cyn. I don't blush, sir, for I vow I don't understand.

Sir Paul. Pshaw, pshaw, you fib, you baggage; you do understand, and you shall understand: Come, don't be so nice; Gads-bud, don't learn after your mother-in-law, my lady here—Marry, Heaven forbid that you should follow her example; that would spoil all indeed. Bless us, if you should take a vagary, and make a rash resolution on your wedding-night, to die a maid, as she did, all were ruined, all my hopes lost—— My heart would break, and my estate would be left to the wide world, eh! I hope you are a better Christian than to think of living a nun, eh! Answer me.

Cyn. I am all obedience, sir, to your commands.

Lady Ply. [*Having read the letter.*] O dear Mr Careless! I swear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charmed me as much as I have charmed him; and so I'll tell him in the wardrobe when 'tis dark. O Crimine! I hope sir Paul has not seen both letters—[*Puts the wrong letter hastily up, and gives him her own.*] Sir Paul, here's your letter, to-morrow morning I'll settle accounts to your advantage.

Enter BRISK.

Brisk. Sir Paul, Gads-bud you are an uncivil person, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

Sir Paul. O la! what's the matter now? I hope you are not angry, Mr Brisk?

Brisk. Deuce take me, I believe you intend to marry your daughter yourself; you are always

brooding over her like an old hen, as if she were not well hatched, 'egad, he! he!

Sir Paul. Good strange! Mr Brisk is such a merry facetious person, he, he, he! No, no, I have done with her; I have done with her now.

Brisk. The fiddles have stayed this hour in the hall, and my lord Froth wants a partner; we can never begin without her.

Sir Paul. Go, go, child; go, get you gone and dance, and be merry; I will come and look at you by and by. Where is my son Mellefont?

Lady Ply. I'll send him to them; I know where he is——

Brisk. Sir Paul, will you send Careless into the hall, if you meet him.

Sir Paul. I will, I will; I'll go and look for him on purpose. [*Exeunt all but* BRISK.

Brisk. So, now, they are all gone, and I have an opportunity to practise——Ah! my dear lady Froth! She's a most engaging creature, if she were not so fond of that damned coxcombly lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him wit, too, to keep in with him——No matter, she's a woman of parts, and 'egad parts will carry her. She said, she would follow me into the gallery—Now, to make my approaches—Hem, hem! Ah, ma—[*Bows*]—dam!—— Pox on't, why should I disparage my parts by thinking what to say; none but dull rogues think: witty men, like rich fellows, are always ready for all expences, while your blockheads, like poor needy scoundrels, are forced to examine their stock, and forecast the charges of the day. Here she comes; I'll seem not to see her, and try to win her with a new airy invention of my own—hem!

Enter LADY FROTH.

[BRISK *sings, walking about.*] I'm sick with love, ha, ha, ha! prithee, come cure me.

I'm sick with, &c.

O ye powers! O my lady Froth, my lady Froth! My lady Froth! Heigho! Break heart; gods, I thank you!

[*Stands musing, with his arms across.*]

Lady Froth. O heavens, Mr Brisk! What's the matter?

Brisk. My lady Froth! Your ladyship's most humble servant——The matter, madam? Nothing, madam; nothing at all, egad. I was fallen into the most agreeable amusement in the whole province of contemplation: That is all——I'll seem to conceal my passion, and that will look like respect.

[*Aside.*

Lady Froth. Bless me! why did you call out upon me so loud?

Brisk. O lord! I, madam! I beseech your ladyship——When?

Lady Froth. Just now, as I came in—bless me! why, don't you know it?

Brisk. Not I, let me perish!——But did I? Strange! I confess your ladyship was in my thoughts; and I was in a sort of dream, that did in a manner represent a very pleasing object to my imagination; but—but did I, indeed?—To see how love and murder will out. But did I really name my lady Froth?

Lady Froth. Three times aloud, as I love letters——But did you talk of love? O Parnassus! Who would have thought Mr Brisk could have been in love? ha, ha, ha! O Heavens! I thought you could have no mistress but the nine muses.

Brisk. No more I have, 'egad, for I adore them all in your ladyship——Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenetic or airy upon it; the deuce take me if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry that your ladyship has made the discovery.

Lady Froth. O, be merry, by all means—— Prince Volscius in love! Ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. O, barbarous, to turn me into ridicule! Yet, ha, ha, ha! The deuce take me, I cannot help laughing myself, ha, ha, ha! yet, by Heavens, I have a violent passion for your ladyship, seriously.

Lady Froth. Seriously! Ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Seriously, ha, ha, ha! Gad, I have, for all I laugh.

Lady Froth. Ha, ha, ha! What d'ye think I laugh at? Ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Me, 'egad, ha, ha!

Lady Froth. No; the deuce take me if I don't laugh at myself; for, hang me if I have not a violent passion for Mr Brisk, ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Seriously?

Lady Froth. Seriously, ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. That's well enough, let me perish, ha, ha, ha! O miraculous! what a happy discovery! Ah, my dear charming lady Froth!

Lady Froth. Oh, my adored Mr Brisk!

[*Embrace.*

Enter LORD FROTH.

Lord Froth. The company are all ready—— How now?

Brisk. Zoons, madam, there's my lord.

[*Softly to her.*

Lady Froth. Take no notice; but observe me—Now, cast off, and meet me at the lower end of the room, and then join hands again; I could teach my lord this dance purely; but I vow, Mr Brisk, I can't tell how to come so near any other man. Oh, here's my lord, now you shall see me do it with him.

[*They pretend to practise part of a country dance.*

Lord Froth. ——Oh, I see there's no harm yet——But I don't like this familiarity. [*Aside.*

Lady Froth. Shall you and I do our close dance, to shew Mr Brisk?

Lord Froth. No, my dear, do it with him.

Lady Froth. I'll do it with him, my lord, when you are out of the way.

Brisk. That's good, 'egad, that's good; deuce take me, I can hardly hold laughing in his face. [*Aside.*

Lord Froth. Any other time, my dear, or we'll dance it below.

Lady Froth. With all my heart.

Brisk. Come, my lord, I'll wait on you—My charming witty angel! [*To her.*

Lady Froth. We shall have whispering time enough, you know, since we are partners. [*Exeunt.*

Enter LADY PLYANT *and* CARELESS.

Lady Ply. O Mr Careless, Mr Careless! I'm ruined, I'm undone!

Care. What's the matter, madam?

Lady Ply. O, the unluckiest accident! I'm afraid I shan't live to tell it you.

Care. Heaven forbid! What is it?

Lady Ply. I'm in such a fright; the strangest quandary and premunire! I'm all over in an universal agitation! I dare swear, every circumstance of me trembles.——Oh, your letter, your letter! By an unfortunate mistake, I have given sir Paul your letter instead of his own.

Care. That was unlucky.

Lady Ply. O, yonder he comes reading of it! for Heaven's sake step in here, and advise me quickly, before he sees. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SIR PAUL, *with the letter.*

Sir Paul. O Providence, what a conspiracy have I discovered!—But let me see to make an end on't——[*Reads.*] Hum——'After supper, in the 'wardrobe, by the gallery. If sir Paul should 'surprize us, I have a commission from him to 'treat with you about the very matter of fact.'—Matter of fact! Very pretty; it seems, then, I am conducing to my cuckoldom; why, this is a very traiterous position of taking up arms by my authority against my person! Well, let me see—'Till then, I languish in expectation of my ador-'ed charmer. *Dying* NED CARELESS.' Gads-bud, would that were matter of fact, too! Die and be damned, for a Judas Maccabeus and Iscariot both! O friendship, what art thou but a name! Henceforward, let no man make a friend that would not be a cuckold: for, whomsoever he receives into his bosom, will find the way to his bed, and there return his caresses, with interest, to his wife. Have I approached the marriage-bed with reverence, as to a sacred shrine, and must I now find it polluted by foreign iniquity? O my lady Plyant, you were chaste as ice; but you are melted now, and false as water.——But Providence has been constant to me in discovering this conspiracy; still I am beholden to Providence; if it were not for Providence, sure, poor sir Paul, thy heart would break.

Enter LADY PLYANT.

Lady Ply. So, sir, I see you have read the letter—Well, sir Paul, what do you think of your friend Careless? Has he been treacherous, or did you give his insolence a licence to make trial of your wife's suspected virtue? D'ye see here?—[*Snatches the letter as in anger.*] Look, read it! Gad's my life, if I thought it were so, I would this moment renounce all communication with you. Ungrateful monster! Ha? Is it so? Ay, I see it, a plot upon my honour; your guilty cheeks confess it: Oh, where shall wronged virtue fly for reparation! I'll be divorced this instant.

Sir Paul. Gads-bud, what shall I say? This is the strangest surprize! Why, I don't know any thing at all; nor I don't know whether there be any thing at all in the world, or no.

Lady Ply. I thought I should try you, false man. I, that never dissembled in my life; yet, to make trial of you, pretended to like that monster of iniquity, Careless, and found out that contrivance, to let you see this letter; which, now, I find, was of your own inditing—I do, heathen, I do; see my face no more; I'll be divorced presently.

Sir Paul. O strange, what will become of me! I am so amazed, and so overjoyed, so afraid, and so sorry.—But, did you give me this letter on purpose, eh? Did you?

Lady Ply. Did I? Do you doubt me, Turk, Saracen? I have a cousin that's a proctor in the Commons, I'll go to him instantly———

Sir Paul. Hold, stay, I beseech your ladyship—I am so overjoyed, stay, I'll confess all.

Lady Ply. What, will you confess, Jew?

Sir Paul. Why, now, as I hope to be saved, I had no hand in this letter—Nay, hear me, I beseech your ladyship: The devil take me, now, if he did not go beyond my commission——If I desired him to do any more than speak a good word, only just for me—Gads-bud, only for poor sir Paul—I am an Anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

Lady Ply. Why, is not here matter of fact?

Sir Paul. Ay, but, by your own virtue and continency, the matter of fact is all his own doing. I confess, I had a great desire to have some honours conferred upon me, which lie all in your ladyship's breast, and he being a well-spoken man, I desired him to intercede for me.——

Lady Ply. Did you so? Presumption! [*Exit.*

Enter CARELESS.

Care. Sir Paul, I am glad I have met with you; 'egad, I have said all I could, but cannot prevail—Then, my friendship to you has carried me a little further in this matter———

Sir Paul. Indeed——Well, sir—I'll dissemble with him a little. [*Aside.*

Care. Why, faith, I have, in my time, known honest gentlemen abused by a pretended coyness in their wives, and I had a mind to try my lady's virtue—And, when I could not prevail for you, 'egad, I pretended to be in love myself—but all

in vain, she would not hear a word upon that subject; then, I writ a letter to her; I don't know what effects that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you, when I do; though, by this light, I believe her virtue is impregnable.

Sir Paul. O Providence! Providence! What discoveries are here made! Why, this is better, and more miraculous than the rest.

Care. What do you mean?

Sir Paul. I cannot tell you, I am so overjoyed; come along with me to my lady; I cannot contain myself; come, my dear friend.

Care. So, so, so, this difficulty's over. [*Aside.*

[*Exeunt.*

Enter MELLEFONT *and* MASKWELL, *from different doors.*

Mel. Maskwell, I have been looking for you—It is within a quarter of eight.

Mask. My lady is just gone into my lord's closet; you had best steal into her chamber before she comes, and lie concealed there; otherwise, she may lock the door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprize us.

Mel. Ha? You say true.

Mask. You had best make haste; for, after she has made some apology to the company for her own and my lord's absence all this while, she'll retire to her chamber instantly.

Mel. I go this moment: Now, Fortune, I defy thee. [*Exit.*

Mask. I confess, you may be allowed to be secure in your own opinion; the appearance is very fair; but I have an after-game to play, that shall turn the tables; and here comes the man that I must manage.

Enter LORD TOUCHWOOD.

Lord Touch. Maskwell, you are the man I wished to meet.

Mask. I am happy to be in the way of your lordship's commands.

Lord Touch. I have always found you prudent and careful in any thing, that has concerned me or my family.

Mask. I were a villain else—I am bound by duty and gratitude, and my own inclination, to be ever your lordship's servant.

Lord Touch. Enough——You are my friend; I know it: Yet there has been a thing in your knowledge, which has concerned me nearly, that you have concealed from me.

Mask. My lord!

Lord Touch. Nay, I excuse your friendship to my unnatural nephew thus far——But, I know, you have been privy to his impious designs upon my wife. This evening, she has told me all: her good-nature concealed it as long as was possible; but, he perseveres so in villainy, that she has told me even you were weary of dissuading him, though you have once actually hindered him from forcing her.

Mask. I am sorry, my lord, I cannot make you an answer; this is an occasion, in which I would not willingly be silent.

Lord Touch. I know you would excuse him—And I know as well that you cannot.

Mask. Indeed, I was in hopes it had been but a youthful heat, that might have soon boiled over; but——

Lord Touch. Say on.

Mask. I have nothing more to say, my lord—but to express my concern; for I think his frenzy increases daily.

Lord Touch. How! give me but proof of it, ocular proof, that I may justify my dealing with him to the world, and share my fortunes.

Mask. O, my lord! consider that is hard: besides, time may work upon him: then, for me to do it! I have professed an everlasting friendship to him.

Lord Touch. He is your friend, and what am I?

Mask. I am answered.

Lord Touch. Fear not his displeasure; I will put you out of his and Fortune's power; and for that thou art scrupulously honest, I will secure thy fidelity to him, and give my honour never to own any discovery that you shall make me. Can you give me a demonstrative proof? Speak.

Mask. I wish I could not——To be plain, my lord, I intended this evening to have tried all arguments to dissuade him from a design, which I suspect; and, if I had not succeeded, to have informed your lordship of what I knew.

Lord Touch. I thank you. What is the villain's purpose?

Mask. He has owned nothing to me of late, and, what I mean now, is only a bare suspicion of my own. If your lordship will meet me a quarter of an hour hence, there, in that lobby, by my lady's bed-chamber, I shall be able to tell you more.

Lord Touch. I will.

Mask. My duty to your lordship makes me do a severe piece of justice.

Lord Touch. I will be secret, and reward your honesty beyond your hopes. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *opening, shews* LADY TOUCHWOOD'S *chamber.*

MELLEFONT *solus.*

Mel. Pray Heaven my aunt keep touch with her assignation.——Oh, that her lord were but sweating behind this hanging, with the expectation of what I shall see—Hist, she comes——Little does she think what a mine is just ready to spring under her feet. But, to my post.

[*Goes behind the hangings.*

Enter LADY TOUCHWOOD.

Lady Touch. 'Tis eight o'clock: methinks, I should have found him here—Who does not prevent the hour of love, outstays the time; for, to

be duly punctual, is too slow.—I was accusing you of neglect.

Enter MASKWELL.—MELLEFONT *absconding.*

Mask. I confess, you do reproach me, when I see you here before me; but, 'tis fit I should be still behind-hand, still to be more and more indebted to your goodness.

Lady Touch. You can excuse a fault too well, not to have been to blame——A ready answer shews you were prepared.

Mask. Guilt is ever at a loss, and confusion waits upon it; when innocence and bold truth are always ready for expression———

Lady Touch. Not in love; words are the weak support of cold indifference; love has no language to be heard.

Mask. Excess of joy has made me stupid! Thus, may my lips be ever closed. [*Kisses her.*] And thus—Oh, who would not lose his speech upon condition to have joys above it!

Lady Touch. Hold, let me lock the door first. [*Goes to the door.*

Mask. [*Aside.*] That I believed; 'twas well I left the private passage open.

Lady Touch. So, that's safe.

Mask. And so may all your pleasures be, and secret as this kiss———

Mel. And may all treachery be thus discovered! [*Leaps out.*

Lady Touch. Ah! [*Shrieks.*

Mel. Villain! [*Offers to draw.*

Mask. Nay, then, there's but one way. [*Runs out.*

Mel. Say you so? were you provided for an escape? Hold, madam, you have no more holes to your burrow; I stand between you and this sally-port.

Lady Touch. Thunder strike thee dead for this deceit, immediate lightning blast thee, me, and the whole world!——Oh! I could rack myself, play the vulture to my own heart, and gnaw it, piece-meal, for not boding to me this misfortune.

Mel. Be patient———

Lady Touch. Be damned.

Mel. Consider, I have you on the hook; you will but flounder yourself a weary, and be, nevertheless, my prisoner.

Lady Touch. I'll hold my breath and die, but I'll be free.

Mel. O madam, have a care of dying unprepared; I doubt that you have some unrepented sins that may hang heavy, and retard your flight.

Lady Touch. Oh! what shall I do? say? Whither shall I turn? Has hell no remedy?

Mel. None. Hell has served you even as Heaven has done, left you to yourself.—You are in a kind of Erasmus paradise; yet, if you please, you may make it a purgatory; and, with a little penance and my absolution, all this may turn to a good account.

Lady Touch. [*Aside.*] Hold in my passion, and fall, fall a little, thou swelling heart; let me have some intermission of this rage, and one minute's coolness to dissemble. [*She weeps.*

Mel. You have been to blame—I like those tears, and hope they are of the purest kind—penitential tears.

Lady Touch. Oh, the scene was shifted quick before me—I had not time to think—I was surprised to see a monster in the glass, and now I find 'tis myself: can you have mercy to forgive the faults I have imagined, but never put in practice? Oh, consider, consider how fatal you have been to me, you have already killed the quiet of this life. The love of you was the first wandering fire that e'er misled my steps, and while I had only that in view, I was betrayed into unthought-of ways of ruin.

Mel. May I believe this true?

Lady Touch. Oh, be not cruelly incredulous! How can you doubt these streaming eyes? Keep the severest eye over all my future conduct, and, if I once relapse, let me not hope forgiveness! 'twill ever be in your power to ruin me—my lord shall sign to your desires; I will myself create your happiness, and Cynthia shall be this night your bride—do but conceal my failings, and forgive.

Mel. Upon such terms, I will be ever yours in every honest way.

MASKWELL *softly introduces* LORD TOUCHWOOD, *and retires.*

Mask. I have kept my word; he is here, but I must not be seen.

Lord Touch. Hell and amazement! She is in tears!

Lady Touch. [*Kneeling.*] Eternal blessings thank you—Ha! my lord listening! Oh, fortune has o'erpaid me all, all! all's my own! [*Aside.*

Mel. Nay, I beseech you, rise.

Lady Touch. [*Aloud.*] Never, never! I'll grow to the ground, be buried quick beneath it, ere I'll be consenting to so damned a sin as incest! unnatural incest!

Mel. Ha!

Lady Touch. Oh, cruel man, will you not let me go! I'll forgive all that's past—O Heaven, you will not ravish me!

Mel. Damnation!

Lord Touch. Monster! dog! your life shall answer this———

[*Draws, and runs at* MELLEFONT; *is held by* LADY TOUCHWOOD.

Lady Touch. O Heavens, my lord! hold, hold, for Heaven's sake!

Mel. Confusion, my uncle! Oh, the damned sorceress!

Lady Touch. Moderate your rage, good my lord! He's mad, alas, he's mad—indeed he is, my lord, and knows not what he does—see how wild he looks!

Mel. By Heaven, 'twere senseless not to be mad, and see such witchcraft.

Lady Touch. My lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

Lord Touch. Hence from my sight, thou living infamy to my name! when next I see that face, I'll write villain in it with my sword's point.

Mel. Now, by my soul, I will not go, till I have made known my wrongs—nay, till I have made known yours, which (if possible) are greater—though she has all the host of hell her servants!

Lady Touch. Alas, he raves! For Heaven's sake, away, my lord! he'll either tempt you to extravagance, or commit some himself.

Mel. Death and furies! will you not hear me? why, by Heaven, she laughs, grins, points to your back; she forks out cuckoldom with her fingers, and you are running horn-mad after your fortune.

[*As she is going, she turns back and smiles at him.*

Lord Touch. I fear he's mad, indeed——let's send Maskwell to him.

[*Exeunt* LORD *and* LADY TOUCHWOOD.

Mel. Send him to her. Oh, I could curse my stars, fate, and chance; all causes and accidents of fortune in this life! but to what purpose? They talk of sending Maskwell to me; I never had more need of him—but what can he do? imagination cannot form a fairer and more plausible design, than this of his, which has miscarried—O my precious aunt! I shall never thrive without I deal with the devil, or another woman. Women, like flames, have a destroying power,
Ne'er to be quenched, till they themselves devour. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter LADY TOUCHWOOD *and* MASKWELL.

Lady Touch. WAS it not lucky?

Mask. Lucky! fortune is your own, and 'tis her interest so to be; by Heaven, I believe you can controul her power, and she fears it; though chance brought my lord, 'twas your own art that turned it to advantage.

Lady Touch. 'Tis true, it might have been my ruin—but yonder's my lord; I believe he is coming to find you; I'll not be seen.

[*Exit.*

Mask. So; I durst not own my introducing my lord, though it succeeded well for her, for she would have suspected a design, which I should have been puzzled to excuse. My lord is thoughtful—I'll be so, too; yet he shall know my thoughts; or think he does——

Enter LORD TOUCHWOOD.

What have I done?

Lord Touch. Talking to himself!

Mask. 'Twas honest, and shall I be rewarded for it? No, 'twas honest, therefore I shall not: nay, rather, therefore, I ought not; for it rewards itself.

Lord Touch. Unequalled virtue! [*Aside.*

Mask. But should it be known! then I have lost a friend! He was an ill man, and I have gained; for half myself I lent him, and that I have recalled; so, I have served myself, and, what is yet better, I have served a worthy lord, to whom I owe myself.

Lord Touch. Excellent man! [*Aside.*

Mask. Yet I am wretched—Oh, there is a secret burns within this breast, which, should it once blaze forth, would ruin all, consume my honest character, and brand me with the name of villain.

Lord Touch. Ha!

Mask. Why do I love! Yet Heaven, and my waking conscience, are my witnesses, I never gave one working thought a vent, which might discover that I loved, nor ever must; no, let it prey upon my heart; for I would rather die than seem once, barely seem, once dishonest: Oh, should it once be known I love fair Cynthia, all this, that I have done, would look like rival's malice, false friendship to my lord, and base self-interest. Let me perish first, and from this hour avoid all sight and speech, and, if I can, all thought of that pernicious beauty. Ha! but what is my distraction doing? I am wildly talking to myself, and some ill chance might have directed malicious ears this way.

[*Seems to start, seeing my lord.*

Lord Touch. Start not—let guilty and dishonest souls start at the revolution of their thoughts, but be thou fixed, as is thy virtue.

Mask. I am confounded, and beg your lordship's pardon for those free discourses which I have had with myself.

Lord Touch. Come, I beg your pardon that I overheard you, and yet it shall not need—honest Maskwell! thy, and my good genius, led me hither—mine, in that I have discovered so much manly virtue; thine, in that thou shalt have due reward of all thy worth. Give me thy hand—my nephew is the alone remaining branch of all our ancient family; him I thus blow away, and constitute thee, in his room, to be my heir—

Mask. Now, Heaven forbid—

Lord Touch. No more—I have resolved—the writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be signed, and have his name inserted—yours will fill the blank as well—I will have no reply—let me command this time, for 'tis the last in which I will assume authority—hereafter, you shall rule where I have power.

Mask. I humbly would petition———

Lord Touch. Is it for yourself! [MASKWELL *pauses.*] I'll hear of nought for any body else.

Mask. Then witness, Heaven, for me, this wealth and honour was not of my seeking, nor would I build my fortune on another's ruin: I had but one desire———

Lord Touch. Thou shalt enjoy it. If all I am worth in wealth or interest can purchase Cynthia, she is thine. I am sure sir Paul's consent will follow fortune; I will quickly shew him which way that is going.

Mask. You oppress me with bounty; my gratitude is weak, and shrinks beneath the weight, and cannot rise to thank you—what, enjoy my love! forgive the transports of a blessing so unexpected, so unhoped for, so unthought of!

Lord Touch. I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee. [*Exit.*

Mask. This is prosperous indeed! why, let him find me out a villain, settled in possession of a fair estate, and full fruition of my love; I'll bear the railings of a losing gamester—but should he find me out before! 'tis dangerous to delay—let me think—should my lord proceed to treat openly of my marriage with Cynthia, all must be discovered, and Mellefont can be no longer blinded. It must not be; nay, should my lady know it—aye, then were fine work indeed! her fury would spare nothing, though she involved herself in ruin. No, it must be by stratagem—I must deceive Mellefont once more, and get my lord to consent to my private management. He comes opportunely—now will I, in my old way, discover the whole, real truth of the matter to him, that he may not suspect one word on't.

No mask like open truth to cover lies,
As to go naked is the best disguise.

Enter MELLEFONT.

Mel. Oh, Maskwell, what hopes? I am confounded in a maze of thoughts, each leading into another, and all ending in perplexity. My uncle will not see, nor hear me.

Mask. No matter, sir; don't trouble your head; all is in my power.

Mel. How, for Heaven's sake?

Mask. Little do you think, that your aunt has kept her word—how the devil she wrought my lord into this dotage, I know not; but he is gone to sir Paul about my marriage with Cynthia, and has appointed me his heir.

Mel. The devil he has! What's to be done?

Mask. I have it, it must be by stratagem; for it is in vain to make application to him. I think I have that in my head, which cannot fail.—Where is Cynthia?

Mel. In the garden.

Mask. Let us go and consult her: my life for yours, I cheat my lord.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter LORD *and* LADY TOUCHWOOD.

Lady Touch. Maskwell your heir, and marry Cynthia!

Lord Touch. I cannot do too much for so much merit.

Lady Touch. But this is a thing of too great moment to be so suddenly resolved. Why Cynthia? Why must he be married? Is there not reward enough in raising his low fortune, but he must mix his blood with mine, and wed my niece? How know you, that my brother will consent, or she? nay, he himself, perhaps, may have affections otherwhere.

Lord Touch. No, I am convinced he loves her.

Lady Touch. Maskwell love Cynthia! impossible!

Lord Touch. I tell you, he confessed it to me.

Lady Touch. Confusion! How is this! [*Aside.*

Lord Touch. His humility long stifled his passion; and his love of Mellefont would have made him still conceal it: but, by encouragement, I wrung the secret from him, and know he is no way to be rewarded but in her. I will defer my farther proceedings in it, till you have considered it: but remember how we are both indebted to him. [*Exit.*

Lady Touch. Both indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all—villain! Oh, I am wild with this surprize of treachery: it is impossible; it cannot be—he love Cynthia! What shall I do? How shall I think? I cannot think—all my designs are lost, my love unsated, my revenge unfinished, and fresh cause of fury from unthought-of plagues!

Enter SIR PAUL.

Sir Paul. Madam, sister, my lady sister, did you see my lady, my wife?

Lady Touch. Oh! Torture!

Sir Paul. Gad's-bud, I cannot find her high nor low; where can she be, think you?

Lady Touch. Where she is serving you, as all your sex ought to be served; making you a beast. Don't you know, that you are a fool, brother?

Sir Paul. A fool; he, he, he! you are merry—no, no, not I; I know no such matter.

Lady Touch. Why, then, you don't know half your happiness.

Sir Paul. That's a jest, with all my heart, faith and troth—but hark ye, my lord told me something of a revolution of things; I don't know what to make on't—Gad's-bud, I must consult my wife—he talks of disinheriting his nephew, and I don't know what—look you, sister, I must know what my girl has to trust to; or not a syllable of a wedding, Gad's-bud—to shew you that I am not a fool.

Lady Touch. Hear me: consent to the breaking off this marriage, and the promoting any

other, without consulting me, and I will renounce all blood, all relation and concern with you for ever—nay, I'll be your enemy, and pursue you to destruction; I'll tear your eyes out, and tread you under my feet.

Sir Paul. Why, what's the matter now? Good Lord, what's all this for? Pooh, here's a joke indeed—why, where's my wife?

Lady Touch. With Careless, in the close arbour; he may want you by this time, as much as you want her.

Sir Paul. Oh, if she be with Mr Careless, 'tis well enough.

Lady Touch. Fool, sot, insensible ox! but remember what I said to you, or you had better eat your own horns; by this light, you had.

Sir Paul. You are a passionate woman, Gad's bud—but, to say truth, all our family are choleric; I am the only peaceable person amongst them.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter MELLEFONT, MASKWELL, *and* CYNTHIA.

Mel. I know no other way but this he has proposed; if you have love enough to run the venture.

Cyn. I don't know whether I have love enough—but I find I have obstinacy enough, to pursue whatever I have once resolved; and a true female courage to oppose any thing that resists my will, though it were reason itself.

Mask. That's right—well, I'll secure the writings, and run the hazard along with you.

Cyn. But how can the coach and six horses be got ready without suspicion?

Mask. Leave it to my care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my lord's own order.

Mel. How?

Mask. Why, I intend to tell my lord the whole matter of our contrivance; that's my way.

Mel. I do not understand you.

Mask. Why, I'll tell my lord I laid this plot with you, on purpose to betray you; and that, which put me upon it, was the finding it impossible to gain the lady any other way, but in the hopes of her marrying you.

Mel. So.———

Mask. So, why so, while you are busied in making yourself ready, I'll wheedle her into the coach; and, instead of you, borrow my lord's chaplain, and so run away with her myself.

Mel. Oh, I conceive you, you'll tell him so.

Mask. Tell him so! Aye; why, you don't think I mean to do so?

Mel. No, no; ha, ha! I dare swear thou wilt not.

Mask. Therefore, for our farther security, I would have you disguised like a parson, that if my lord should have curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the coach, but think the cheat is carried on as he would have it.

Mel. Excellent Maskwell! thou wert certainly meant for a statesman or a jesuit—but thou art too honest for the one, and too pious for the other.

Mask. Well, get yourselves ready, and meet me in half an hour, yonder, in my lady's dressing room; go by the back-stairs, and so we may slip down without being observed———I'll send the chaplain to you with his robes; I have made him my own—and ordered him to meet us to-morrow morning at St Alban's; there we will sum up this account to all our satisfactions.

Mel. Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little time we have.

[*Exit* MEL.

Mask. Madam, you will be ready.

Cyn. I will be punctual to the minute.

[*Going.*

Mask. Stay, I have a doubt———Upon second thoughts, we had better meet in the chaplain's chamber here, the corner chamber at this end of the gallery; there is a back way into it, so that you need not come through this door——— and a pair of private stairs leading down to the stables———It will be more convenient.

Cyn. I am guided by you—but Mellefont will mistake.

Mask. No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

Cyn. I will not fail. [*Exit.*

Mask. Why, *qui vult decipi decipiatur.* 'Tis no fault of mine. I have told them in plain terms how easy it is for me to cheat them; and if they will not hear the serpent's hiss, they must be stung into experience and future caution——— Now to prepare my lord to consent to this——— But first I must instruct my little Levite; there is no plot, public or private, that can expect to prosper without one of them has a finger in it; he promised me to be within at this hour—Mr Saygrace, Mr Saygrace!

[*Goes to the chamber door, and knocks.*

[MR SAYGRACE *looking out.*] Sweet sir, I will but pen the last line of an acrostic, and be with you in the twinkling of an ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an *Amen*, or before you can———

Mask. Nay, good Mr Saygrace, do not prolong the time by describing to me the shortness of your stay; rather, if you please, defer the finishing of your wit, and let us talk about our business; it shall be tithes in your way.

Enter SAYGRACE.

Say. You shall prevail; I would break off in the middle of a sermon to do you a pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater——— except———the business in hand———Have you provided a habit for Mellefont?

Say. I have; they are ready in my chamber, together with a clean starched band and cuffs.

Mask. Good: let them be carried to him——— Have you stitched the gown-sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waste time in putting it on?

Say. I have; the gown will not be indued without perplexity.

Mask. Meet me in half an hour, here, in your own chamber. When Cynthia comes, let there be no light; and do not speak, that she may not distinguish you from Mellefont. I'll urge haste to excuse your silence.

Say. You have no more commands?

Mask. None, your text is short.

Say. But pithy, and I will handle it with discretion.

Mask. It will be the first you have so served. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter Lord TOUCHWOOD *and* MASKWELL.

Lord Touch. Sure I was born to be controuled by those I should command: my very slaves will shortly give me rules how I shall govern them.

Mask. I am concerned to see your lordship discomposed———

Lord Touch. Have you seen my wife lately, or disobliged her?

Mask. No, my lord——What can this mean? [*Aside.*

Lord Touch. Then Mellefont has urged somebody to incense her——Something she has heard of you, which carries her beyond the bounds of patience.

Mask. This I feared. [*Aside.*] Did not your lordship tell her of the honours you designed me?

Lord Touch. Yes.

Mask. 'Tis that; you know my lady has a high spirit; she thinks I am unworthy.

Lord Touch. Unworthy! 'Tis an ignorant pride in her to think so——Honesty to me is true nobility. However, 'tis my will it shall be so, and that should be convincing to her as much as reason——By Heaven, I'll not be wife-ridden!—Were it possible, it should be done this night.

Mask. By Heaven! he meets my wishes. [*Aside.*] Few things are impossible to willing minds.

Lord Touch. Instruct me how this may be done; you shall see I want no inclination.

Mask. I had laid a small design for to-morrow (as love will be inventing) which I thought to communicate to your lordship——But it may be as well done to-night.

Lord Touch. Here is company——Come this way, and tell me. [*Exeunt.*

Enter CARELESS *and* CYNTHIA.

Care. Is not that he, now gone out with my lord?

Cyn. Yes.

Care. By Heaven! there's treachery.——The confusion that I saw your father in, my lady Touchwood's passion, with what imperfectly I overheard between my lord and her, confirm me in my fears. Where's Mellefont?

Cyn. Here he comes

Enter MELLEFONT.

———Did Maskwell tell you any thing of the chaplain's chamber?

Mel. No: my dear, will you get ready?—The things are all in my chamber; I want nothing but the habit.

Care. You are betrayed, and Maskwell is the villain I always thought him.

Cyn. When you were gone, he said his mind was changed, and bid me meet him in the chaplain's room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you notice.

Care. There's Saygrace tripping by, with a bundle under his arm—He cannot be ignorant that Maskwell means to use his chamber; let's follow and examine him.

Mel. 'Tis loss of time——I cannot think him false. [*Exeunt* MEL. *and* CARE.

Enter Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Cyn. My lord musing!

Lord Touch. He has a quick invention, if this were suddenly designed——Yet he says he had prepared my chaplain already.

Cyn. How is this! Now I fear, indeed.

Lord Touch. Cynthia here! Alone, fair cousin, and melancholy?

Cyn. Your lordship was thoughtful.

Lord Touch. My thoughts were on serious business, not worth your hearing.

Cyn. Mine were on treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

Lord Touch. Treachery concerning me! Pray, be plain——Hark! What noise!

Mask. [*Within.*] Will you not hear me?

Lady Touch. [*Within.*] No, monster! Traitor! No!

Cyn. My lady and Maskwell! This may be lucky—My lord, let me entreat you to stand behind this screen, and listen; perhaps this chance may give you proof of what you never could have believed from my suspicions.

Enter Lady TOUCHWOOD, *with a dagger, and* MASKWELL: CYNTHIA *and Lord* TOUCHWOOD *abscond, listening.*

Lady Touch. You want but leisure to invent fresh falsehood, and sooth me to a fond belief of all your fictions; but I will stab the lie, that's forming in your heart, and save a sin in pity to your soul.

Mask. Strike then—since you will have it so.

Lady Touch. Ha! a steady villain to the last!

Mask. Come, why do you dally with me thus?

Lady Touch. Thy stubborn temper shocks me, and you knew it would——This is cunning all, and not courage; no, I know thee well——But thou shalt miss thy aim.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Touch. Ha! Do you mock my rage? Then this shall punish your fond, rash attempt! Again smile! [*Goes to strike.*

And such a smile as speaks in ambiguity!
Ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of that various face.
O! that they were written in thy heart,
That I, with this, might lay thee open to my sight!
But then 'twill be too late to know——
Thou hast, thou hast found the only way to turn my rage; too well thou knowest my jealous soul could never bear uncertainty. Speak, then, and tell me——Yet are you silent? Oh, I am wildered in all passions! But thus my anger melts—[*Weeps.*] Here, take this poniard, for my very spirits faint, and I want strength to hold it; thou hast disarmed my soul. [*Gives the dagger.*

Lord Touch. Amazement shakes me—Where will this end?

Mask. So, 'tis well——let your wild fury have a vent, and when you have temper, tell me.

Lady Touch. Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

Mask. [*Aside*] Thanks, my invention: and now I have it for you——First tell me, what urged you to this violence? For your passion broke out in such imperfect terms, that yet I am to learn the cause.

Lady Touch. My lord himself surprised me with the news, you were to marry Cynthia—That you had owned your love to him, and his indulgence would assist you to attain your ends.

Cyn. How, my lord!

Lord Touch. Pray forbear all resentments for awhile, and let us hear the rest.

Mask. I grant you, in appearance all is true; I seemed consenting to my lord; nay, transported with the blessing——But could you think that I, who had been happy in your loved embraces, could e'er be fond of inferior slavery?

Cyn. Nay, good my lord, forbear resentment, let us hear it out.

Lord Touch. Yes, I will contain, though I could burst. [*Aside.*

Mask. I, that had wantoned in the rich circle of your world of love, could be confined within the puny province of a girl? No—Yet, though I dote on each last favour more than all the rest, though I would give a limb for every look you cheaply throw away on any other object of your love; yet so far I prize your pleasures over my own, that all this seeming plot that I have laid, has been to gratify your taste, and cheat the world, to prove a faithful rogue to you.

Lady Touch. If this were true——But how can it be?

Mask. I have so contrived, that Mellefont will presently, in the chaplain's habit, wait for Cynthia in your dressing-room: but I have put the change upon her, that she may be otherwhere employed. Do you procure her night-gown, and, with your hood tied over your face, meet him in her stead; you may go privately by the back-stairs, and, unperceived, there you may propose to reinstate him in his uncle's favour, if he will comply with your desires. His case is desperate, and, I believe, he will yield to any condition——If not, here, take this; you may employ it better than in the heart of one who is nothing, when not yours. [*Gives the dagger.*

Lady Touch. Thou canst deceive every body—Nay, thou hast deceived me; but it is as I would wish——Trusty villain! I could worship thee.

Mask. No more——It wants but a few minutes of the time; and Mellefont's love will carry him there before his hour.

Lady Touch. I go, I fly, incomparable Maskwell! [*Exit.*

Mask. So! this was a pinch indeed; my invention was upon the rack, and made discovery of her last plot: I hope Cynthia and my chaplain will be ready. I will prepare for the expedition. [*Exit.*

CYNTHIA *and* LORD TOUCHWOOD *come forward.*

Cyn. Now, my lord!

Lord Touch. Astonishment binds up my rage! Villainy upon villainy! Heavens, what a long track of dark deceit has this discovered! I am confounded when I look back, and want a clue to guide me through the various mazes of unheard-of treachery. My wife! Damnation! My hell!

Cyn. My lord, have patience, and be sensible how great our happiness is, that this discovery was not made too late.

Lord Touch. I thank you, yet it may be still too late, if we don't presently prevent the execution of their plots——Ha! I'll do it. Where is Mellefont, my poor injured nephew? How shall I make him ample satisfaction?

Cyn. I dare answer for him.

Lord Touch. I do him fresh wrong to question his forgiveness, for I know him to be all goodness——Yet my wife! Damn her!—She'll think to meet him in that dressing-room—Was it not so? And Maskwell will expect you in the chaplain's chamber—For once I'll add my plot too—let us hasten to find out, and inform my nephew; and do you, quickly as you can, bring all the company into this gallery. I'll expose the strumpet and the villain. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter LORD FROTH *and* SIR PAUL.

Lord Froth. By Heavens! I have slept an age—Sir Paul, what o'clock is it? Past eight! On my conscience, my lady's is the most inviting couch, and a slumber there is the prettiest amusement! But where is all the company?

Sir Paul, The company! Gad's bud, I don't know, my lord; but here's the strangest revolution, all turned topsy-turvy, as I hope for Providence.

Lord Froth. O Heavens! What's the matter? Where is my wife?

Sir Paul. All turned topsy-turvy, as sure as a gun.

Lord Froth. How do you mean? My wife!

Sir Paul. The strangest posture of affairs!

Lord Froth. What! my wife?

Sir Paul. No, no, I mean the family. Your lady's affairs may be in a very good posture; I saw her go into the garden with Mr Brisk.

Lord Froth. How? Where, when, what to do?

Sir Paul. I suppose they have been laying their heads together.

Lord Froth. How?

Sir Paul. Nay, only about poetry, I suppose, my lord; making couplets.

Lord Froth. Couplets!

Sir Paul. Oh, here they come.

Enter LADY FROTH *and* BRISK.

Brisk. My lord, your humble servant; sir Paul, yours——The finest night!

Lady Froth. My dear, Mr Brisk and I have been star-gazing I don't know how long.

Sir Paul. Does it not tire your ladyship? Are not you weary with looking up?

Lady Froth. Oh, no! I love it violently——My dear, you are melancholy.

Lord Froth. No, my dear, I am but awake.

Lady Froth. Snuff some of my spirit of harts-horn.

Lord Froth. I have some of my own, thank you, my dear.

Lady Froth. Well, I swear, Mr Brisk, you understand astronomy like an old Egyptian!

Brisk. Not comparably to your ladyship; you are the very Cynthia of the skies, and queen of stars.

Lady Froth. That's because I have no light, but what's by reflection from you, who are the sun.

Brisk. Madam, you have eclipsed me quite, let me perish——I cannot answer that.

Lady Froth. No matter——Harkee, shall you and I make an almanack together?

Brisk. With all my soul——Your ladyship has made me the man in it already, I am so full of the wounds which you have given.

Lady Froth. O, finely taken! I swear now you are even with me; O Parnassus, you have an infinite deal of wit!

Sir Paul. So he has, Gads-bud; and so has your ladyship.

Enter LADY PLYANT, CARELESS, *and* CYNTHIA.

Lady Ply. You tell me most surprising things; bless me, who would ever trust a man? O, my heart aches for fear they should all be deceitful alike.

Care. You need not fear, madam; you have charms to fix inconstancy itself.

Lady Ply. O dear, you make me blush.

Lord Froth. Come, my dear, shall we take leave of my lord and lady?

Cyn. They will wait upon your lordship presently.

Lady Froth. Mr Brisk, my coach shall set you down.

All. What's the matter?

[*A great shriek from the corner of the stage.*

Enter LADY TOUCHWOOD, *and runs out affrighted, my* LORD *after her, like a parson.*

Lady Touch. Oh! I'm betrayed——Save me, help me!

Lord Touch. Now, what evasion, strumpet?

Lady Touch. Stand off, let me go.

Lord Touch. Go, and thy own infamy pursue thee!——You stare as you were all amazed—I do not wonder at it——But too soon you'll know mine, and that woman's shame.

Enter MELLEFONT, *disguised in a parson's habit, and pulling in* MASKWELL.

Mel. Nay, by Heaven! you shall be seen——Careless, your hand—Do you hold down your head? Yes, I am your chaplain; look in the face of your injured friend, thou wonder of all falsehood.

Lord Touch. Are you silent, monster?

Mel. Good Heavens! How I believed and loved this man! Take him hence, for he is a disease to my sight.

Lord Touch. Secure that manifold villain.

[*Servants seize him.*

Care. Miracle of ingratitude!

Brisk. This is all very surprising, let me perish.

Lady Froth. You know I told you Saturn looked a little more angry than usual.

Lord Touch. We'll think of punishment at leisure; but let me hasten to do justice, in rewarding virtue and wronged innocence.——Nephew, I hope I have your pardon, and Cynthia's?

Mel. We are your lordship's creatures.

Lord Touch. And be each other's comfort——Let me join your hands——Mutual love, lasting health, and circling joys, tread round each happy year of your long lives.

Let secret villainy from hence be warned,
Howe'er in private mischiefs are conceived,
Torture and shame attend their open birth:
Like vipers in the womb, base treachery lies
Still gnawing that, whence first it did arise;
No sooner born, but the vile parent dies.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

PROVOKED WIFE.

BY

VANBRUGH.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

CONSTANT, HEARTFREE, } *gentlemen of the town.*
SIR JOHN BRUTE, *a drunken debauchee.*
LORD RAKE, COL. BULLY, } *companions to* SIR JOHN BRUTE.
RAZOR, *valet de chambre to* SIR JOHN BRUTE.
Justice of the peace.
Constable and Watch.

WOMEN.

LADY BRUTE.
BELINDA, *attached to* HEARTFREE.
LADY FANCYFUL.
MADEMOISELLE, *a French waiting-woman.*
CORNET, *servant to* LADY FANCYFUL.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—SIR JOHN BRUTE'S *house.*

Enter SIR JOHN, *solus.*

WHAT cloying meat is love, when matrimony's the sauce to it! Two years marriage has debauched my five senses! Every thing I see, every thing I hear, every thing I feel, every thing I smell, and every thing I taste—methinks has wife in it! No boy was ever so weary of his tutor, or girl of her bib, no nun of doing penance, or old maid of being chaste—as I am of being married. Sure there is a secret curse entailed upon the very name of wife! My lady is a young lady, a fine lady, a witty lady, a virtuous lady—and yet I hate her. There is but one thing on earth I loath beyond her—that's fighting. Would my courage come up to a fourth part of my ill-nature, I would stand buff to her relations, and thrust her out of doors. But marriage has sunk me down to such an ebb of resolution, I dare not draw my sword, though even to get rid of my wife! But here she comes.

Enter LADY BRUTE.

Lady Brute. Do you dine at home to-day, sir John?

Sir John. Why, do you expect I should tell you what I don't know myself?

Lady Brute. I thought there was no harm in asking you.

Sir John. If thinking wrong were an excuse for impertinence, women might be justified in most things they say or do.

Lady Brute. I am sorry I have said any thing to displease you.

Sir John. Sorrow for things past is of as little importance to me, as my dining at home or abroad ought to be to you.

Lady Brute. My enquiry was only that I might have provided what you liked.

Sir John. Six to four you had been in the wrong there again; for what I liked yesterday I don't like to-day; and what I like to-day, 'tis odds I may not like to-morrow.

Lady Brute. But if I had asked you what you liked?

Sir John. Why, then, there would be more asking about it than the thing is worth.

Lady Brute. I wish I did but know how I might please you.

Sir John. Aye, but that sort of knowledge is not a wife's talent.

Lady Brute. Whatever my talent is, I am sure my will has ever been to make you easy.

Sir John. If women were to have their wills, the world would be finely governed.

Lady Brute. What reason have I given you to use me as you do of late? It once was otherwise: You married me for love.

Sir John. And you me for money; So you have your reward, and I have mine.

Lady Brute. What is it, that disturbs you?

Sir John. A parson.

Lady Brute. Why, what has he done to you?

Sir John. He has married me. [*Exit* SIR JOHN.

Lady Brute. The devil's in the fellow, I think. I was told, before I married him, that thus 'twould be: But I thought I had charms enough to govern him; and that, where there was an estate, a woman must needs be happy: So my vanity has deceived me, and my ambition has made me uneasy. But there's some comfort still; if one would be revenged of him, these are good times; a woman may have a gallant, and a separate maintenance too—The surly puppy—yet he's a fool for't: For hitherto he has been no monster: But who knows how far he may provoke me? I never loved him, yet I have been ever true to him; and that, in spite of all the attacks of art and nature upon a poor weak woman's heart, in favour of a tempting lover. Methinks so noble a defence, as I have made, should be rewarded with a better usage—Or who can tell—Perhaps a good part of what I suffer from my husband, may be a judgment upon me for my cruelty to my lover—Lord, with what pleasure could I indulge that thought, were there but a possibility of finding arguments to make it good! And how do I know but there may—Let me see—What opposes!—My matrimonial vow—Why, what did I vow? I think I promised to be true to my husband. Well; and he promised to be kind to me: But he han't kept his word—Why, then I'm absolved from mine. O, but that condition was not expressed—No matter, it was understood. Well, by all I see, if I argue the matter a little longer with myself, I shall not find so many bugbears in the way, as I thought I should. Lord, what fine notions of virtue do we women take up upon the credit of old foolish philosophers! Virtue its own reward, virtue's this, virtue's that—Virtue's an ass, and a gallant's worth forty on't.

Enter BELINDA.

Good-morrow, dear cousin.

Bel. Good-morrow, madam; you look pleased this morning.

Lady Brute. I am so.

Bel. With what, pray?

Lady Brute. With my husband.

Bel. Brown husbands! for yours is a provoking fellow: As he went out just now, I prayed him to tell me what time of day it was; and he asked me if I took him for the church-clock, that was obliged to tell all the parish.

Lady Brute. He has been saying some good obliging things to me too. In short, Belinda, he has used me so barbarously of late, that I could almost resolve to play the downright wife—and cuckold him.

Bel. That would be downright indeed.

Lady Brute. Why, after all, there is more to be said for it than you would imagine, child. He is the first aggressor, not I.

Bel. Ah, but you know, we must return good for evil.

Lady Brute. That may be a mistake in the translation—Prithee be of my opinion, Belinda; for I'm positive I'm in the right; and if you'll keep up the prerogative of a woman, you'll likewise be positive you are in the right, whenever you do any thing you have a mind to. But I shall play the fool and jest on, till I make you begin to think I'm in earnest.

Bel. I shall not take the liberty, madam, to think of any thing, that you desire to keep from me.

Lady Brute. Alas, my dear, I have no secrets. My heart could never yet confine my tongue.

Bel. Your eyes, you mean; for I'm sure I have seen them gadding, when your tongue has been locked up safe enough.

Lady Brute. My eyes gadding! Prithee after whom, child?

Bel. Why, after one, that thinks you hate him, as much as I know you love him.

Lady Brute. Constant, you mean?

Bel. I do so.

Lady Brute. Lord, what should put such a thing into your head?

Bel. That, which puts things into most people's heads; observation.

Lady Brute. Why, what have you observed, in the name of wonder?

Bel. I have observed you blush, when you met him; force yourself away from him; and then be out of humour with every thing about you: In a word, never was a poor creature so spurred on by desire, or so reined in with fear!

Lady Brute. How strong is fancy!

Bel. How weak is woman!

Lady Brute. Prithee, niece, have a better opinion of your aunt's inclination

Bel. Dear aunt, have a better opinion of your nicce's understanding.

Lady Brute. You'll make me angry.

Bel. You'll make me laugh.

Lady Brute. Then you are resolved to persist?

Bel. Positively.

Lady Brute. And all I can say—

Bel. Will signify nothing.

Lady Brute. Though I should swear 'twere false—

Bel. I should think it true.

Lady Brute. Then let us forgive, [*kissing her*] for we have both offended: I, in making a secret, you, in discovering it.

Bel. Good nature may do much: But you have more reason to forgive one, than I have to pardon the other.

Lady Brute. 'Tis true, Belinda, you have given me so many proofs of your friendship, that my reserve has been indeed a crime: But that you may more easily forgive me, remember, child, that, when our nature prompts us to a thing our honour and religion have forbid us, we would (were it possible) conceal, even from the soul itself, the knowledge of the body's weakness.

Bel. Well, I hope, to make your friend amends, you will hide nothing from her for the future, though the body should still grow weaker and weaker.

Lady Brute. No, from this moment, I have no more reserve; and, for a proof of my repentance, I own, Belinda, I am in danger. Merit and wit assault me from without, nature and love solicit me within; my husband's barbarous usage piques me to revenge; and Satan, catching at the fair occasion, throws in my way that vengeance, which, of all vengeance, pleases women best.

Bel. 'Tis well Constant don't know the weakness of the fortification; for, o' my conscience, he'd soon come on to the assault.

Lady Brute. Ay, and I'm afraid carry the town too. But whatever you may have observed, I have dissembled so well as to keep him ignorant. So you see I'm no coquet, Belinda: And, if you follow my advice, you will never be one neither. 'Tis true, coquetry is one of the main ingredients in the natural composition of a woman, and I, as well as others, could be well enough pleased to see a crowd of young fellows ogling, and glancing, and watching all occasions to do forty foolish officious things: Nay, should some of them push on, even to hanging or drowning, Why—Faith—if I should let pure woman alone, I should e'en be but too well pleased with it.

Bel. I'll swear, 'twould tickle me strangely.

Lady Brute. But, after all, 'tis a vicious practice in us, to give the least encouragement, but where we design to come to a conclusion. For it is an unreasonable thing to engage a man in a disease, which we, before-hand, resolve we will never apply a cure to.

Bel. It is true; but then a woman must abandon one of the supreme blessings of her life. For I am fully convinced, no man has half that pleasure in possessing a mistress, as a woman has in jilting a gallant

Lady Brute. The happiest woman, then, on earth must be our neighbour.

Bel. O the impertinent composition! She has vanity and affectation enough to make her a ridiculous original, in spite of all that art and nature ever furnished to any of her sex before her.

Lady Brute. She concludes all men her captives; and whatever course they take, it serves to confirm her in that opinion.

Bel. If they shun her, she thinks it is modesty, and takes it for a proof of their passion.

Lady Brute. And if they are rude to her, it is conduct, and done to prevent town talk.

Bel. When her folly makes them laugh, she thinks they are pierced with her wit.

Lady Brute. And when her impertinence makes them dull, concludes they are jealous of her favours.

Bel. All their actions and their words, she takes for granted, aim at her.

Lady Brute. And pities all other women, because she thinks they envy her.

Bel. Prav, out of pity to ourselves, let us find a better subject; for I am weary of this. Do you think your husband inclined to jealousy?

Lady Brute. O, no; he does not love me well enough for that. Lord, how wrong men's maxims are! They are seldom jealous of their wives, unless they are very fond of them: whereas they ought to consider the women's inclinations, for there depends their fate. Well, men may talk; but they are not so wise as we—that's certain.

Bel. At least in our affairs.

Lady Brute. Nay, I believe we should out-do them in the business of the state too: For, methinks, they do, and undo, and make but bad work on't.

Bel. Why, then, don't we get into the intrigues of government as well as they?

Lady Brute. Because we have intrigues of our own, that make us more sport, child. And so, let's in and consider of them. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A dressing-room.*

Enter LADY FANCYFUL, MADEMOISELLE, *and* CORNET.

Lady Fan. How do I look this morning?

Cor. Your ladyship looks very ill, truly.

Lady Fan. Lard, how ill-natured thou art, Cornet, to tell me so, though the thing should be true. Don't you know, that I have humility enough to be but too easily out of conceit with myself? Hold the glass; I dare swear that will have more manners than you have. Mademoiselle, let me have your opinion too.

Madem. My opinion pe, matam, dat your ladyship never look so well in your life.

Lady Fan. Well, the French are the prettiest obliging people! they say the most acceptable, well-mannered things—and never flatter.

Madem. Your ladyship say great justice inteed.

Lady Fan. Nay, every thing's just in my house but Cornet. The very looking-glass gives her the dementi. But I am almost afraid it flatters me, it makes me look so very engaging.

[*Looking affectedly in the glass.*

Madem. Inteed, matam, your face pe handsomer den all de looking-glass in de world, croyez moy.

Lady Fan. But is it possible my eyes can be so languishing——and so very full of fire!

Madem. Matam, if de glass was burning-glass, I believe your eyes set de fire in de house.

Lady Fan. You may take that night-gown, mademoiselle; get out of the room, Cornet; I can't endure you. This wench, methinks, does look so insufferably ugly.

Madem. Every ting look ugly, matam, dat stand by your latiship.

Lady Fan. No really, mademoiselle; methinks you look mighty pretty.

Madem. Ah matam! de moon have no eclat, ven de sun appear.

Lady Fan. O pretty expression! Have you ever been in love, mademoiselle?

Madem. Ouy, matam. [*sighing.*

Lady Fan. And were you beloved again?

Madem. No, matam. [*sighing.*

Lady Fan. O ye gods! What an unfortunate creature should I be in such a case! But nature has made me nice for my own defence: I'm nice, strangely nice, mademoiselle. I believe, were the merit of whole mankind bestowed upon one single person, I should still think the fellow wanted something to make it worth my while to take notice of him: And yet I could love; nay, fondly love, were it possible to have a thing made on purpose for me: For I'm not cruel, mademoiselle; I'm only nice.

Madem. Ah, matam! I wish I was fine gentleman for your sake. I do all de ting in de world, to get a little way into your heart. I make song, I make verse, I give you de serenade, I give great many present to mademoiselle; I no eat, I no sleep, I be lean, I be mad, I hang myself, I drown myself. Ah, ma chere dame, que je vous aimerois! [*Embracing her.*

Lady Fan. Well, the French have strange obliging ways with them; you may take those two pair of gloves, mademoiselle.

Madem. Me humbly tank my sweet lady.

Enter Servant, with a letter.

Ser. Madam, here's a letter for your ladyship.

Lady Fan. 'Tis thus I am importuned every morning, mademoiselle. Pray, how do the French ladies, when they are thus accablées?

Madem. Matam, dey never complain. Au contraire. When one Frense laty have got a hundred lover——Den she do all she can—— to get a hundred more.

Lady Fan. Well, let me die, I think they have le goût bon. For 'tis an unutterable pleasure to be adored by all the men, and envied by all the women——Yet I'll swear I'm concerned at the torture I give them. Lard, why was I formed to make the whole creation uneasy? But let me read my letter. [*Reads.*

'If you have a mind to hear of your faults, 'instead of being praised for your virtues, take 'the pains to walk in the Green-walk in Saint 'James's Park, with your woman, an hour hence. 'You'll there meet one, who hates you for some 'things, as he could love you for others, and 'therefore is willing to endeavour your reforma-'tion——If you come to the place I mention, 'you'll know who I am: if you don't, you never 'shall: So take your choice.'

This is strangely familiar, mademoiselle; now have I a provoking fancy to know, who this impudent fellow is.

Madem. Den take your scarf and your mask, and go to de rendezvous. De Frense laty do justement comme ça.

Lady Fan. Rendezvous! What, rendezvous with a man, mademoiselle?

Madem. Eh, pourquoy non?

Lady Fan. What, and a man perhaps I never saw in my life!

Madem. Tant mieux: C'est donc quelque chose de nouveau.

Lady Fan. Why, how do I know what designs he may have? He may intend to ravish me, for aught I know.

Madem. Ravish?—Bagatelle. I would fain see one impudent rogue ravish mademoiselle; Oui, je le voudrois!

Lady Fan. O but my reputation, mademoiselle, my reputation; ah, ma chere reputation!

Madem. Matam——Quand on l'a une fois perdue——On n'en est plus embarrassée.

Lady Fan. Fe, mademoiselle, fe! reputation is a jewel.

Madem. Qui coute bien chere, matam.

Lady Fan. Why sure you would not sacrifice your honour to your pleasure?

Madem. Je suis philosophe.

Lady Fan. Bless me, how you talk! Why, what if honour be a burden, mademoiselle, must it not be borne?

Madem. Chaqu'un a sa façon—Quand quelque chose m' incommode moy—je m'en defais, vite.

Lady Fan. Get you gone, you little naughty Frenchwoman you! I vow and swear I must turn you out of doors, if you talk thus.

Madem. Turn me out of doors!—turn yourself out of doors, and go see what de gentleman have to say to you—Tenez. Voilà [*giving her her things hastily.*] votre esharpe, voilà votre coife, voilà votre masque, voilà tout. Hey, Mercure, Coquin: Call one chair for matam, and one oder [*calling within*] for me: Va t'en, vite.

[*Turning to her lady, and helping her on hastily with her things.*]

Allons, matam: depechez vous donc. Mon Dieu, quelles scrupules!

Lady Fan. Well, for once, mademoiselle, I'll follow your advice, out of the intemperate desire I have to know who this ill-bred fellow is. But I have too much delicatesse to make a practice on't.

Madem. Belle chose vrayment que la delicatesse, lors qu'il s'agit de se divertir———à ça—Vous voilà équipée. Partons—Hé bien?—qu'avez vous donc?

Lady Fan. J'ai peur.

Madem. Je n'en point moi.

Lady Fan. I dare not go.

Madem. Demeurex donc.

Lady Fan. Je suis poltrone.

Madem. Tant pis pour vous.

Lady Fan. Curiosity's a wicked devil.

Madem. C'est une charmante sainte.

Lady Fan. It ruined our first parents.

Madem. Elle a bien diverti leurs enfans.

Lady Fan. L'honneur est contre.

Madem. Le plaisir est pour.

Lady Fan. Must I then go?

Madem. Must you go?—Must you eat, must you drink, must you sleep, must you live? De nature bid you do one, de nature bid you do toder. Vous me ferez enrager.

Lady Fan. But reason corrects nature, mademoiselle?

Madem. Elle est donc bien insolente; c'est sa sœur ainée.

Lady Fan. Do you then prefer your nature to your reason, mademoiselle?

Madem. Oui da.

Lady Fan. Pourquoi?

Madem. Because my nature make me merry, my reason make me mad.

Lady Fan. Ah, la méchante Francoise!

Madem. Ah, la belle Angloise!

[*Forcing her lady off.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*St. James's Park.*

Enter LADY FANCYFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE.

Lady Fan. WELL, I vow, mademoiselle, I'm strangely impatient to know who this confident fellow is.

Enter HEARTFREE.

Look, there's Heartfree. But sure it can't be him: he's a professed woman-hater. Yet who knows what my wicked eyes may have done!

Madem. Il nous approche, matam.

Lady Fan. Yes, 'tis he: Now he will be most intolerably cavalier, though he should be in love with me.

Heart. Madam, I'm your humble servant; I perceive you have more humility and good nature than I thought you had.

Lady Fan. What you attribute to humility and good nature, sir, may, perhaps, be only due to curiosity. I had a mind to know who 'twas, had ill manners enough to write that letter.

[*Throwing him his letter.*

Heart. Well, and now I hope you are satisfied.

Lady Fan. I am so, sir: Good-by t'ye.

Heart. Nay, hold there; though you have done your business, I han't done mine: By your ladyship's leave, we must have one moment's prattle together. Have you a mind to be the prettiest woman about town, or not? How she stares upon me! What! this passes for an impertinent question with you now, because you think you are so already.

Lady Fan. Pray, sir, let me ask a question in my turn: By what right do you pretend to examine me?

Heart. By the same right that the strong govern the weak; because I have you in my power; for you cannot get so quickly to your coach, but I shall have time enough to make you hear every thing I have to say to you.

Lady Fan. These are strange liberties you take, Mr Heartfree.

Heart. They are so, madam, but there's no help for it; for know, that I have a design upon you.

Lady Fan. Upon me, sir!

Heart. Yes; and one that will turn to your glory, and my comfort, if you will but be a little wiser than you use to be.

Lady Fan. Very well, sir.

Heart. Let me see—Your vanity, madam, I take to be about some eight degrees higher than any woman's in the town, let t'other be who she will; and my indifference is naturally about the same pitch. Now could you find the way to turn this indifference into fire and flames, methinks your vanity ought to be satisfied; and this, perhaps, you might bring about upon pretty reasonable terms.

Lady Fan. And pray, at what rate would this indifference be bought off, if one should have so depraved an appetite as to desire it?

Heart. Why, madam, to drive a quaker's bargain, and make but one word with you, if I do part with it—you must lay me down—your affectation.

Lady Fan. My affectation, sir!

Heart. Why, I ask you nothing but what you may very well spare.

Lady Fan. You grow rude, sir. Come, mademoiselle, 'tis high time to be gone.

Madem. Allons, allons, allons!

Heart. [*stopping them.*] Nay, you may as well stand still; for hear me you shall, walk which way you please.

Lady Fan. What mean you, sir?

Heart. I mean to tell you, that you are the most ungrateful woman upon earth.

Lady Fan. Ungrateful! To whom?

Heart. To nature.

Lady Fan. Why, what has nature done to me?

Heart. What you have undone by art! It made you handsome; it gave you beauty to a miracle, a shape without a fault, wit enough to make them relish, and so turned you loose to your own discretion, which has made such work with you, that you are become the pity of our sex, and the jest of your own. There is not a feature in your face, but you have found the way to teach it some affected convulsion; your feet, your hands, your very finger ends are directed never to move without some ridiculous air or other; and your language is a suitable trumpet, to draw people's eyes upon the raree show.

Madem. [*aside.*] Est ce qu'on fait l'amour en Angleterre comme ça?

Lady Fan. [*aside.*] Now could I cry for madness, but that I know he'd laugh at me for it!

Heart. Now do you hate me for telling you the truth, but that's because you don't believe 'tis so; for, were you once convinced of that, you'd reform for your own sake.

Lady Fan. Every circumstance of nice breeding must needs appear ridiculous to one, who has so natural an antipathy to good manners.

Heart. But suppose I could find the means to convince you, that the whole world is of my opinion?

Lady Fan. Sir, though you, and all the world you talk of, should be so impertinently officious, as to think to persuade me I don't know how to behave myself; I should still have charity enough for my own understanding, to believe myself in the right, and all you in the wrong.

Madem. Le voilà mort.

[*Exeunt Lady* FANCIFUL, *and* MADEMOISELLE.]

Heart. [*gazing after her.*] There her single clapper has published the sense of the whole sex. Well, this once I have endeavoured to wash the black-moor white, but henceforward I'll sooner undertake to teach sincerity to a courtier, generosity to an usurer, honesty to a lawyer, than discretion to a woman, I see has once set her heart upon playing the fool.

Enter CONSTANT.

'Morrow, Constant.

Con. Good-morrow, Jack: What are you doing here this morning?

Heart. Doing! guess if you can——Why I have been endeavouring to persuade my lady Fanciful, that she's the most foolish woman about town.

Con. A pretty endeavour truly!

Heart. I have told her in as plain English as I could speak, both what the town says of her, and what I think of her. In short, I have used her as an absolute king would do Magna Charta.

Con. And how does she take it?

Heart. As children do pills; bite them, but can't swallow them.

Con. But, prithee, what has put it into your head, of all mankind, to turn reformer?

Heart. Why, one thing was, the morning hung upon my hands, I did not know what to do with myself: and another was, that as little as I care for women, I could not see with patience one, that Heaven had taken such wondrous pains about, be so very industrious to make herself the jack-pudding of the creation.

Con. Well, now could I almost wish to see my cruel mistress make the self-same use of what Heaven has done for her, that so I might be cured of the same disease, that makes me so very uneasy; for love, love is the devil, Heart-free.

Heart. And why do you let the devil govern you?

Con. Because I have more flesh and blood than grace and self-denial. My dear, dear mistress—'sdeath! that so genteel a woman should be a saint, when religion's out of fashion.

Heart. Nay, she's much in the wrong, truly; but who knows how far time and good example may prevail?

Con. O! they have played their parts in vain already: 'Tis now two years since the damned fellow her husband invited me to his wedding; and that was the first time I saw that charming woman, whom I have loved ever since; but she is cold, my friend, still cold as the northern star.

Heart. So are all women by nature, which makes them so willing to be warmed.

Con. O don't profane the sex! prithee think them all angels for her sake; for she's virtuous even to a fault.

Heart. A lover's head is a good accountable thing truly; he adores his mistress for being virtuous, and yet is very angry with her, because she won't be lewd.

Con. Well, the only relief I expect in my misery is to see thee, some day or other, as deeply engaged as myself, which will force me to be merry in the midst of all my misfortunes.

Heart. That day will never come, be assured, Ned. Not but that I can pass a night with a woman. Nay, I can court a woman too, call her nymph, angel, goddess, what you please: But

here's the difference between you and I; I persuade a woman she's an angel, and she persuades you she's one. Prithee, let me tell you how I avoid falling in love; that, which serves me for prevention, may chance to serve you for a cure.

Con. Well, use the ladies moderately, then, and I'll hear you.

Heart. That using them moderately undoes us all; but I'll use them justly, and that you ought to be satisfied with. I always consider a woman, not as the taylor, the shoemaker, the tire-woman, the sempstress, and (which is more than all that) the poet makes her; but I consider her as pure nature has contrived her, and that more strictly than I should have done our old grandmother Eve, had I seen her naked in the garden; for I consider her turned inside out. Her heart well examined, I find there pride, vanity, covetousness, indiscretion; but, above all things, malice: plots eternally forging to destroy one another's reputations, and as honestly to charge the levity of mens' tongues with the scandal; hourly debates how to make poor gentlemen in love with them, with no other intent but to use them like dogs when they have done; a constant desire of doing more mischief, and an everlasting war waged against truth and good-nature.

Con. Very well, sir; an admirable composition, truly!

Heart. Then for her outside, I consider it merely as an outside; she has a thin tiffany covering over just such stuff as you and I are made of. As for her motion, her mien, her airs, and all those tricks, I know they affect you mightily. If you should see your mistress at a coronation, dragging her peacock's train, with all her state and insolence about her, 'twould strike you with all the awful thoughts, that heaven itself could pretend to from you: whereas, I turn the whole matter into a jest, and suppose her strutting in the self-same stately manner, with nothing on but her stays, and her under scanty quilted petticoat.

Con. Hold thy profane tongue; for I'll hear no more.

Heart. What, you'll love on then?

Con. Yes, to eternity.

Heart. Yet you have no hopes at all?

Con. None.

Heart. Nay, the resolution may be discreet enough; perhaps you have found out some new philosophy, that love, like virtue, is its own reward: So you and your mistress will be as well content at a distance, as others that have less learning are in coming together.

Con. No; but if she should prove kind at last, my dear Heartfree! [*Embracing him.*

Heart. Nay, prithee don't take me for your mistress; for lovers are very troublesome.

Con. Well, who knows what time may do?

Heart. And just now he was sure time could do nothing!

Con. Yet not one kind glance in two years, is somewhat strange.

Heart. Not strange at all; she don't like you, that's all the business.

Con. Prithee, don't distract me.

Heart. Nay, you are a good handsome young fellow, she might use you better: Come, will you go see her? perhaps, she may have changed her mind; there's some hopes as long as she's a woman.

Con. O, 'tis in vain to visit her: sometimes, to get a sight of her, I visit that beast her husband, but she certainly finds some pretence to quit the room as soon as I enter.

Heart. It's much she don't tell him you have made love to her, too; for that's another good-natured thing usual amongst women, in which they have several ends. Sometimes 'tis to recommend their virtue, that they may sin with the greater security. Sometimes 'tis to make their husbands fight, in hopes they may be killed, when their affairs require it should be so: but most commonly 'tis to engage two men in a quarrel, that they may have the credit of being fought for; and if the lover's killed in the business, they cry, Poor fellow! he had ill luck—and so they go to cards.

Con. Thy injuries to women are not to be forgiven. Look to it, if ever you fall into their hands—

Heart. They can't use me worse than they do you, that speak well of them. O ho! here comes the knight.

Enter SIR JOHN BRUTE.

Your humble servant, sir John.

Sir John. Servant, sir.

Heart. How does all your family?

Sir John. Pox on my family!

Con. How does your lady? I han't seen her abroad a good while.

Sir John. Do? I don't know how she does, not I; she was well enough yesterday; I han't been at home to-night.

Con. What, were you out of town?

Sir John. Out of town! No, I was drinking.

Con. You are a true Englishman; don't know your own happiness. If I were married to such a woman, I would not be from her a night for all the wine in France.

Sir John. Not from her!—'Oons—what a time should a man have of that!

Heart. Why, there's no division, I hope.

Sir John. No; but there's a conjunction, and that's worse; a pox of the parson—Why the plague don't you two marry! I fancy I look like the devil to you.

Heart. Why, you don't think you have horns, do you?

Sir John. No, I believe my wife's religion will keep her honest.

Heart. And what will make her keep her religion?

Sir John. Persecution; and therefore she shall have it.

Heart. Have a care, knight; women are tender things.

Sir John. And yet, methinks, 'tis a hard matter to break their hearts.

Con. Ay, ay! you have one of the best wives in the world, and yet you seem the most uneasy husband.

Sir John. Best wives!——the woman's well enough; she has no vice, that I know of, but she's a wife, and—damn a wife! if I were married to a hogshead of claret, matrimony would make me hate it.

Heart. Why did you marry then? You were old enough to know your own mind.

Sir John. Why did I marry? I married, because I had a mind to lie with her, and she would not let me.

Heart. Why, did you ravish her?

Sir John. Yes, and so have hedged myself into forty quarrels with her relations, besides buying my pardon: but, more than all that, you must know I was afraid of my soul in those days; for I kept sneaking, cowardly, company; fellows, that went to church, said grace to their meat, and had not the least tincture of quality about them.

Heart. But I think you are got into a better gang now.

Sir John. Zoons, sir, my lord Rake and I are hand and glove: I believe we may get our bones broke together, to-night; have you a mind to share a frolic?

Con. Not I, truly; my talent lies to softer exercises.

Sir John. What, a down-bed and a strumpet? A pox of venery, I say. Will you come and drink with me this afternoon?

Con. I can't drink to-day, but we'll come and sit an hour with you, if you will.

Sir John. Phugh! pox, sit an hour! why can't you drink?

Con. Because I am to see my mistress.

Sir John. Who's that?

Con. Why, do you use to tell?

Sir John. Yes.

Con. So wont I.

Sir John. Why?

Con. Because, 'tis a secret.

Sir John. Would my wife knew it! 'twould be no secret long.

Con. Why, do you think she can't keep a secret?

Sir John. No more than she can keep Lent.

Heart. Prithee, tell it her to try, Constant.

Sir John. No, prithee don't, that I mayn't be plagued with it.

Con. I'll hold you a guinea you don't make her tell it you.

Sir John. I'll hold you a guinea I do.

Con. Which way?

Sir John. Why, I'll beg her not to tell it me.

Heart. Nay, if any thing does it, that will.

Con. But do you think, sir——

Sir John. 'Oons, sir, I think a woman and a secret are the two impertinentest themes in the universe: therefore, pray let's hear no more of my wife, nor your mistress. Damn them both, with all my heart, and every thing else, that daggles a petticoat, except four generous whores, who are drunk with my lord Rake and I, ten times in a fortnight.

[*Exit* SIR JOHN.

Con. Here's a dainty fellow for you! And the veriest coward, too. But his usage of his wife makes me ready to stab the villain.

Heart. Lovers are short-sighted: all their senses run into that of feeling. This proceeding of his is the only thing on earth can make your fortune. If any thing can prevail with her to accept of a gallant, 'tis his ill usage of her. Prithee, take heart, I have great hopes for you: and, since I can't bring you quite off her, I'll endeavour to bring you quite on; for a whining lover is the damned'st companion upon earth.

Con. My dear friend, flatter me a little more with these hopes; for, whilst they prevail, I have Heaven within me, and could melt with joy.

Heart. Pray, no melting yet; let things go farther first. This afternoon, perhaps, we shall make some advance. In the mean while, let's go dine at Locket's, and let hope get you a stomach. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—LADY FANCIFUL'S *house.*

Enter LADY FANCIFUL, *and* MADEMOISELLE.

Lady Fan. Did you ever see any thing so importune, mademoiselle?

Madem. Inteed, matam, to say de trute, he want leetel good-breeding.

Lady Fan. Good-breeding! He wants to be caned, mademoiselle: an insolent fellow! and yet, let me expose my weakness, 'tis the only man on earth I could resolve to dispense my favours on, were he but a fine gentleman. Well! did men but know how deep an impression a fine gentleman makes in a lady's heart, they would reduce all their studies to that of good-breeding alone.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Will your ladyship please to dine yet?

Lady Fan. Yes, let them serve. [*Exit Servant.*] Sure this Heartfree has bewitched me, Mademoiselle. You can't imagine how oddly he mixt himself in my thoughts, during my rapture, even now. I vow 'tis a thousand pities he is not more polished; don't you think so?

Madem. Matam, I tink it so great pity, dat if I was in your ladyship's place, I take him home in my house, I lock him up in my closet, and I never let him go till I teach him every ting dat fine laty expect from fine gentelman.

Lady Fan. Why, truly, I believe I should soon subdue his brutality; for, without doubt, he has a strange *penchant* to grow fond of me, in spite of his aversion to the sex, else he would ne'er have taken so much pains about me. Lord, how proud would some poor creatures be of such a conquest! but I, alas! I don't know how to receive as a favour, what I take to be so infinitely my due. But what shall I do to new-mould him, mademoiselle? for, till then, he is my utter aversion.

Madem. Matam, you must laugh at him in all de place dat you meet him, and turn into de reticule all he say, and all he do.

Lady Fan. Why, truly, satire has ever been of wondrous use to reform ill manners. Besides, 'tis my particular talent to ridicule folks. I can be severe, strangely severe, when I will, mademoiselle. Give me the pen and ink—I find myself whimsical—I'll write to him—or, I'll let it alone, and be severe upon him that way. [*Sitting down to write, rising up again.*] Yet active severity is better than passive. [*Sitting down.*] 'Tis as good to let it alone, too; for every lash I give him, perhaps he'll take for a favour. Yet, 'tis a thousand pities so much satire should be lost. [*Sitting.*] But, if it should have a wrong effect upon him, 'twould distract me.—[*Rising.*] Well, I must write though, after all. [*Sitting.*] Or, I'll let it alone, which is the same thing. [*Rising.*]

Madem. La voilà determinée.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

SIR JOHN, LADY BRUTE, *and* BELINDA *rising from the table.*

Sir John. HERE; take away the things; I expect company. But first bring me a pipe; I'll smoke. [*To a servant.*

Lady Brute. Lord, Sir John, I wonder you won't leave that nasty custom.

Sir John. Prithee, don't be impertinent.

Bel. [*To* LADY BRUTE.] I wonder who those are, he expects this afternoon?

Lady Brute. I would give the world to know: perhaps 'tis Constant; he comes here sometimes; if it does prove him, I am resolved I'll share the visit.

Bel. We'll send for our work, and sit here.

Lady Brute. He'll choak us with his tobacco.

Bel. Nothing will choak us, when we are doing what we have a mind to. Lovewell!

Enter LOVEWELL.

Love. Madam.

Lady Brute. Here; bring my cousin's work and mine hither.

[*Exit* LOVEWELL, *and re-enters with their work.*

Sir John. Why, pox, can't you work somewhere else?

Lady Brute. We shall be careful not to disturb you, sir.

Bel. Your pipe would make you too thoughtful, uncle, if you were left alone; our prittle prattle will cure your spleen.

Sir John. Will it so, Mrs Pert! Now I believe it will so increase it, [*Sitting and smoking.*] I shall take my own house for a paper-mill.

Lady Brute. [*To* BELINDA *aside.*] Don't let's mind him; let him say what he will.

Sir John. A woman's tongue a cure for the spleen! 'Oons—[*Aside.*]—If a man had got the head-ache, they would be for applying the same remedy.

Lady Brute. You have done a great deal, Belinda, since yesterday.

Bel. Yes, I have worked very hard; how do you like it?

Lady Brute. Oh, 'tis the prettiest fringe in the world! Well, cousin, you have the happiest fancy: prithee, advise me about altering my crimson petticoat.

Sir John. A pox o' your petticoat! here's such a prating, a man can't digest his own thoughts for you.

Lady Brute. Don't answer him.—[*Aside.*]—Well, what do you advise me?

Bel. Why, really, I would not alter it at all. Methinks, 'tis very pretty as it is

Lady Brute. Aye, that's true: but, you know, one grows weary of the prettiest things in the world, when one has had them long.

Sir John. Yes, I have taught her that.

Bel. Shall we provoke him a little?

Lady Brute. With all my heart. Belinda, don't you long to be married?

Bel. Why, there are some things in it which I could like well enough.

Lady Brute. What do you think you should dislike?

Bel. My husband, a hundred to one else.

Lady Brute. O ye wicked wretch! sure you don't speak as you think?

Bel. Yes, I do: especially if he smoked tobacco? [*He looks earnestly at them.*

Lady Brute. Why, that many times takes off worse smells.

Bel. Then he must smell very ill indeed.

Lady Brute. So some men will, to keep their wives from coming near them.

Bel. Then those wives should cuckold them at a distance.

[*He rises in a fury, throws his pipe at them, and drives them out. As they run off,* CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE *enter.* LADY BRUTE *runs against* CONSTANT.]

Sir John. 'Oons, get you up stairs, you confederating strumpets, you; or I'll cuckold you with a vengeance!

Lady Brute. O Lord, he'll beat us, he'll beat us! Dear, dear Mr Constant, save us.

[*Exeunt.*

Sir John. I'll cuckold you, with a pox!

Con. Heaven! sir John, what's the matter?

Sir John. Why, these two gentlewomen did but hear me say I expected you here this afternoon; upon which, they presently resolved to take up the room, o' purpose to plague me and my friends.

Con. Was that all? Why, we should have been glad of their company.

Sir John. Then I should have been weary of yours; for I can't relish both together. They found fault with my smoking tobacco, too; and said men stunk. But I have a good mind—to say something.

Con. No, nothing against the ladies, pray.

Sir John. Split the ladies! Come, will you sit down? Give us some wine, fellow. You won't smoke?

Con. No, nor drink neither, at this time; I must ask your pardon.

Sir John. What, this mistress of yours runs in your head! I'll warrant it's some such squeamish minx as my wife, that's grown so dainty of late, she finds fault even with a dirty shirt.

Heart. That a woman may do, and not be very dainty neither.

Sir John. Pox of the women! let's drink.—Come, you shall take one glass, though I send for a box of lozenges to sweeten your mouth after it.

Con. Nay, if one glass will satisfy you, I'll drink it, without putting you to that expence.

Sir John. Why, that's honest. Fill some wine, sirrah: so here's to you, gentlemen—a wife's the devil. To your being both married.

[*They drink.*

Heart. O, your most humble servant, sir.

Sir John. Well, how do you like my wine?

Con. 'Tis very good, indeed.

Heart. 'Tis admirable.

Sir John. Then give us t'other glass.

Con. No, pray excuse us now: we'll come another time, and then we won't spare it.

Sir John. This one glass, and no more. Come, it shall be your mistress's health: and that's a great compliment from me, I assure you.

Con. And 'tis a very obliging one to me: so give us the glasses.

Sir John. So; let her live. [SIR JOHN *coughs in the glass.*]

Heart. And be kind.

Con. What's the matter? does it go the wrong way?

Sir John. If I had love enough to be jealous, I should take this for an ill omen: for I never drank my wife's health in my life, but I puked in the glass.

Con. Oh, she's too virtuous to make any reasonable man jealous.

Sir John. Pox of her virtue! If I could but catch her adulterating, I might be divorced from her by law.

Heart. And so pay her a yearly pension, to be a distinguished cuckold.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, there's my lord Rake, colonel Bully, and some other gentlemen, at the Blue Posts, desire your company.

Sir John. Cod's so, we are to consult about playing the devil to-night.

Heart. Well, we won't hinder business.

Sir John. Methinks, I don't know how to leave you two: but, for once, I must make bold. Or look you; may be the conference may'nt last long: so, if you'll wait here half an hour, or an hour; if I don't come then—why then—I won't come at all.

Heart. [*To* CONSTANT.] A good modest proposition, truly! [*Aside.*

Con. But let's accept on't, however. Who knows what may happen?

Heart. Well, sir, to shew you how fond we are of your company, we'll expect your return as long as we can.

Sir John. Nay, may be I may'nt stay at all; but business, you know, must be done. So, your servant——or, hark you, if you have a mind to take a frisk with us, I have an interest with my lord; I can easily introduce you.

Con. We are much beholden to you; but, for my part, I am engaged another way.

Sir John. What! to your mistress, I'll warrant. Prithee, leave your nasty punk to entertain herself with her own lewd thoughts, and make one with us to-night.

Con. Sir, 'tis business that is to employ me.

Heart. And me; and business must be done, you know.

Sir John. Aye, women's business, though the world were consumed for it.

[*Exit* SIR JOHN.

Con. Farewell, beast; and now, my dear friend, would my mistress be but as complaisant as some men's wives, who think it a piece of good breeding to receive the visits of their husband's friend, in his absence!

Heart. Why, for your sake, I could forgive her, though she should be so complaisant to receive something else in his absence. But what way shall we invent to see her?

Con. Oh, ne'er hope it: invention will prove as vain as wishes.

Enter LADY BRUTE *and* BELINDA.

Heart. What do you think now, friend?

Con. I think I shall swoon.

Heart. I'll speak first, then, whilst you fetch breath.

Lady Brute. We think ourselves obliged, gentlemen, to come and return you thanks for your knight errantry. We were just upon being devoured by the fiery dragon.

Bel. Did not his fumes almost knock you down, gentlemen?

Heart. Truly, ladies, we did undergo some hardships; and should have done more, if some greater heroes than ourselves, hard by, had not diverted him.

Con. Though I am glad of the service you are pleased to say we have done you, yet I am sorry we could do it in no other way, than by making ourselves privy to what you would, perhaps, have kept a secret.

Lady Brute. For sir John's part, I suppose he designed it no secret, since he made so much noise. And, for myself, truly, I am not much concerned, since 'tis fallen only into this gentleman's hands and yours; who, I have many reasons to believe, will neither interpret nor report any thing to my disadvantage.

Con. Your good opinion, madam, was what I feared I never could have merited.

Lady Brute. Your fears were vain then, sir; for I'm just to every body.

Heart. Prithee, Constant, what is't you do to get the ladies' good opinions; for I'm a novice at it?

Bel. Sir, will you give me leave to instruct you?

Heart. Yes, that I will, with all my soul, madam.

Bel. Why, then, you must never be slovenly; never be out of humour, never smoke tobacco, nor drink but when you are dry.

Heart. That's hard.

Con. Nay, if you take his bottle from him, you break his heart, madam.

Bel. Why, is it possible the gentleman can love drinking?

Heart. Only by way of antidote.

Bel. Against what, pray?

Heart. Against love, madam.

Lady Brute Are you afraid of being in love, sir?

Heart. I should, if there were any danger of it.

Lady Brute. Pray, why so?

Heart. Because I always had an aversion to being used like a dog.

Bel. Why, truly, men in love are seldom used better.

Lady Brute. But was you never in love, sir?

Heart. No, I thank Heaven, madam.

Bel. Pray, where got you your learning, then?

Heart. From other people's expence.

Bel. That's being a spunger, sir, which is scarce honest: If you'd buy some experience with your own money, as 'twould be fairlier got, so 'twould stick longer by you.

Enter FOOTMAN.

Foot. Madam, here's my lady Fancyful, to wait upon your ladyship.

Lady Brute. Shield me, kind Heaven! What an inundation of impertinence is here coming upon us!

Enter LADY FANCYFUL, *who runs first to* LADY BRUTE, *then to* BELINDA, *kissing them.*

Lady Fan. My dear lady Brute, and sweet Belinda, methinks, 'tis an age since I saw you!

Lady Brute. Yet 'tis but three days; sure you have passed your time very ill, it seems so long to you.

Lady Fan. Why, really, to confess the truth to you, I am so everlastingly fatigued with the addresses of unfortunate gentlemen, that, were it not for the extravagancy of the example, I should e'en tear out these wicked eyes with my own fingers, to make both myself and mankind easy. What think you on't, Mr Heartfree, for I take you to be my faithful adviser?

Heart. Why, truly, madam——I think——every project, that is for the good of mankind, ought to be encouraged.

Lady Fan. Then I have your consent, sir?

Heart. To do whatever you please, madam.

Lady Fan. You had a much more limited complaisance this morning, sir. Would you believe it, ladies? The gentleman has been so exceeding generous, to tell me of above fifty faults, in less time than it was well possible for me to commit two of them.

Con. Why, truly, madam, my friend there is apt to be something familiar with the ladies.

Lady Fan. He is indeed, sir; but, he's wondrous charitable with it: He has had the goodness to design a reformation, even down to my fingers ends.——'Twas thus, I think, sir, [*Opening her fingers in an awkward manner.*] you'd have them stand———My eyes, too, he did not like: How was't you would have directed them? Thus, I think. [*Staring at him.*]—Then there was something amiss in my gaite, too: I don't know well how 'twas, but, as I take it, he would have me walk like him. Pray, sir, do me the favour to take a turn or two about the room, that the company may see you—He's sullen, ladies, and won't. But, to make short, and give you as true an idea as I can of the matter, I think 'twas much about this figure in general, he would have moulded me to; but I was an obstinate woman,

and could not resolve to make myself mistress of his heart, by growing as awkward as his fancy.

[*She walks awkwardly about, staring and looking ungainly; then changes, on a sudden, to the extremity of her usual affectation.*]

Heart. Just thus women do, when they think we are in love with them, or when they are so with us.

[*Here* CONSTANT *and* LADY BRUTE *talk together apart.*

Lady Fan. 'Twould, however, be less vanity for me to conclude the former, than you the latter, sir.

Heart. Madam, all I shall presume to conclude, is, that, if I were in love, you'd find the means to make me soon weary on't.

Lady Fan. Not by over-fondness, upon my word, sir. But, pray, let's stop here; for you are so much governed by instinct, I know you'll grow brutish at last.

Bel. [*Aside.*] Now am I sure she's fond of him: I'll try to make her jealous. Well, for my part, I should be glad to find some-body would be so free with me, that I might know my faults, and mend them.

Lady Fan. Then, pray let me recommend this gentleman to you: I have known him some time, and will be surety for him, that, upon a very limited encouragement on your side, you shall find an extended impudence on his.

Heart. I thank you, madam, for your recommendation: But hating idleness, I'm unwilling to enter into a place, where I believe there would be nothing to do. I was fond of serving your ladyship, because I knew you'd find me constant employment.

Lady Fan. I told you he'd be rude, Belinda.

Bel. O, a little bluntness is a sign of honesty, which makes me always ready to pardon it. So, sir, if you have no other exceptions to my service, but the fear of being idle in it, you may venture to list yourself: I shall find you work, I warrant you.

Heart. Upon those terms I engage, Madam; and this, with your leave, I take for earnest.

[*Offering to kiss her hand.*

Bel. Hold there, sir; I'm none of your earnest givers. But, if I'm well served, I give good wages, and pay punctually.

[HEARTFREE *and* BELINDA *seem to continue talking familiarly.*

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] I don't like this jesting between them—Methinks the fool begins to look, as if he were in earnest—but then he must be a fool indeed.—Lard, what a difference there is between me and her! [*Looking at* BELINDA *scornfully.*] How I should despise such a thing, if I were a man!—What a nose she has—What a chin—What a neck—Then her eyes—And the worst kissing lips in the universe—No, no, he can never like her, that's positive—Yet I can't suffer them together any longer. Mr Heartfree, do you know, that you and I must have no quarrel for all this? I can't forbear being a little severe now and then: But women, you know, may be allowed any thing.

Heart. Up to a certain age, madam,

Lady Fan. Which I'm not yet past, I hope.

Heart. [*Aside.*] Nor ever will, I dare swear.

Lady Fan. [*To* LADY BRUTE.] Come, madam, will your ladyship be witness to our reconciliation?

Lady Brute. You, agree, then at last?

Heart. [*Slightingly.*] We forgive.

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] That was a cold, ill-natured reply.

Lady Brute. Then there's no challenges sent between you?

Heart. Not from me, I promise. [*Aside to* CONSTANT.] But that's more than I'll do for her; for I know she can as well be damned as forbear writing to me.

Con. That I believe. But I think we had best be going, lest she should suspect something, and be malicious.

Heart. With all my heart.

Con. Ladies, we are your humble servants. I see sir John is quite engaged, 'twould be in vain to expect him. Come, Heartfree. [*Exit* CONSTANT.

Heart. Ladies, your servant. [*To* BELINDA.] I hope, madam, you won't forget our bargain; I'm to say what I please to you.

[*Exit* HEARTFREE.

Bel. Liberty of speech, entire, sir.

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] Very pretty, truly——But how the blockhead went out languishing at her; and not a look toward me—Well, people may talk, but miracles are not ceased. For it is more than natural, such a rude fellow as he, and such a little impertinent as she, should be capable of making a woman of my sphere uneasy. But I can bear her sight no longer——methinks she's grown ten times uglier than Cornet. I must home, and study revenge. [*To* LADY BRUTE.] Madam, your humble servant; I must take my leave.

Lady Brute. What, going already, madam?

Lady Fan. I must beg you'll excuse me this once; for really I have eighteen visits to return this afternoon: So you see I'm importuned by the women as well as the men.

Bel. [*Aside.*] And she's quits with them both.

Lady Fan. [*Going.*] Nay, you shan't go one step out of the room.

Lady Brute. Indeed, I'll wait upon you down.

Lady Fan. No, sweet lady Brute, you know I swoon at ceremony

Lady Brute. Pray give me leave.

Lady Fan. You know I won't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I must.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I will.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I will.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't. Indeed, indeed, indeed, you shan't.

[*Exit* LADY FANCYFUL, *running; they follow.*

Re-enter LADY BRUTE.

Lady Brute. This impertinent woman has put me out of humour for a fortnight——What an agreeable moment has her foolish visit interrupted! Lord, what a pleasure there is in doing what we should not do!

Re-enter CONSTANT.

Ha! here again?

Con. Though the renewing my visit may seem a little irregular, I hope I shall obtain your pardon for it, madam, when you know I only left the room, lest the lady, who was here, should have been as malicious in her remarks, as she is foolish in her conduct.

Lady Brute. He, who has discretion enough to be tender of a woman's reputation, carries a virtue about him, that may atone for a great many faults.

Con. If it has a title to atone for any, its pretensions must needs be strongest, where the crime is love. I therefore hope I shall be forgiven the attempt I have made upon your heart, since my enterprize has been a secret to all the world but yourself.

Lady Brute. Secrecy, indeed, in sins of this kind, is an argument of weight to lessen the punishment; but nothing's a plea, for a pardon entire, without a sincere repentance.

Con. If sincerity in repentance consists in sorrow for offending, no cloister ever inclosed so true a penitent as I should be. But I hope it cannot be reckoned an offence to love, where it is a duty to adore.

Lady Brute. 'Tis an offence, a great one, where it would rob a woman of all she ought to be adored for, her virtue.

Con. Virtue!——Virtue, alas! is no more like the thing that's called so, than 'tis like vice itself.

Lady Brute. If it be a thing of so very little value, why do you so earnestly recommend it to your wives and daughters?

Con. We recommend it to our wives, madam, because we would keep them to ourselves; and to our daughters, because we would dispose of them to others.

Lady Brute. It is, then, of some importance, it seems, since you can't dispose of them without it.

Con. That importance, madam, lies in the humour of the country, not in the nature of the thing. Pray, what does your ladyship think of a powdered coat for deep mourning?

Lady Brute. I think, sir, your sophistry has all the effect, that you can reasonably expect it should have; it puzzles, but don't convince.

Con. I'm sorry for it.

Lady Brute. I'm sorry to hear you say so.

Con. Pray, why?

Lady Brute. Because, if you expected more from it, you have a worse opinion of my understanding than I desire you should have.

Con. [*Aside.*] I comprehend her: She would have me set a value upon her chastity, that I might think myself the more obliged to her, when she makes me a present of it.—[*To her.*] I beg you will believe I did but rally, madam; I know you judge too well of right and wrong, to be deceived by arguments like those. I hope you will have so favourable an opinion of my understanding, too, to believe the thing called virtue has worth enough with me, to pass for an eternal obligation, wherever it is sacrificed.

Lady Brute. It is, I think, so great a one, as nothing can repay.

Con. Yes; the making the man you love your everlasting debtor.

Lady Brute. When debtors once have borrowed all we have to lend, they are very apt to grow shy of their creditor's company.

Con. That, madam, is only when they are forced to borrow of usurers, and not of a generous friend. Let us chuse our creditors, and we are seldom so ungrateful as to shun them.

Lady Brute. What think you of sir John, sir? I was his free choice.

Con. I think he is married, madam.

Lady Brute. Does marriage, then, exclude men from your rule of constancy?

Con. It does. Constancy is a brave, free, haughty, generous agent, that cannot buckle to the chains of wedlock.

Lady Brute. Have you no exceptions to this general rule, as well as to the other?

Con. Yes, I would, after all, be an exception to it myself, if you were free in power and will to make me so.

Lady Brute. Compliments are well placed, where it is impossible to lay hold on them.

Con. I would to Heaven it were possible for you to lay hold on mine, that you might see it is no compliment at all. But since you are already disposed of, beyond redemption, to one who does not know the value of the jewel you have put into his hands, I hope you would not think him greatly wronged, though it should sometimes be looked on by a friend, who knows how to esteem it as he ought.

Lady Brute. If looking on it alone would serve his turn, the wrong, perhaps, might not be very great.

Con. Why, what if he should wear it now and then a day, so he gave good security to bring it home again at night?

Lady Brute. Small security, I fancy, might serve for that. One might venture to take his word.

Con. Then, where's the injury to the owner?

Lady Brute. It is an injury to him, if he think it one. For if happiness be seated in the mind, unhappiness must be so, too.

Con. Here I close with you, madam, and draw my conclusive argument from your own position: If the injury lie in the fancy, there needs nothing but secrecy to prevent the wrong.

Lady Brute. [*Going.*] A surer way to prevent it, is to hear no more arguments in its behalf.

Con. [*Following her.*] But, madam——

Lady Brute. But, sir, it is my turn to be discreet now, and not suffer too long a visit.

Con. [*Catching her hand.*] By Heaven! you shall not stir, till you give me hopes, that I shall see you again at some more convenient time and place.

Lady Brute. I give you just hopes enough—[*Breaking from him.*] to get loose from you; and that's all I can afford you at this time.

[*Exit running.*

Con. Now, by all that's great and good, she is a charming woman! In what ecstacy of joy has she left me! For she gave me hope, did she not say she gave me hope? Hope! Ay; what hope—enough to make me let her go——Why, that's enough, in conscience. Or, no matter how it was spoke—Hope was the word; it came from her, and it was said to me.

Enter HEARTFREE.

Ha, Heartfree! Thou hast done me noble service, in prattling to the young gentlewoman without there: Come to my arms, thou venerable bawd, and let me squeeze thee, [*Embracing him eagerly.*] as a new pair of stays does a fat country girl, when she is carried to court to stand for a maid of honour.

Heart. Why, what the devil is all this rapture for?

Con. Rapture! There is ground for rapture, man; there is hopes, my Heartfree; hopes, my friend!

Heart. Hopes! of what?

Con. Why, hopes that my lady and I together (for it is more than one body's work) should make sir John a cuckold.

Heart. Prithee, what did she say to thee?

Con. Say! What did she not say? She said, that—says she—she said—Zoons, I don't know what she said; but she looked as if she said every thing I'd have her; and so, if thou wilt go to the tavern, I'll treat you with any thing, that gold can buy; I'll give all my silver amongst the drawers, make a bonfire before the door; say the plenipo's have signed the peace, and the bank of England's grown honest. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

LORD RAKE, SIR JOHN, *&c. at a table, drinking.*

All. Huzza!

Lord Rake. Come boys, charge again—So—Confusion to all order! Here's liberty of conscience.

All. Huzza!

Lord Rake. Come, sing the song I made this morning. [*Lord Rake. Rep.*] *And in peace I'll jog on to the devil.* Well, how do you like it, gentlemen?

All. Oh, admirable!

Sir John. I would not give a fig for a song that is not full of sin and impudence.

Lord Rake. Then my muse is to your taste. But drink away; the night steals upon us; we shall want time to be lewd in. Hey, page, sally out, sirrah, and see what's doing in the camp; we'll beat up their quarters presently.

Page. I'll bring your lordship an exact account. [*Exit Page.*

Lord Rake. Now let the spirit of Clary go round. Here's to our forlorn hope. Courage, knight, victory attends you.

Sir John. And laurels shall crown me—Drink away, and be damned.

Lord Rake. Again, boys; t'other glass, and damn morality.

Sir John. [*drunk.*] Ay—damn morality—and damn the watch. And let the constable be married.

All. Huzza!

Re-enter Page.

Lord Rake. How are the the streets inhabited, sirrah?

Page. My lord, 'tis sunday-night, they are full of drunken citizens.

Lord Rake. Along, then, boys! we shall have a feast.

Col. Bully. Along, noble knight.

Sir John. Ay—along, Bully; and he that says sir John Brute is not as drunk, and as religious as the drunkennest citizen of them all—is a liar, and the son of a whore.

Col. Bully. Why, that was bravely spoke, and like a free-born Englishman.

Sir John. What's that to you, sir, whether I am an Englishman or a Frenchman?

Col. Bully. Zoons, you are not angry, sir?

Sir John. Zoons, I am angry, sir—for if I'm a freeborn Englishman, what have you to do, even to talk of my privileges?

Lord Rake. Why, prithee, knight, don't quarrel here; leave private animosities to be decided by day-light; let the night be employed against the public enemy.

Sir John. My lord, I respect you, because you are a man of quality. But I'll make that fellow know I am within a hair's breadth as absolute by my privileges, as the king of France is by his prerogative. He, by his prerogative, takes money, where it is not his due; I, by my privilege, refuse paying it, where I owe it. Liberty and property, and Old England—Huzza!

All. Huzza!

[*Exit* SIR JOHN *reeling, all following him.*

SCENE III.—*A bed-chamber.*

Enter LADY BRUTE *and* BELINDA.

Lady Brute. Sure 'its late, Belinda; I begin to be sleepy.

Bel. Yes, 'tis near twelve. Will you go to bed?

Lady Brute. To bed, my dear! And by that time I am fallen into a sweet sleep, (or perhaps a sweet dream, which is better and better) sir John will come home roaring drunk, and be overjoyed he finds me in a condition to be disturbed.

Bel. O, you need not fear him; he is in for all night. The servants say he is gone to drink with my lord Rake.

Lady Brute. Nay, 'tis not very likely, indeed, such suitable company should part presently. What hogs men turn, Belinda, when they grow weary of women!

Bel. And what owls they are, whilst they are fond of them!

Lady Brute. But that we may forgive well enough, because they are so upon our accounts. But, prithee, one word of poor Constant before we go to bed, if it be but to furnish matter for dreams: I dare swear he is talking of me now, or thinking of me, at least.

Bel. So he ought, I think; for you were pleased to make him a good round advance to-day, madam.

Lady Brute. Why, I have even plagued him enough to satisfy any reasonable woman: He has besieged me these two years to no purpose.

Bel. And if he besieged you two years more, he'd be well enough paid, so he had the plundering of you at last.

Lady Brute. That may be; but I'm afraid the town won't be able to hold out much longer: for, to confess the truth to you, Belinda, the garrison begins to grow mutinous.

Bel. Then the sooner you capitulate, the better.

Lady Brute. Yet, methinks, I would fain stay a little longer, to see you fixed, too, that we might start together, and see who could love longest. What think you, if Heartfree should have a month's mind to you?

Bel. Why, faith, I could almost be in love with him, for despising that foolish, affected lady Fancyful; but I'm afraid he is too cold ever to warm himself by my fire.

Lady Brute. Then he deserves to be froze to death. Would I were a man for your sake, dear rogue! [*Kissing her.*]

Bel. You'd wish yourself a woman for your own, or the men are mistaken. But if I could make a conquest of this son of Bacchus, and rival his bottle, what should I do with him? He has no fortune; I can't marry him; and sure you would not have me—do I don't know what with him.

Lady Brute. Why, if you did, child, it would be but a good friendly part; if it were only to keep me in countenance, whilst I play the fool with Constant.

Bel. Well, if I can't resolve to serve you that way, I may perhaps some other, as much to your satisfaction. But pray, how shall we contrive to see these blades again quickly?

Lady Brute. We must e'en have recourse to the old way; make them an appointment betwixt jest and earnest: it will look like a frolick; and that, you know, is a very good thing to save a woman's blushes.

Bel. You advise well; but where shall it be?

Lady Brute In Spring Garden. But they shan't know their women, till they pull off their masks; for a surprise is the most agreeable thing in the world: And I find myself in a very good humour, ready to do them any good turn I can think on.

Bel. Then, pray write them the necessary billet, without farther delay.

Lady Brute. Let's go into your chamber, then; and whilst you say your prayers, I'll do it, child.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Covent Garden.*

Enter LORD RAKE, SIR JOHN, *&c. with swords drawn.*

Lord Rake. Is the dog dead?

Col. Bully. No, damn him; I heard him wheeze.

Lord Rake. How the witch his wife howled!

Col. Bully. Ay, she'll alarm the watch presently.

Lord Rake. Appear, knight, then; come, you have a good cause to fight for; there's a man murdered.

Sir John. Is there? then let his ghost be satisfied; for I'll sacrifice a constable to it presently, and burn his body upon his wooden chair.

Enter a Tailor, with a bundle under his arm.

Col. Bully. How now? what have we got here? a thief?

Tai. No, an't please you, I'm no thief.

Lord Rake. That we'll see presently: Here, let the general examine him.

Sir John. Ay, ay, let me examine him, and I'll lay a hundred pounds I find him guilty in spite of his teeth; for he looks—like a—sneaking rascal. Come, sirrah, without equivocation or mental reservation, tell me of what opinion you are, and

what calling; for by them—I shall guess at your morals.

Tai. An't please you, I'm a dissenting journeyman tailor.

Sir John. Then, sirrah, you love lying by your religion, and theft by your trade: And so, that your punishments may be suitable to your crimes—I'll have you first gagged—and then hanged.

Tai. Pray, good worthy gentleman, don't abuse me! indeed I'm an honest man, and a good workman, though I say it, that should not say it.

Sir John. No words, sirrah, but attend your fate.

Lord Rake. Let me see what's in that bundle.

Tai. An't please you, it's my lady's short cloak and wrapping gown.

Sir John. What lady, you reptile, you?

Tai. My lady Brute, an't please your honour.

Sir John. My lady Brute! my wife! the robe of my wife——with reverence let me approach it. The dear angel is always taking care of me in danger, and has sent me this suit of armour to protect me in this day of battle—on they go.

All. O brave knight!

Lord Rake. Live Don Quixotte the second!

Sir John. Sancho, my 'squire, help me on with my armour.

Tai. O dear gentlemen! I shall be quite undone if you take the sack.

Sir John. Retire, sirrah! and since you carry off your skin, go home, and be happy. So! how d'ye like my shapes now?

Lord Rake. To a miracle! He looks like a queen of the Amazons—But to your arms, gentlemen! The enemy's upon their march—here's the watch——

Sir John. 'Oons! if it were Alexander the Great, at the head of his army, I would drive him into a horse-pond.

All. Huzza! O brave knight!

Enter Watchmen.

Sir John. See! Here he comes, with all his Greeks about him———

Watch. Hey-day! Who have we got here!—Stand.

Sir John. May-hap not.

Watch. What are you all doing here in the streets at this time o'night? And who are you, madam, that seems to be at the head of this noble crew?

Sir John. Sirrah, I'm Bonduca, queen of the Welchmen; and with a leek as long as my pedigree, I will destroy your Roman legion in an instant—Britons, strike home!

[*Snatches a watchman's staff, strikes at the watch, and falls down, his party drove off.*]

Watch. So! We have got the queen, however. We'll make her pay well for her ransom—Come, madam, will your majesty please to walk before the constable?

Sir John. The constable's a rascal! and you are a son of a whore!

Watch. A most noble reply, truly! If this be her royal style, I'll warrant her maids of honour prattle prettily: But we'll teach you some of our court-dialect, before we part with you, princess—Away with her to the round-house.

Sir John. Hands off, you ruffians! My honour's dearer to me than my life; I hope you won't be uncivil.

Watch. Away with her. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A bed-chamber.*

Enter HEARTFREE.

What the plague ails me?—Love? No, I thank you for that, my heart's rock still——Yes, 'tis Belinda that disturbs me, that's positive——Well, what of all that? Must I love her for being troublesome? At that rate, I might love all the women I meet, 'egad. But hold!——though I don't love her for disturbing me, yet she may disturb me, because I love her——Ay, that may be, faith! I have dreamt of her, that's certain—Well, so I have of my mother; therefore, what's that to the purpose? Ay, but Belinda runs in my mind waking—and so does many a damned thing, that I don't care a farthing for——Methinks, though, I would fain be talking to her, and yet I have no business—Well, am I the first man that has had a mind to do an impertinent thing?

Enter CONSTANT.

Con. How now, Heartfree? What makes you up and dressed so soon? I thought none but lovers quarrelled with their beds; I expected to have found you snoring, as I used to do.

Heart. Why, faith, friend, 'tis the care I have of your affairs, that makes me so thoughtful. I have been studying all night how to bring your matter about with Belinda.

Con. With Belinda!

Heart. With my lady, I mean: And, faith, I have mighty hopes of it. Sure you must be very well satisfied with her behaviour to you yesterday?

Con. So well, that nothing but a lover's fears can make me doubt of success. But what can this sudden change proceed from?

Heart. Why, you saw her husband beat her, did you not?

Con. That's true: A husband is scarce to be borne upon any terms, much less when he fights with his wife. Methinks, she should e'en have cuckolded him upon the very spot, to shew, that after the battle she was master of the field.

Heart. A council of war of women would infallibly have advised her to it. But, I confess, so agreeable a woman as Belinda deserves better usage.

Con. Belinda again!

Heart. My lady, I mean. What a pox makes me blunder so to-day? [*Aside.*] A plague of this treacherous tongue.

Con. Pr'ythee look upon me seriously, Heartfree—Now answer me directly: Is it my lady, or Belinda, employs your careful thoughts thus?

Heart. My lady, or Belinda?

Con. In love, by this light! in love.

Heart. In love!

Con. Nay, ne'er deny it; for thou'lt do it so awkwardly, 'twill but make the jest sit heavier about thee. My dear friend, I give thee much joy.

Heart. Why, pr'ythee, you won't persuade me to it, will you?

Con. That she's mistress of your tongue, that's plain; and I know you are so honest a fellow, your tongue and heart always go together. But how—but how the devil? Pha, ha, ha, ha, ha!—

Heart. Hey-day! Why sure you don't believe it in earnest?

Con. Yes, I do, because I see you deny it in jest.

Heart. Nay, but look you, Ned——a——deny in jest——a ——gadzooks, you know I say —— a—— when a man denys a thing in jest—a ———

Con. Pha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Heart. Nay, then, we shall have it: What, because a man stumbles at a word! Did you never make a blunder?

Con. Yes; for I am in love, I own it.

Heart. Then, so am I——Now laugh till thy soul's glutted with mirth. [*Embracing him.*] But, dear Constant, don't tell the town on't.

Con. Nay, then, 'twere almost pity to laugh at thee, after so honest a confession. But tell us a little, Jack, by what new invented arms has this mighty stroke been given?

Heart. E'en by that unaccountable weapon, called je-ne sçai-quoi: For every thing, that can come within the verge of beauty, I have seen it with indifference.

Con. So, in few words then, the je-ne sçai-quoi has been too hard for the quilted petticoat.

Heart. 'Egad, I think the je-ne sçai-quoi is in the quilted petticoat; at least 'tis certain, I ne'er think on't without—a—a je-ne sçai-quoi in every part about me.

Con. Well, but have all your remedies lost their virtue! Have you turned her inside out yet?

Heart. I dare not so much as think on't.

Con. But don't the two years fatigue I have had, discourage you?

Heart. Yes: I dread what I foresee; yet cannot quit the enterprize. Like some soldiers, whose courage dwells more in their honour than their nature: On they go, though the body trembles at what the soul makes it undertake.

Con. Nay, if you expect your mistress will use you, as your profanations against her sex deserve, you tremble justly. But how do you intend to proceed, friend?

Heart. Thou know'st I'm but a novice; be friendly, and advise me.

Con. Why, look you then; I'd have you—Serenade and a—write a song—Go to church; look like a fool—be very officious: Ogle, write and lead out: And who knows, but in a year or two's time, you may be—called a troublesome puppy, and sent about your business.

Heart. That's hard.

Con. Yet thus it oft falls out with lovers, sir.

Heart. Pox on me for making one of the number!

Con. Have a care; say no saucy things; 'twill but augment your crime; and if your mistress hears on't, increase your punishment.

Heart. Pr'ythee say something then to encourage me; you know I helped you in your distress.

Con. Why, then, to encourage you to perseverance, that you may be thoroughly ill used for your offences, I'll put you in mind, that even the coyest ladies of them all are made up of desires, as well as we; and though they do hold out a long time, they will capitulate at last. For that thundering engineer, Nature, does make such havoc in the town, they must surrender at the long-run, or perish in their own flames.

Enter FOOTMAN.

Foot. Sir, there's a porter without, with a letter; he desires to give it into your own hands.

Con. Call him in.

Enter PORTER.

What, Joe! Is it thee?

Por. An't please you, sir, I was ordered to deliver this into your own hands, by two well-shaped ladies at the New Exchange. I was at your honour's lodgings, and your servants sent me hither.

Con. 'Tis well; are you to carry any answer?

Por. No, my noble master!

Con. Very well; there. [*Gives him money.*

Por. God bless your honour! [*Exit* PORTER.

Con. Now let's see what honest, trusty Joe has brought us. [*Reads.*

'If you and your play-fellow can spare time 'from your business and devotions, don't fail to 'be at Spring Garden about eight in the evening. 'You'll find nothing there but women, so you 'need bring no other arms than what you usually 'carry about you.'

So, play-fellow: here's something to stay your stomach, till your mistress's dish is ready for you.

Heart. Some of our old battered acquaintance; I won't go, not I.

Con. Nay, that you can't avoid; there's honour in the case; 'tis a challenge, and I want a second

Heart. I doubt I shall be but a very useless one to you: for I'm so disheartened by this wound Belinda has given me, I don't think I shall have courage enough to draw my sword.

Con. O, if that be all, come along; I'll warrant you find sword enough for such enemies as we have to deal withal. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A street.*

Enter CONSTABLE *and* WATCHMEN, *with* SIR JOHN.

Const. Come, forsooth, come along, if you please! I once, in compassion, thought to have seen you safe home this morning; but you have been so rampant and abusive all night, I shall see what the justice of peace will say to you.

Sir John. And you shall see what I'll say to the justice of peace, sirrah!

[WATCHMAN *knocks at the door.*

Enter SERVANT.

Const. Is Mr Justice at home?

Ser. Yes.

Const. Pray acquaint his worship we have got an unruly woman here, and desire to know what he'll please to have done with her.

Ser. I'll acquaint my master. [*Exit* SERV.

Sir John. Hark you, constable, what cuckoldy justice is this?

Const. One that knows how to deal with such romps as you are, I'll warrant you.

Enter JUSTICE.

Just. Well, Mr constable, what is the matter there?

Const. An't please your worship, this here comical sort of a gentlewoman has committed great outrages to-night. She has been frolicking with my lord Rake and his gang; they attacked the watch, and I hear there has been a man killed: I believe 'tis they have done it.

Sir John. Sir, there may have been murder for aught I know; and 'tis a great mercy there has not been a rape, too——that fellow would have ravished me.

2d Watch. Ravish! ravish! O lud! O lud! O lud! Ravish her! Why, please your worship, I heard Mr Constable say he believed she was little better than a maphrodite.

Just. Why, truly, she does seem a little masculine about the mouth.

2d Watch. Yes, and about the hands too, an't please your worship. I did but offer in mere civility, to help her up the steps into our apartment, and with her gripen fist thus——

[SIR JOHN *knocks him down.*

Sir John. Just so, sir, I felled him to the ground like an ox.

Just. Out upon this boisterous woman! Out upon her!

Sir John. Mr Justice, he would have been uncivil: It was in defence of my honour, and I demand satisfaction.

2d Watch. I hope your worship will satisfy her honour in Bridewell; that fist of hers will make an admirable hemp-beater.

Sir John. Sir, I hope you will protect me against that libidinous rascal: I am a woman of quality, and virtue too, for all I am in an undress this morning.

Just. Madam, if you expect I should be favourable to you, I desire I may know who you are.

Sir John. Sir, I am any body at your service.

Just. Lady, I desire to know your name?

Sir John. Sir, my name's Mary.

Just. Ay, but your surname, madam?

Sir John. Sir, my surname's the very same with my husband's.

Just. A strange woman this! Who is your husband, pray?

Sir John. Sir John.

Just. Sir John who?

Sir John. Sir John Brute.

Just. Is it possible, madam, you can be my lady Brute?

Sir John. That happy woman, sir, am I; only a little in my merriment to night.

Just. I am concerned for sir John.

Sir John. Truly, so am I.

Just. I have heard he's an honest gentleman.

Sir John. As ever drank.

Just. Good lack! Indeed, lady, I'm sorry he has such a wife.

Sir John. I am sorry he has any wife at all.

Just. And so perhaps may he—I doubt you have not given him a very good taste of matrimony.

Sir John. Taste, sir! sir, I have scorned to stint him to a taste; I have given him a full meal of it.

Just. Indeed, I believe so. But pray, fair lady, may he have given you any occasion for this extraordinary conduct? does he not use you well?

Sir John. A little upon the rough, sometimes.

Just. Ay, any man may be out of humour now and then.

Sir John. Sir, I love peace and quiet, and when a woman don't find that at home, she's apt sometimes to comfort herself with a few innocent diversions abroad.

Just. I doubt he uses you but too well. Pray, how does he as to that weighty thing, money? Does he allow you what is proper of that?

Sir John. Sir, I have generally enough to pay the reckoning, if this son of a whore of a drawer would but bring his bill.

Just. A strange woman this!—Does he spend a reasonable portion of his time at home, to the comfort of his wife and children?

Sir John. He never gave his wife cause to repine at his being abroad in his life.

Just. Pray, madam, how may he be in the grand matrimonial point——Is he true to your bed?

Sir John. Chaste! Oons! This fellow asks so many impertinent questions! I'gad I believe it is the justice's wife, in the justice's clothes.

Just. Pray, madam, (and then I've done) what may be your ladyship's common method of life, if I may presume so far?

Sir John. Why, sir, much that of a woman of quality.

Just. Pray, how may you generally pass your time, madam? your morning, for example?

Sir John. Sir, like a woman of quality——I wake about two o'clock in the afternoon—I stretch—and make a sign for my chocolate—When I have drank three cups—I slide down again upon my back, with my arms over my head, while my two maids put on my stockings. Then, hanging upon their shoulders, I am trailed to my great chair, where I sit—and yawn—for my breakfast—If it don't come presently, I lie down upon my couch to say my prayers, while my maid reads me the play-bills.

Just. Very well, madam.

Sir John. When the tea is brought in, I drink twelve regular dishes, with eight slices of bread and butter—And half an hour after, I send to the cook to know if the dinner is almost ready.

Just. So! madam!

Sir John. By that time my head is half drest, I hear my husband swearing himself into a state of perdition, that the meat's all cold upon the table; to amend which, I come down in an hour more, and have it sent back to the kitchen, to be all dressed over again.

Just. Poor man!

Sir John. When I have dined, and my idle servants are presumptuously set down at their ease, to do so too, I call for my coach, to go visit dear friends, of whom I hope I never shall find one at home, while I shall live.

Just. So! There's the morning and afternoon pretty well disposed of——Pray, madam, how do you pass your evenings?

Sir John. Like a woman of spirit, sir, a great spirit. Give me a box and dice—Seven's the main, Oons! Sir, I set you a hundred pounds! Why, do you think women are married now a-days, to sit at home and mend napkins? Sir, we have nobler ways of passing time.

Just. Mercy upon us, Mr Constable, what will this age come to?

Const. What will it come to, indeed, if such women as these are not set in the stocks?

Sir John. Sir, I have a little urgent business calls upon me; and therefore, I desire the favour of you to bring matters to a conclusion.

Just. Madam, if I were sure that business were not to commit more disorders, I would release you.

Sir John. None——By my virtue.

Just. Then, Mr Constable, you may discharge her.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant. If you please to accept of a bottle——

Just. I thank you kindly, madam; but I never drink in a morning. Good-by-t'ye, madam, good-by-t'ye.

Sir John. Good-by-t'ye, good sir. [*Exit Justice.* So——now, Mr Constable, shall you and I go pick up a whore together?

Const. No, thank you, madam; my wife's enough to satisfy any reasonable man.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] He, he, he, he, he! the fool is married then. Well, you won't go?

Const. Not I, truly.

Sir John. Then I'll go by myself; and you and your wife may go to the devil.

[*Exit* SIR JOHN.

[*Constable gazing after her.*] Why, god-a-mercy, lady! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Spring-Garden.*

CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE *cross the Stage. As they go off, enter* LADY FANCIFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE *masked, and dogging them.*

Con. So; I think we are about the time appointed: Let us walk up this way. [*Exeunt.*

Lady Fan. Good: Thus far I have dogged them without being discovered. 'Tis infallibly some intrigue that brings them to Spring-Garden. How my poor heart is torn and wrackt with fear and jealousy! Yet let it be any thing but that flirt Belinda, and I'll try to bear it. But if it proves her, all that's woman in me shall be employed to destroy her.

[*Exeunt after* CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE.

Re-enter CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE. LADY FANCIFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE *still following at a distance.*

Con. I see no females yet, that have any thing to say to us. I'm afraid we are bantered.

Heart. I wish we were; for I'm in no humour to make either them or myself merry.

Con. Nay, I'm sure you'll make them merry enough, if I tell them why you are dull. But, prithee, why so heavy and sad before you begin to be ill used?

Heart. For the same reason, perhaps, that you are so brisk and well pleased; because both pains and pleasures are generally more considerable in prospect, than when they come to pass.

Enter LADY BRUTE *and* BELINDA, *masked, and poorly dressed.*

Con. How now! who are these? Not our game, I hope.

Heart. If they are, we are e'en well enough served, to come a hunting here, when we had so much better game in chase elsewhere.

Lady Fan. [*to Mademoiselle.*] So, those are their ladies without doubt. But I'm afraid that doily stuff is not worn for want of better

clothes. They are the very shape and size of Belinda and her aunt.

Madam. So dey be indeed, madam.

Lady Fan. We'll slip into this close arbour, where we may hear all they say.

[*Exeunt* LADY FANCIFUL *and* MAPEMOISELLE.

Lady Brute. What, are you afraid of us, gentlemen?

Heart. Why, truly, I think we may, if appearances don't lie.

Bel. Do you always find women what they appear to be, sir?

Heart. No, forsooth; but I seldom find them better than they appear to be.

Bel. Then the outside's best, you think?

Heart. 'Tis the honestest.

Con. Have a care, Heartfree; you are relapsing again.

Lady Brute. Why, does the gentleman use to rail at women?

Con. He has done formerly.

Bel. I suppose he had very good cause for it. They did not use you so well, as you thought you deserved, sir.

Lady Brute. They made themselves merry at your expence, sir.

Bel. Laughed, when you sighed.

Lady Brute. Slept, while you were waking.

Bel. Had your porter beat.

Lady Brute. And threw your billet-doux in the fire.

Heart. Hey-day! I shall do more than rail presently.

Bel. Why, you won't beat us, will you?

Heart. I don't know but I may.

Con. What the devil's coming here? Sir John in a gown—And drunk, i'faith.

Enter SIR JOHN.

Sir John. What a pox—here's Constant, Heartfree—and two whores 'egad—O, you covetous rogues! what, have you never a spare punk for your friend?—But I'll share with you.

[*He seizes both the women.*

Heart. Why, what the plague have you been doing, knight?

Sir John. Why, I have been beating the watch, and scandalizing the clergy.

Heart. A very good account, truly.

Sir John. And what do you think I'll do next?

Con. Nay, that no man can guess.

Sir John. Why, if you'll let me sup with you, I'll treat both your strumpets.

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*] O Lord, we're undone.

Heart. No, we can't sup together, because we have some affairs elsewhere. But if you'll accept of these two ladies, we'll be so complaisant to you, to resign our right in them.

Bel. [*Aside.*] Lord, what shall we do?

Sir John. Let me see, their clothes are such damned clothes, they won't pawn for the reckoning.

Heart. Sir John, your servant. Raptures attend you.

Con. Adieu, ladies; make much of the gentleman.

Lady Brute. Why, sure you won't leave us in the hands of a drunken fellow to abuse us!

Sir John. Who do you call a drunken fellow, you slut you? I'm a man of quality; the king has made me a knight.

Heart. Ay, ay, you are in good hands; adieu, adieu. [HEARTFREE *runs off.*

Lady Brute. The devil's hands: Let me go, or I'll——For Heaven's sake, protect us.

[*She breaks from him, runs to* CONSTANT, *twitching off her mask, and clapping it on again.*

Sir John. I'll devil you, you jade you. I'll demolish your ugly face.

Re-enter HEARTFREE. BELINDA *runs to him, and shews her face.*

Heart. Hold, thou mighty man! look ye, sir, we did but jest with you. These are ladies of our acquaintance, that we had a mind to frighten a little, but now you must leave us.

Sir John. Oons, I won't leave you, not I.

Heart. Nay, but you must, though; and, therefore, make no words on't.

Sir John. Then, you are a couple of damned uncivil fellows. And I hope your punks will give you sauce to your mutton.

[*Exit* SIR JOHN.

Lady Brute. Oh, I shall never come to myself again, I'm so frightened!

Con. 'Tis a narrow escape, indeed.

Bel. Women must have frolics, you see, whatever they cost them.

Heart. This might have proved a dear one, though.

Lady Brute. You are the more obliged to us for the risk we run upon your accounts.

Con. And I hope you'll acknowledge something due to our knight-errantry, ladies. This is the second time we have delivered you.

Lady Brute. 'Tis true; and since we see fate has designed you for our guardians, 'twill make us the more willing to trust ourselves in your hands. But you must not have the worse opinion of us for our innocent frolic.

Heart. Ladies, you may command our opinions in every thing, that is to your advantage.

Bel. Then, sir, I command you to be of opinion, that women are sometimes better than they appear to be.

[LADY BRUTE *and* CONSTANT *talk apart.*

Heart. Madam, you have made a convert of me in every thing. I'm grown a fool. I could be fond of a woman.

Bel. I thank you, sir, in the name of the whole sex.

Heart. Which sex, nothing but yourself could ever have atoned for.

Bel. Now has my vanity a devilish itch to know in what my merit consists.

Heart. In your humility, madam, that keeps you ignorant it consists at all.

Bel. One other compliment, with that serious face, and I hate you for ever after.

Heart. Some women love to be abused: Is it that you would be at?

Bel. No, not that neither: But I'd have men talk plainly what's fit for women to hear; without putting them either to a real, or an affected blush.

Heart. Why, then, in as plain terms as I can find to express myself, I could love you even to matrimony itself a-most, egad.

Bel. Just as Sir John did her ladyship there.—What think you? Don't you believe one month's time might bring you down to the same indifference, only clad in a little better manners, perhaps? Well, you men are unaccountable things! mad, till you have your mistresses, and then stark mad, till you are rid of them again. Tell me honestly, is not your patience put to a much severer trial after possession than before?

Heart. With a great many, I must confess it is, to our eternal scandal; but I—dear creature, do but try me!

Bel. That's the surest way, indeed, to know, but not the safest. [*To* LADY BRUTE.] Madam, are not you for taking a turn in the great walk? It is almost dark, nobody will know us.

Lady Brute. Really, I find myself something idle, Belinda: Besides, I doat upon this little odd private corner. But don't let my lazy fancy confine you.

Con. [*Aside.*] So, she would be left alone with me, that's well.

Bel. Well, we'll take one turn, and come to you again. [*To* HEARTFREE.] Come, sir, shall we go pry into the secrets of the garden? Who knows what discoveries we may make?

Heart. Madam, I'm at your service.

Con. [*To* HEARTFREE, *Aside.*] Don't make too much haste back; for, d'ye hear—I may be busy.

Heart. Enough.

[*Exeunt* BELINDA *and* HEARTFREE.

Lady Brute. Sure you think me scandalously free, Mr Constant; I'm afraid I shall lose your good opinion of me.

Con. My good opinion, madam, is like your cruelty, ne'er to be removed.

Lady Brute. Indeed, I doubt you much: why, suppose you had a wife, and she should entertain a gallant?

Con. If I gave her just cause, how could I justly condemn her?

Lady Brute. Ah! but you differ widely about just causes.

Con. But blows can bear no dispute.

Lady Brute. Nor ill manners much, truly.

Con. Then no woman upon earth has so just a cause as you have.

Lady Brute. But, can a husband's faults release my duty?

Con. In equity, without doubt. And, where laws dispense with equity, equity should dispense with laws.

Lady Brute. Pray, let's leave this dispute; for you men have as much witchcraft in your arguments, as women have in their eyes.

Con. But, whilst you attack me with your charms, 'tis but reasonable I assault you with mine.

Lady Brute. The case is not the same. What mischief we do, we can't help, and therefore are to be forgiven.

Con. Beauty soon obtains pardon for the pain that it gives, when it applies the balm of compassion to the wound: but a fine face, and a hard heart, is almost as bad as an ugly face, and a soft one; both very troublesome to many a poor gentleman.

Lady Brute. Yes, and to many a poor gentlewoman, too, I can assure you. But pray, which of them is it, that most afflicts you?

Con. Your glass and conscience will inform you, madam. But, for Heaven's sake, (for now I must be serious) if pity, or if gratitude can move you; [*Taking her hand.*]—If constancy and truth have power to tempt you; if love, if adoration can affect you, give me at least some hopes, that time may do, what you, perhaps, mean never to perform; 'twill ease my sufferings, though not quench my flame.

Lady Brute. Your sufferings eased, your flame would soon abate: and that I would preserve, not quench it, sir.

Con. Would you preserve it, nourish it with favours: for that's the food it naturally requires.

Lady Brute. Yet on that natural food 'twould surfeit soon, should I resolve to grant all you would ask.

Con. And in refusing all, you starve it. Forgive me, therefore, since my hunger rages, if I at last grow wild, and in my frenzy force at least this from you. [*Kissing her hand.*] Or, if you would have my flame soar higher still, then grant me this, and this, and thousands more; [*Kissing first her hand, then her neck.*] [*Aside.*] For now's the time she melts into compassion.

Lady Brute. O Heavens! let me go.

Con. Aye, go, aye: where shall we go, my charming angel—into this private arbour—nay, let's lose no time—moments are precious.

Lady Brute. And lovers wild. Pray, let us stop here; at least for this time.

Con. 'Tis impossible: he, that has power over you, can have none over himself.

[*As he is forcing her into the arbour,* LADY FANCIFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE *bolt out upon them, and run over the stage.*

Lady Brute. Ah, I'm lost!

Lady Fan. Fe, fe, fe, fe, fe!

Madem. Fe, fe, fe, fe, fe!

Con. Death and furies! who are these?

Lady Brute. O Heavens, I'm out of my wits! if they knew me, I am ruined.

Con. Don't be frightened: ten thousand to one, they are strangers to you.

Lady Brute. Whatever they are, I won't stay here a moment longer.

Con. Whither will you go?

Lady Brute. Home, as if the devil were in me; Lord! where's this Belinda now?

Enter BELINDA *and* HEARTFREE.

Oh! 'tis well you are come; I'm so frightened, my hair stands on end. Let's be gone, for Heaven's sake!

Bel. Lord! what's the matter?

Lady Brute. The devil's the matter! here's a couple of women have done the most impertinent thing—away, away, away, away, away! [*Exit running.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—LADY FANCIFUL'S *house.*

Enter LADY FANCIFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE.

Lady Fan. WELL, mademoiselle; did you dodge the filthy things?

Madem. O que ouy, madame.

Lady Fan. And where are they?

Madem. Au logis.

Lady Fan. What, men and all?

Madem. Tous ensemble.

Lady Fan. O confidence! what! carry their fellows to their own house?

Madem. C'est que le mari n'y est pas.

Lady Fan. No, so I believe, truly. But he shall be there, and quickly, too, if I can find him out. Well, 'tis a prodigious thing, to see when men and women get together, how they fortify one another in their impudence. But if that drunken fool, her husband, be to be found in e'er a tavern in town, I'll send him amongst them; I'll spoil their sport.

Madem. En vérité, madame, ce seroit domage.

Lady Fan. 'Tis in vain to oppose it, mademoiselle; therefore, never go about it. For I am the steadiest creature in the world, when I have determined to do mischief. So, come along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—SIR JOHN BRUTE'S *house.*

Enter CONSTANT, HEARTFREE, LADY BRUTE, BELINDA, *and* LOVEWELL.

Lady Brute. But are you sure you don't mistake, Lovewell?

Love. Madam, I saw them all go into the tavern together, and my master was so drunk he could scarce stand.

Lady Brute. Then, gentlemen, I believe we may venture to let you stay, and play at cards with us, an hour or two: for they'll scarce part, till morning.

Bel. I think, 'tis pity they should ever part.

Con. The company that's here, madam?

Lady Brute. Then, sir, the company, that's here, must remember to part itself in time.

Con. Madam, we don't intend to forfeit your future favours by an indiscreet usage of this.—The moment you give us the signal, we sha'nt fail to make our retreat.

Lady Brute. Upon those conditions, then, let us sit down to cards.

Enter LOVEWELL.

Love. O Lord, madam! here's my master just staggering in upon you; he has been quarrelsome, yonder, and they have kicked him out of the company.

Lady Brute. Into the closet, gentlemen, for Heaven's sake! I'll wheedle him to bed, if possible.

[CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE *run into the closet.*

Enter SIR JOHN, *all dirt and bloody.*

Lady Brute. Ah—ah—he's all over blood!

Sir John. What the plague does the woman squall for? Did you never see a man in pickle before?

Lady Brute. Lord, where have you been?

Sir John. I have been at—cuffs.

Lady Brute. I fear that is not all. I hope you are not wounded?

Sir John. Sound as a roach, wife.

Lady Brute. I'm mighty glad to hear it.

Sir John. You know I think you lie.

Lady Brute. You do me wrong to think so. For, Heaven's my witness, I had rather see my own blood trickle down, than yours.

Sir John. Then will I be crucified.

Lady Brute. 'Tis a hard fate I should not be believed.

Sir John. 'Tis a damned atheistical age, wife.

Lady Brute. I am sure I have given you a thousand tender proofs, how great my care is of you. But, spite of all your cruel thoughts, I'll still persist, and, at this moment, if I can, persuade you to lie down and sleep a little.

Sir John. Why, do you think I am drunk, you slut, you?

Lady Brute. Heaven forbid I should: but I am afraid you are feverish. Pray, let me feel your pulse.

Sir John. Stand off, and be damned!

Lady Brute. Why, I see your distemper in

your very eyes. You are all on fire. Pray, go to bed; let me intreat you.

Sir John. Come, kiss me, then.

Lady Brute. [*Kissing him.*]—There: now go.—[*Aside.*]—He stinks like poison!

Sir John. I see it goes dammably against your stomach. And therefore—kiss me again.

Lady Brute. Nay, now you fool me.

Sir John. Do it, I say.

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*]—Ah, Lord have mercy upon me! Well; there: now, will you go?

Sir John. Now, wife, you shall see my gratitude. You gave me two kisses—I'll give you two hundred.

[*Kisses and tumbles her.*

Lady Brute. O Lord! pray, sir John, be quiet. Heavens, what a pickle am I in!

Bel. [*Aside.*]—If I were in her pickle, I would call my gallant out of the closet, and he should cudgel him soundly.

Sir John. So, now, you being as dirty and as nasty as myself, we may go pig together. But first, I must have a cup of your cold tea, wife.

[*Going to the closet.*

Lady Brute. Oh, I am ruined! There's none there, my dear.

Sir John. I'll warrant you, I'll find some, my dear.

Lady Brute. You can't open the door, the lock's spoiled; I have been turning and turning the key, this half hour, to no purpose. I'll send for the smith to-morrow.

Sir John. There's ne'er a smith in Europe can open a door with more expedition than I can do—as for example—now.—[*He bursts open the door with his foot.*]—How now! what the devil have we got here? Constant!—Heartfree!—and two whores again, I'gad!—this is the worst cold tea that ever I met with in my life——

Enter CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE.

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*]—O Lord, what will become of us?

Sir John. Gentlemen, I am your very humble servant—I give you many thanks—I see you take care of my family—I shall do all I can to return the obligation.

Con. Sir, how oddly soever this business may appear to you, you would have no cause to be uneasy, if you knew the truth of all things; your lady is the most virtuous woman in the world, and nothing has past but an innocent frolic.

Heart. Nothing else, upon my honour, sir.

Sir John. You are both very civil gentlemen—and my wife, there, is a very civil gentlewoman; therefore, I don't doubt but many civil things have past between you. Your very humble servant.

Lady Brute. [*Aside to* CONSTANT.] Pray be gone: he's so drunk he can't hurt us to-night, and to-morrow morning you shall hear from us.

Con. I'll obey you, madam. Sir, when you are cool, you will understand reason better. So, then, I shall take the pains to inform you. If not—I wear a sword, sir, and so good-bye-t'ye. Come along, Heartfree.

[*Exeunt* CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE.

Sir John. Wear a sword, sir!—and what of all that, sir? he comes to my house; eats my meat; lies with my wife; dishonours my family; gets a bastard to inherit my estate—and when I ask a civil account of all this—sir, says he, I wear a sword—wear a sword, sir? Yes, sir, says he, I wear a sword. It may be a good answer to cross purposes; but 'tis a damned one to a man in my whimsical circumstances—sir, says he, I wear a sword! [*To* LADY BRUTE.] And what do you wear, now? ha! tell me.—[*Sitting down in a great chair.*]—What, you are modest, and can't—why, then, I'll tell you, you slut, you. You wear—an impudent lewd face—a damned, designing heart—and a tail—and a tail full of—

[*He falls fast asleep, snoring.*

Lady Brute. So; thanks to kind Heaven, he's fast for some hours.

Bel. 'Tis well he is so, that we may have time to lay our story handsomely; for we must lie like the devil to bring ourselves off.

Lady Brute. What shall we say, Belinda?

Bel. [*Musing.*] I'll tell you: it must all light upon Heartfree and me. We'll say he has courted me some time, but, for reasons unknown to us, has ever been very earnest the thing might be kept from sir John. That, therefore, hearing him upon the stairs, he run into the closet, though against our will, and Constant with him, to prevent jealousy. And, to give this a good impudent face of truth, (that I may deliver you from the trouble you are in) I'll even, if he pleases, marry him.

Lady Brute. I am beholden to you, cousin; but that would be carrying the jest a little too far, for your own sake: you know he's a younger brother, and has nothing.

Bel. 'Tis true: but I like him, and have fortune enough to keep above extremity: I can't say, I would live with him in a cell, upon love, and bread and butter: but I had rather have the man I love, and a middle state of life, than that gentleman in the chair, there, and twice your ladyship's splendour.

Lady Brute. In truth, niece, you are in the right on't: but 'tis late: let's end our discourse for to-night, and, out of an excess of charity, take a small care of that nasty drunken thing there—do but look at him, Belinda.

Bel. Ah, 'tis a savoury dish!

Lady Brute. As savoury as 'tis, I am cloyed with it. Prithee, call the butler to take away—

Bel. Call the butler! call the scavenger! [*To a servant within.*] Who's there? Call Razor! Let him take away his master, scour him clean with a little soap and sand, and so put him to bed.

Lady Brute. Come, Belinda, I'll e'en lie with you to-night: and, in the morning, we'll send for our gentlemen, to set this matter even.

Bel. With all my heart.

Lady Brute. Good night, my dear.

[*Making a low courtesy to* SIR JOHN.

Both. Ha, ha, ha!

[*Exeunt* LADY BRUTE *and* BELINDA.

Enter RAZOR.

Raz. My lady there's a wag——my master there's a cuckold. Marriage is a slippery thing—women have depraved appetites—my lady's a wag: I have heard all: I have seen all: I understand all: and I'll tell all; for my little Frenchwoman loves news dearly. This story will gain her heart, or nothing will.—[*To his master.*]—Come, sir, your head's too full of fumes at present, to make room for your jealousy; but I reckon we shall have rare work with you, when your pate's empty. Come to your kennel, you cuckoldy, drunken sot, you.

[*Carries him out on his back.*

SCENE III.—LADY FANCIFUL'S *house.*

Enter LADY FANCIFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE.

Lady Fan. But, why did you not tell me before, mademoiselle, that Razor and you were fond?

Madem. De modesty hinder me, matam.

Lady Fan. Why, truly, modesty does often hinder us from doing things, we have an extravagant mind to. But does he love you well enough yet, to do any thing you bid him? Do you think, to oblige you, he would speak scandal?

Madem. Matam, to oblige your ladyship, he shall speak blasphemy.

Lady Fan. Why, then, mademoiselle, I'll tell you what you shall do. You shall engage him to tell his master all that past at Spring Garden: I have a mind he should know what a wife and a niece he has got.

Madem. Il le fera, madame.

Enter a Footman, who speaks to MADEMOISELLE *apart.*

Foot. Mademoiselle, yonder's Mr Razor desires to speak with you.

Madem. Tell him, I come presently. [*Exit Footman.*] Razor be dere, matam.

Lady Fan. That's fortunate: well, I'll leave you together. And if you find him stubborn, mademoiselle—hark you—don't refuse him a few little reasonable liberties, to put him into humour.

Madem. Laissez moi faire.

[*Exit* LADY FANCIFUL.

[RAZOR *peeps in; and, seeing* LADY FANCIFUL *gone, runs to* MADEMOISELLE, *takes her about the neck, and kisses her.*]

Madem. How now, confidence!

Raz. How now, modesty!

Madem. Who make you so familiar, sirrah?

Raz. My impudence, hussy.

Madem. Stand off, rogue face!

Raz. Ah, mademoiselle! great news at our house.

Madem. Why, vat be de matter?

Raz. The matter? why, uptails all's the matter.

Madem. Tu te mocque de moi.

Raz. Now, do you long to know the particulars: the time when: the place where: the manner how. But I won't tell you a word more.

Madem. Nay, den dou kill me, Razor.

Raz. Come, kiss me, then.

[*Clapping his hands behind.*

Madem. Nay, pridee tell me.

Raz. Good-by-t'ye! [*Going.*

Madem. Hold, hold: I will kiss dee.

[*Kissing him.*

Raz. So, that's civil: why now, my pretty poll; my goldfinch; my little waterwagtail—you must know, that—come, kiss me again.

Madem. I won't kiss de no more.

Raz. Good-by-t'ye. [*Going.*

Madem. Doucement; dere; es tu content?

[*Kissing him.*

Raz. So: now I'll tell thee all. Why, the news is, that cuckoldom, in folio, is newly printed; and matrimony, in quarto, is just going into the press. Will you buy any books, mademoiselle?

Madem. Tu parle comme un libraire; de devil no understand dee.

Raz. Why, then, that I may make myself intelligible to a waiting-woman, I'll speak like a valet de chambre. My lady has cuckolded my master.

Madem. Bon.

Raz. Which we take very ill from her hands, I can tell her that. We can't yet prove matter of fact upon her.

Madem. N'importe.

Raz. But we can prove, that matter of fact had like to have been upon her.

Madem. Ouy-da.

Raz. For we have such terrible circumstances—

Madem. Sans doute.

Raz. That any man of parts may draw tickling conclusions from them.

Madem. Fort bien.

Raz. We found a couple of tight, well-built gentlemen, stuft into her ladyship's closet.

Madem. Le diable!

Raz. And I, in my particular person, have discovered a most damnable plot, how to persuade my poor master, that all this hide and seek, this

Will in the Wisp, has no other meaning than a christian marriage for sweet Mrs Belinda.

Madem. Une marriage? Ah les droless!

Raz. Don't you interrupt me, hussy; 'tis agreed, I say. And my innocent lady, to wriggle herself out at the back-door of the business, turns marriage-bawd to her niece, and resolves to deliver up her fair body, to be tumbled and mumbled by that young liquorish whipster, Heartfree. Now, are you satisfied?

Madem. No.

Raz. Right woman; always gaping for more.

Madem. Dis be all den, dat you know?

Raz. All? Ay, and a great deal too, I think.

Madem. Dou be fool, dou know noting. Ecoute, mon pauvre Razor. Dou sees des two eyes?—Des two eyes have see de devil.

Raz. The woman's mad.

Madem. In Spring-Garden, dat rogue Constant meet dy lady.

Raz. Bon.

Madem. I'll tell dee no more.

Raz. Nay, prithee, my swan.

Madem. Come, kiss me den.

[*Clapping her hands behind her, as he did before.*]

Raz. I won't kiss you, not I.

Madem. Adieu! [*Going.*

Raz. Hold—Now proceed.

[*Gives her a hearty kiss.*

Madem. A çà—I hide myself in one cunning place, where I hear all, and see all. First, dy drunken master come mal à propos; but de sot no know his own dear wife, so he leave her sport.—Den de game begin. De lover say soft ting: De lady look upon de ground. [*As she speaks,* Razor *still acts the man, and she the woman.*] He take her by de hand: She turn her head on oder way. Den he squeeze very hard: Den she pull—very softly. Den he take her in his arm: Den she give him leetel pat. Den he kiss her. Den she say—pish, nay fee. Den he tremble: Den she sigh. Den he pull her into de arbour: Den she pinch him.

Raz. Ay, but not so hard, you baggage you.

Madem. Den he grow bold: she grow weak, he tro her down, il tombe dessu, le diable assist, il emport tout; [Razor *struggles with her, as if he would throw her down.*] stand off, sirrah!

Raz. You have set me a-fire, you jade, you.

Madem. Den go to de river, and quench dyself.

Raz. What an unnatural harlot this!

Madem. Razor.

[*Looking languishingly on him.*

Raz. Mademoiselle!

Madem. Dou no love me?

Raz. Not love thee?——More than a Frenchman does soup.

Madem. Den dou will refuse nothing dat I bid dee?

Raz. Don't bid me be damned then.

Madem. No, only tell dy master, all I have tell dee of dy laty.

Raz. Why, you little malicious strumpet, you; should you like to be served so?

Madem Dou dispute den?—Adieu.

Raz. Hold——But why wilt thou make me be such a rogue, my dear?

Madem. Voilà un vrai Anglois! il est amoureux, et cependant il veut raisonner. Va t'en au diable!

Raz. Hold once more: In hopes thou'lt give me up thy body, I'll make thee a present of my honesty.

Madem. Bon, écoute donc;—If dou fail me—I never see de more ——if dou obey me——Je m'abandonne a toy à toy. [*She takes him about the neck, and gives him a smacking kiss.*]

[*Exit* Mademoiselle.

Raz. [*Licking his lips.*] Not be a rogue?—*Amor vincit omnia.* [*Exit* Razor.

Enter Lady Fanciful *and* Mademoiselle.

Lady Fan. Marry, say ye? Will the two things marry?

Madem. On le va faire, madame.

Lady Fan. Look you, mademoiselle, in short, I can't bear it—No; I find I can't—If once I see them a-bed together I shall have ten thousand thoughts in my head will make me run distracted. Therefore, run and call Razor back immediately; for something must be done to stop this impertinent wedding. If I can but defer it four and twenty hours, I'll make such work about town, with that little pert slut's reputation, he shall as soon marry a witch.

Madem. [*Aside.*] La voilà bien intentionée.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—Constant's *lodgings.*

Enter Constant *and* Heartfree.

Con. But what dost think will become of this business?

Heart. 'Tis easier to think what will not come of it.

Con. What's that?

Heart. A challenge. I know the knight too well for that; his dear body will always prevail upon his noble soul to be quiet.

Con. But though he dare not challenge me, perhaps he may venture to challenge his wife.

Heart. Not if you whisper him in the ear, you won't have him do't; and there's no other way left that I see. For as drunk as he was, he'll remember you and I were where we should not be; and I don't think him quite blockhead enough yet, to be persuaded we were got into his wife's closet only to peep into her prayer-book.

Enter a Servant, with a letter.

Serv. Sir, here's a letter; a porter brought it.

Con. O ho! here's instructions for us. [*Reads.*

'The accident, that has happened, has touched 'our invention to the quick. We would fain 'come off without your help: but find that's im-'possible. In a word, the whole business must 'be thrown upon a matrimonial intrigue between 'your friend and mine. But if the parties are 'not fond enough to go quite through with the 'matter, 'tis sufficient for our turn, they own the 'design. We'll find pretences enough to break 'the match. Adieu.'

——Well, women for invention! How long would my block head have been producing this! Hey, Heartfree. What, musing, man? Prithee be cheerful: What say'st thou, friend, to this matrimonial remedy?

Heart. Why, I say, it's worse than the disease.

Con. Here's a fellow for you! There's beauty and money on her side: and love up to the ears on his: And yet——

Heart. And yet, I think, I may reasonably be allowed to boggle at marrying the niece in the very moment that you are debauching the aunt.

Con. Why, truly, there may be something in that. But have not you a good opinion enough of your own parts, to believe you could keep a wife to yourself?

Heart. I should have, if I had a good opinion enough of hers, to believe she could do as much by me. For, to do them right, after all, the wife seldom rambles, till the husband shews her the way.

Con. 'Tis true, a man of real worth scarce ever is a cuckold, but by his own fault. Women are not naturally cwd: there must be something to urge them to it. They'll cuckold a churl, out of revenge; a fool, because they despise him; a beast, because they loath him. But, when they make bold with a man they once had a well-grounded value for, 'tis, because they first see themselves neglected by him.

Heart. Well then, shall I marry, or die a maid?

Con. Why faith, Heartfree, matrimony is like an army going to engage. Love's the forlorn hope, which is soon cut off: the marriage knot is the main body, which may stand buff a long long time; and repentance is the rear-guard, which rarely gives ground, as long as the main body has a being.

Heart. Conclusion, then; you advise me to whore on as you do.

Con. That's not concluded yet. For though marriage be a lottery, in which there are a wondrous many blanks; yet there is one inestimable lot, in which the only heaven on earth is written. Would your kind fate but guide your hand to that, though I were wrapt in all, that luxury itself could clothe me with, I still should envy you.

Heart. And justly, too; for to be capable of loving one, doubtless, is better than to possess a thousand. But how far that capacity's in me, alas, I know not.

Con. But you would know.

Heart. I would so.

Con. Matrimony will inform you. Come, one flight of resolution carries you to the land of experience; where, in a very moderate time, you'll know the capacity of your soul and your body both, or I'm mistaken. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—SIR JOHN BRUTE'S *house.*

Enter LADY BRUTE *and* BELINDA.

Bel. Well, madam, what answer have you from them?

Lady Brute. That they'll be here this moment. I fancy 'twill end in a wedding: I'm sure he's a fool, if it don't. Ten thousand pounds, and such a lass as you are, is no contemptible offer to a younger brother. But are you not under strange agitations? Prithee, how does your pulse beat?

Bel. High and low; I have much ado to be valiant: Is it not very strange to go to bed with a man?

Lady Brute. Um—it is a little odd at first, but it will soon grow easy to you.

Enter CONSTANT *and* HEARTFREE.

Good-morrow, gentlemen! How have you slept after your adventure?

Heart. Some careful thoughts, ladies, on your accounts, have kept us waking.

Bel. And some careful thoughts on your own, I believe, have hindered you from sleeping. Pray, how does this matrimonial project relish with you?

Heart. Why, faith, even as storming towns does with soldiers, where the hopes of delicious plunder banishes the fear of being knocked on the head.

Bel. Is it then possible, after all, that you dare think of downright lawful wedlock?

Heart. Madam, you have made me so foolhardy, I dare do any thing.

Bel. Then, sir, I challenge you; and matrimony's the spot, where I expect you.

Heart. 'Tis enough; I'll not fail [*Aside.*] So, now, I am in for Hobbe's voyage; a great leap in the dark.

Lady Brute. Well, gentlemen, this matter being concluded, then, have you got your lessons ready; for sir John is grown such an atheist of late, he'll believe nothing upon easy terms?

Con. We'll find ways to extend his faith, madam. But, pray, how do you find him this morning?

Lady Brute. Most lamentably morose, chewing the cud after last night's discovery; of which,

however, he has but a confused notion even now. But I'm afraid the valet de chambre has told him all; for they are very busy together at this moment. When I told him of Belinda's marriage, I had no other answer but a grunt: From which you may draw what conclusions you think fit.—But to your notes, gentlemen, he's here.

Enter SIR JOHN *and* RAZOR.

Con. Good-morrow, sir.

Heart. Good-morrow, sir John; I'm very sorry my indiscretion should cause so much disorder in your family.

Sir John. Disorders generally come from indiscretion, sir; 'tis no strange thing at all.

Lady Brute. I hope, my dear, you are satisfied there was no wrong intended you.

Sir John. None, my dove.

Bel. If not, I hope my consent to marry Mr Heartfree will convince you. For as little as I know of amours, sir, I can assure you, one intrigue is enough to bring four people together, without further mischief.

Sir John. And I know, too, that intrigues tend to procreation of more kinds than one. One intrigue will beget another, as soon as beget a son or a daughter.

Con. I am very sorry, sir, to see you still seem unsatisfied with a lady, whose more than common virtue, I am sure, were she my wife, should meet a better usage.

Sir John. Sir, if her conduct has put a trick upon her virtue, her virtue's the bubble, but her husband's the loser.

Con. Sir, you have received a sufficient answer already, to justify both her conduct and mine. You'll pardon me for meddling in your family-affairs; but I perceive I am the man you are jealous of, and therefore it concerns me.

Sir John. Would it did not concern me! and then I should not care who it concerned.

Con. Well, sir, if truth and reason won't content you, I know but one way more, which, if you think fit, you may take.

Sir John. Lord, sir, you are very hasty: If I had been found at prayers in your wife's closet, I should have allowed you twice as much time to come to yourself in.

Con. Nay, sir, if time be all you want, we have no quarrel.

Heart. I told you how the sword would work upon him. [SIR JOHN *muses.*

Con. Let him muse: however, I'll lay fifty pounds our foreman brings us in, not guilty.

Sir John [*Aside.*] 'Tis well—'tis very well—In spite of that young jade's matrimonial intrigue, I am a downright stinking cuckold—Here they are—Boo—[*Putting his hand to his forehead.*] Methinks I could butt with a bull. What the plague did I marry her for? I knew she did not like me; if she had, she would have lain with me; for I would have done so, because I liked her; but that's past, and I have her. And now, what shall I do with her?—If I put my horns into my pocket, she'll grow insolent—if I don't, that goat there, that stallion, is ready to whip me through the guts—The debate, then, is reduced to this; shall I die a hero, or live a rascal?—Why, wiser men than I have long since concluded, that a living dog is better than a dead lion.——[*To* CON. *and* HEART.] Gentlemen, now my wine and my passion are governable; I must own, I never observed any thing in my wife's course of life, to back me in my jealousy of her: But jealousy's a mark of love; so she need not trouble her head about it, as long as I make no more words on't.

LADY FANCYFUL *enters disguised, and addresses* BELINDA *aside.*

Con. I'm glad to see your reason rule at last. Give me your hand: I hope you'll look upon me as you are wont.

Sir John. Your humble servant.—[*Aside.*] A wheedling son of a whore!

Heart. And that I may be sure you are friends with me, too, pray give me your consent to wed your niece.

Sir John. Sir, you have it with all my heart: Damn me if you han't.—[*Aside.*] 'Tis time to get rid of her. A young pert pimp: she'll make an incomparable bawd in a little time.

Enter a servant, who gives HEARTFREE *a letter.*

Bel. Heartfree your husband, say you? 'Tis impossible!

Lady Fan. Would to kind Heaven it were! But 'tis too true; and in the world there lives not such a wretch. I'm young; and, either I have been flattered by my friends, as well as glass, or nature has been kind and generous to me. I had a fortune, too, was greater far than he could ever hope for; but with my heart I am robbed of all the rest. I am slighted and I'm beggared both at once: I have scarce a bare subsistence from the villain, yet dare complain to none; for he has sworn, if ever 'tis known I am his wife, he'll murder me. [*Weeping.*

Bel. The traitor!

Lady Fan. I accidentally was told he courted you: Charity soon prevailed upon me to prevent your misery: And, as you see, I'm still so generous, even to him, as not to suffer he should do any thing, for which the law might take away his life. [*Weeping.*

Bel. Poor creature! How I pity her!

[*They continue talking aside.*

Heart. [*Aside.*] Death and damnation!—— Let me read it again. [*Reads.*] 'Though I have 'a particular reason not to let you know who I 'am till I see you; yet you'll easily believe 'tis 'a faithful friend, that gives you this advice. I 'have lain with Belinda.' (Good!) 'I have a child 'by her,' (Better and better!) 'which is now at 'nurse;' (Heaven be praised!) 'and I think the

'foundation laid for another;' (Ha!—Old true-'penny!) 'No rack could have tortured this sto-'ry from me; but friendship has done it. I heard 'of your design to marry her, and could not see 'you abused. Make use of my advice, but keep 'my secret till I ask you for it again. Adieu.'

[*Exit* LADY FANCYFUL.

Con. to *Bel.* Come, madam, shall we send for the parson? I doubt here's no business for the lawyer: Younger brothers have nothing to settle but their hearts; and that, I believe, my friend here has already done very faithfully.

Bel. [*Scornfully.*] Are you sure, sir, there are no old mortgage upon it?

Heart. [*Coldly.*] If you think there are, madam, it mayn't be amiss to defer the marriage, till you are sure they are paid off.

Bel. We'll defer it as long as you please, sir.

Heart. The more time we take to consider on't, madam, the less apt we shall be to commit oversights; therefore, if you please, we will put it off for just nine months.

Bel. Guilty consciences make men cowards—I don't wonder you want time to resolve.

Heart. And they make women desperate—I don't wonder you were so quickly determined.

Bel. What does the fellow mean?

Heart. What does the lady mean?

Sir John. Zoons, what do you both mean?

[HEART. *and* BEL. *walk chafing about.*

Raz. [*Aside.*] Here is so much sport going to be spoiled, it makes me ready to weep again. A pox o' this impertinent lady Fancyful, and her plots, and her Frenchwoman, too; she's a whimsical, ill-natured bitch; and, when I have got my bones broke in her service, 'tis ten to one but my recompense is a slap: I hear them tittering without still. Ecod! I'll e'en go lug them both in by the ears, and discover the plot, to secure my pardon. [*Exit* RAZOR.

Con. Prithee, explain, Heartfree.

Heart. A fair deliverance; thank my stars and my friend.

Bel. 'Tis well it went no farther; a base fellow!

Lady Brute. What can be the meaning of all this?

Bel. What's his meaning, I don't know; but mine is, that if I had married him—I had had no husband.

Heart. And what's her meaning, I don't know; but mine is, that if I had married her—I had had wife enough.

Sir John. Your people of wit have got such cramp ways of expressing themselves, they seldom comprehend one another. Pox take you both! will you speak that you may be understood?

Enter RAZOR *in sackcloth, pulling in* LADY FANCYFUL *and* MADEMOISELLE.

Raz. If they won't, here comes an interpreter.

Lady Brute. Heavens! What have we here?

Raz. A villain—but a repenting villain.

All. Razor!

Lady Brute. What means this?

Raz. Nothing without my pardon.

Lady Brute. What pardon do you want?

Raz. Imprimis. Your ladyship's, for a damnable lie upon your spotless virtue, and set to the tune of Spring Garden.—[*To* SIR JOHN.] Next, at my generous master's feet I bend, for interrupting his more noble thoughts with phantoms of disgraceful cuckoldom.—[*To* CON.] Thirdly, I to this gentleman apply, for making him the hero of my romance.—[*To* HEART.] Fourthly, your pardon, noble sir, I ask, for clandestinely marrying you, without either bidding of banns, bishop's licence, friends, consent—or your own knowledge!—[*To* BEL.] And, lastly, to my good young lady's clemency I come, for pretending corn was sowed in the ground, before ever the plough had been in the field.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] So that, after all, 'tis a moot point, whether I am a cuckold or not.

Bel. Well, sir, upon condition you confess all, I'll pardon you myself, and try to obtain as much from the rest of the company. But I must know, then, who 'tis has put you upon all this mischief.

Raz. Satan, and his equipage: woman tempted me; vice weakened me—— and so the devil overcame me.

Bel. Then, pray, will you make us acquainted with your tempter?

Raz. [*To* MADEM.] Unmask, for the honour of France.

All. Mademoiselle!

Madem. Me ask ten thousand pardon of all de good company.

Sir John. Why, this mystery thickens, instead of clearing up.—[*To* RAZ.] You son of a whore you, put us out of our pain!

Raz. One moment brings sunshine. [*Shewing* MADEM.] 'Tis true, this is the woman that tempted me; but this is the serpent that tempted the woman: and, if my prayers might be heard, her punishment, for so doing, should be like the serpent's of old—[*Pulls off* LADY FANCYFUL's *mask.*] She should lie upon her face all the days of her life.

All. Lady Fancyful!

Bel. Impertinent!

Lady Brute. Ridiculous!

All. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Bel. I hope your ladyship will give me leave to wish you joy, since you have owned your marriage yourself?—[*To* HEART.] I vow 'twas strangely wicked in you to think of another wife, when you had one already so charming as her ladyship.

All. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] Confusion seize them, as it seizes me!

Madem. Que le diable étouffe ce maraut de Razor!

Bel. Your ladyship seems disordered: A breed-

ing qualm, perhaps, Mr Heartfree! Your bottle of Hungary water to your lady! Why, madam, he stands as unconcerned, as if he were your husband in earnest.

Lady Fan. Your mirth's as nauseous as yourself. Belinda, you think you triumph over a rival, now; Helas, ma pauvre fille! Where'er I'm rival, there's no cause for mirth. No, my poor wretch, 'tis from another principle I have acted. I knew that thing there would make so perverse a husband, and you so impertinent a wife, that, lest your mutual plagues should make you both run mad, I charitably would have broke the match. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

[*Exit laughing affectedly,* MADEMOISELLE *following her.*

Madem. He, he, he, he, he!

All. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir John. [*Aside.*] Why now, this woman will be married to somebody, too.

Bel. Poor creature! what a passion she's in! But I forgive her.

Heart. Since you have so much goodness for her, I hope you'll pardon my offence, too, madam.

Bel. There will be no great difficulty in that, since I am guilty of an equal fault.

Heart. So, madam; now, had the parson but done his business——

Bel. You'd be half weary of your bargain.

Heart. No, sure, I might dispense with one night's lodging.

Bel. I'm ready to try, sir.

Heart. Then let's to church:
And if it be our chance to disagree———

Bel. Take heed—the surly husband's fate you see.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

LOVE MAKES A MAN;

OR,

THE FOP's FORTUNE.

BY

CIBBER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

ANTONIO, } *old gentlemen.*
CHARINO, }
DON LEWIS, *uncle and near friend to Carlos.*
CARLOS, *a student, son to Antonio.*
CLODIO, *a pert coxcomb, his brother.*
SANCHO, *servant to Carlos.*
MONSIEUR, *valet to Clodio.*
GOVERNOR *of Lisbon.*
DON DUART, *his nephew.*
DON MANUEL, *a sea officer, in love with Louisa.*

WOMEN.

ANGELINA, *daughter to Charino.*
LOUISA, *a lady of quality and pleasure.*
ELVIRA, *sister to Don Duart.*
HONORIA, *cousin to Louisa.*
Priests, Officers, and Servants.

Scene—Lisbon.

ACT. I.

SCENE I.—*A hall.*

Enter ANTONIO *and* CHARINO.

Ant. WITHOUT compliment, my old friend, I shall think myself much honoured in your alliance; our families are both ancient; our children young, and able to support them; and, I think, the sooner we set them to work the better.

Cha. Sir, you offer fair and nobly, and shall find I dare meet you in the same line of honour: and, I hope, since I have but one girl in the world, you won't think me a troublesome old fool, if I endeavour to bestow her to her worth; therefore, if you please, before we shake hands, a word or two by the by; for I have some considerable questions to ask you.

Ant. Ask them.

Cha. Well, in the first place, you say you have two sons?

Ant. Exactly.

Cha. And you are willing that one of them shall marry my daughter?

Ant. Willing.

Cha. My daughter Angelina?

Ant. Angelina.

Cha. And you are likewise content that the said Angelina shall survey them both, and (with my allowance) take to her lawful husband which of them she pleases?

Ant. Content.

Cha. And you farther promise, that the person by her (and me) so chosen (be it elder or young-

er) shall be your sole heir: that is to say, shall be in a conditional possession of at least three parts of your estate. You know the conditions, and this you positively promise?

Ant. To perform.

Cha. Why, then, as the last token of my full consent and approbation, I give you my hand.

Ant. There's mine.

Cha. Is't a match?

Ant. A match.

Cha. Done.

Ant. Done.

Cha. And done——that's enough——Carlos, the elder, you say, is a great scholar, spends his whole life in the university, and loves his study.

Ant. Nothing more, sir.

Cha. But Clodio, the younger, has seen the world, and is very well known in the court of France; a sprightly fellow, ha?

Ant. Mettle to the back, sir.

Cha. Well, how far either of them may go with my daughter, I can't tell; she'll be easily pleased where I am——I have given her some documents already. Hark! what noise without?

Ant. Odso! 'tis they——they're come——I have expected them these two hours. Well, sirrah, who's without?

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. 'Tis Sancho, sir, with a waggon-load of my master's books.

Cha. What, does he always travel with his whole study?

Ant. Never without them, sir; 'tis his humour.

Enter SANCHO, *laden with books.*

San. Pedro, unload part of the library; bid the porter open the great gates, and make room for t'other dozen of carts; I'll be with you presently.

Ant. Ha! Sancho! where's my Carlos?—Speak, boy, where didst thou leave thy master?

San. Jogging on, sir, in the highway to knowledge, both hands employed, in his book, and his bridle, sir; but he has sent his duty before him in this letter, sir.

Ant. What have we here, pothooks and andirons?

San. Pothooks! Oh, dear sir!——I beg your pardon——No, sir, this is Arabic; 'tis to the lord Abbot, concerning the translation, sir, of human bodies——a new way of getting out of the world——There's a terrible wise man has written a very smart book of it.

Cha. Pray, friend, what will that same book teach a man?

San. Teach you, sir! why, to play a trump upon death, and shew yourself a match for the devil.

Cha. Strange!

San. Here, sir, this is your letter. [*To* ANT.

Cha. Pray, sir, what sort of life may your master lead?

San. Life, sir! no prince fares like him; he breaks his fast with Aristotle, dines with Tully, drinks tea at Helicon, sups with Seneca, then walks a turn or two in the milky way, and after six hours conference with the stars, sleeps with old Erra Pater.

Cha. Wonderful!

Ant. o, Carlos will be here presently——Here, take the knave in, and let him eat.

San. And drink too, sir?

Ant. And drink too, sir—and pray see your master's chamber ready. [*Knocking again.*]—Well, sir, who's at the gate?

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. Monsieur, sir, from my young master, Clodio.

Enter MONSIEUR.

Ant. Well, Monsieur, what says your master? When will he be here?

Mons. Sire, he vill be here in de less time dan von quarter of de hour; he is not quite tirty mile off.

Ant. And what came you before for?

Mons. Sire, me come to provide de pulville, and de essence for his peruque, dat he may approche to your vorshipe vid de reverence, and de belle air.

Ant. What, is he unprovided, then?

Mons. Sire, he vas enrage, and did break his bottel d'orangerie, because it vas not de same dat is prepare for Monseigneur le Dauphin.

Ant. Well, sir, if you'll go to the butler, he'll help you to some oil for his periwig.

Mons. Sire, me tank you. [*Exit* MONSIEUR.

Cha. A very notable spark, this Clodio. Ha! what noise is that without?

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. Sir, my young masters are both come.

Ant. That's well! Now, sir, now! now observe their several dispositions.

Enter CARLOS.

Car. My father! sir, your blessing.

Ant. Thou hast it, Carlos; and now, pray know this gentleman, Charino, sir, my old friend, and one in whom you may have a particular interest.

Car. I'll study to deserve his love, sir.

Cha. Sir, as for that matter, you need not study at all. [*They salute.*

Clo. [*Within.*] Hey! La Valiere! bid the groom take care our hunters be well rubbed and clothed; they're hot, and have out-stripped the wind.

Cha. Ay, marry, sir, there's mettle in this young fellow.

Enter CLODIO.

Clo. Where's my father?

Ant. Ha, my dear Clody, thou'rt welcome!

Clo. Sir, being my father's friend, I am your most obliged, faithful, humble servant. [*To* CHA.

Cha. Sir——I—I—I like you. [*Eagerly.*

Clo. Thy hand.

Cha. Faith, thou art a pretty humoured fellow.

Clo. Who's that? Pray, sir, who's that?

Ant. Your brother, Clody.

Clo. Odso! I beg his pardon with all my heart——Ha, ha, ha! did ever mortal see such a book-worm!—Brother, how is't! [*Carelessly.*

Car. I'm glad you are well, brother. [*Reads.*

Clo. What, does he draw his book upon me? Then I will draw my wit upon him——Gad, I'll puzzle him—Hark you, brother; pray, what's—Latin for a sword-knot?

Car. The Romans wore none, brother.

Clo. No ornament upon their swords, sir?

Car. Oh, yes, several; conquest, peace, and honour—an old unfashionable wear.

Clo. Sir, no man in France (I may as well say breathing; for not to live there, is not to breathe) wears a more fashionable sword than I do; he cost me fifteen louis d'ors in Paris——There, sir, ——feel him——try him, sir.

Car. I have no skill, sir.

Clo. No skill, sir! why, this sword would make a coward fight——aha! sa, sa! ha! rip—ha! there I had him. [*Fencing.*

Car. Take heed; you'll cut my clothes, brother.

Clo. Cut 'em! ha, ha!——no, no, they are cut already, brother, to the grammar rules exactly: psha! prithee, man, leave off this college-air.

Car. No, brother, I think it wholesome, the soil and situation pleasant.

Clo. A put, by Jupiter! he don't know the air of a gentleman, from the air of the country—Sir, I mean the air of your clothes; I would have you change your tailor, and dress a little more en cavalier: lay by your book, and take out your snuff-box; cock, and look smart, ha!

Cha. Faith, a pretty fellow.

Car. I read no use in this, brother; and for my clothes, the half of what I wear already seems to me superfluous. What need I outward ornaments, when I can deck myself with understanding? Why should we care for any thing but knowledge? Or look upon the follies of mankind, but to condemn or pity those that seek them?

[*Reads again.*

Clo. Stark mad, split me!

Cha. Psha! this fellow will never do——he has no soul in him.

Clo. Hark you, brother, what do you think of a pretty, plump wench now?

Car. I seldom think that way; women are books I have not read yet.

Clo. Gad, I could set you a sweet lesson, brother.

Car. I am as well here, sir. [*Reads.*

Cha. Good for no earthly thing—a stock——Ah, that Clody!

Enter MONSIEUR.

Mons. Sire, here be de several sort of de jessamine d'orangerie vidout, if you please to make your choice.

Clo. Mum, sir, I must beg pardon for a moment; a most important business calls me aside, which I will dispatch with all imaginable celerity, and return to the repetition of my desire to continue, sir, your most obliged, and faithful humble servant. [*Exit* CLODIO, *bowing.*

Cha. Faith, he's a pretty fellow.

Ant. Now, sir, if you please, since we have got the other alone, we'll put the matter a little closer to him.

Cha. 'Tis to little purpose, I'm afraid: but use your pleasure, sir.

Car. Plato differs from Socrates in this.

[*To himself.*

Ant. Come, come, prithee, Charles, lay them by, let them agree at leisure——What, no hour of interruption?

Car. Man's life, sir, being so short, and then the way that leads us to the knowledge of ourselves, so hard and tedious, each minute should be precious.

Ant. Aye, but to thrive in this world, Charles, you must part a little with this bookish contemplation, and prepare yourself for action. If you will study, let it be to know what part of my land's fit for the plough; what for pasture; to buy and sell my stock to the best advantage; and cure my cattle when they are overgrown with labour. This, now, would turn to some account.

Car. This, sir, may be done from what I've read; for, what concerns tillage, who can better deliver it than Virgil in his Georgics? And, for the cure of herds, his Bucolics are a masterpiece; but when his art describes the commonwealth of bees, their industry, their more than human knowledge of the herbs from which they gather honey; their laws, their government among themselves, their order in going forth, and coming laden home, their strict obedience to their king, his just rewards to such as labour, his punishment, inflicted only on the slothful drone; I'm ravished with it: then reap, indeed, my harvest, receive the grain my cattle bring me, and there find wax and honey.

Ant. Hey day! Georges, and Blue-sticks, and bees-wax! What, art thou mad?

Cha. Raving, raving!

Car. No, sir, the knowledge of this guards me from it.

Ant. But can you find, amongst all your musty manuscripts, what pleasure he enjoys, that lies in the arms of a young, rich, well-shaped, healthy bride? Answer me that, ha, sir!

Car. 'Tis frequent, sir, in story: there I read

of all kinds of virtuous, and of vicious women; the ancient Spartan dames, the Roman ladies, their beauties, their deformities; and when I light upon a Portia, or a Cornelia, crowned with ever-blooming truth and virtue, with such a feeling I peruse their fortunes, as if I then had lived, and tasted of their lawful, envied love. But when I meet a Messalina, tired and unsated in her foul desires; a Clytemnestra, bathed in her husband's blood; an impious Tullia, whirling her chariot over her father's breathless body, horror invades my faculties. Comparing, then, the numerous guilty, with the easy count of those that die in innocence, I detest and loath them as ignorance, or atheism.

Ant. And you do resolve, then, not to make payment of the debt you owe me?

Car. What debt, good sir!

Ant. Why, the debt I paid my father, when I got you, sir, and made him a grandsire; which I expect from you. I won't have my name die.

Car. Nor would I; my laboured studies, sir, may prove in time a living issue.

Ant. Very well, sir; and so I shall have a general collection of all the quiddits, from Adam till this time, to be my grandchild.

Car. I'll take my best care, sir, that what I leave, may'nt shame the family.

Cha. A sad fellow, this! this is a very sad fellow! [*Aside.*

Ant. So, in short, you would not marry an empress!

Car. Give me leave to enjoy myself. The closet, that contains my chosen books, to me's a glorious court; my venerable companions there, the old sages and philosophers, sometimes the greatest kings and heroes, whose counsels I have leave to weigh, and call their victories, if unjustly got, unto a strict account, and, in my fancy, dare deface their ill-placed statues. Can I then part with solid, constant pleasures, to clasp uncertain vanities? No, sir, be it your care to swell your heap of wealth; marry my brother, and let him get you bodies of your name; I rather would inform it with a soul. I tire you, sir——your pardon and your leave. Lights there, for my study. [*Exit* CARLOS.

Ant. Was ever man thus transported from the common sense of his own happiness! a stupid wise rogue! I could beat him. Now, if it were not for my hopes in young Clody, I might fairly conclude my name were at a period.

Cha. Aye, aye, he's the match for my money, and my girl's too, I warrant her. What say you, sir, shall we tell them a piece of our mind, and turn them together instantly?

Ant. This minute, sir; and here comes my young rogue, in the very nick of his fortune.

Enter CLODIO.

Ant. Clody, a word——

Clo. To the wise is enough. Your pleasure, sir?

Ant. In the mean time, sir, if you please to send your daughter notice of our intended visit.

[*To* CHARINO.

Cha. I'll do it—hark you, friend—

[*Whispers a servant.*

Enter SANCHO *behind.*

San. I doubt my master has found but rough welcome; he's gone supperless into his study; I'd fain know the reason—it may be, somebody has borrowed one of his books, or so—I must find it out. [*Stands aside.*

Clo. Sir, you could not have started any thing more agreeable to my inclination; and for the young lady's, sir, if this old gentleman will please to give me a sight of her, you shall see me whip into her's, in the cutting of a caper.

Cha. Well, pursue and conquer; though, let me tell you, sir, my girl has wit, and will give you as good as you bring; she has a smart way, sir.

Clo. Sir, I will be as smart as she; I have my share of courage; I fear no woman alive, sir, having always found that love and assurance ought to be as inseparable companions, as a beau and a snuff-box, or a curate and a tobacco-stopper.

Cha. Faith, thou art a pleasant rogue! E'gad she must like thee.

Clo. I know how to tickle the ladies, sir—in Paris, I had constantly two challenges every morning came up with my chocolate, only for being pleasant company the night before with the first ladies of quality.

Cha. Ah, silly envious rogues! Prithee, what do you do to the ladies?

San. Positively, nothing. [*Aside.*

Clo. Why, the truth is, I did make the jades drink a little too smartly; for which the poor dogs, the princes, could not endure me.

Cha. Why, hast thou really conversed with the royal family?

Clo. Conversed with them! aye, rot them, aye, aye—You must know, some of them came with me half a day's journey, to see me a little on my way hither; but e'gad, I sent young Louis back again to Marli, as drunk as a tinker, by Jove! Ha, ha, ha! I can't but laugh to think how old Monarchy growled at him next morning.

Cha. Gad-a-mercy, boy! Well, and I warrant thou wert as intimate with their ladies, too?

San. Just alike, I dare answer for him.

[*Aside.*

Clo. Why, you shall judge now, you shall judge—let me see—there was I and Monsieur—no, no, no! Monsieur did not sup with us——there was I and prince Grandmont, duke de Bongrace—duke de Bellegrade—Bellegrade—yes—yes—Jack was there, count de l'Esprit, marshal Bombard, and that pleasant dog, the prince de Hautenbas. We six, now, were all at supper, all in good humour; champaigne was the word, and wit flew about the room like a pack of fesing

cards—now, sir, in Madame's adjacent lodgings, there happened to be the self-same number of ladies, after the fatigue of a ballet, diverting themselves with ratifia and the spleen; so dull, they were not able to talk, though it were scandalously, even of their best friends. So, sir, after a profound silence, at last, one of them gaped—Oh, gad! says she, would that pleasant dog, Clody, were here, to badiner a little! hey! says a second, and stretched—Ah, mon dieu! says a third, and waked—Could not one find him? says a fourth, and leered—Oh, burn him, says a fifth, I saw him go out with the nasty rakes of the blood again—in a pet—did you so? says a sixth. Pardie! we'll spoil that gang presently—in a passion. Whereupon, sir, in two minutes, I received a billet in four words—'Chien, nous vous demandons;' subscribed, Grandmont, Bongrace, Bellegrade, L'Esprit, Bombard, and Hautenbas.

Cha. Why, these are the very names of the princes you supped with.

Clo. Every soul of them the individual wife or sister of every man in the company, split me! ha, ha, ha!

Cha. & Ant. Ha, ha!

San. Did ever two old gudgeons swallow so greedily? [*Aside.*

Ant. Well, and didst thou make a night on't, boy?

Clo. Yes, e'gad, and morning too, sir; for about eight o'clock the next day, slap they all soused upon their knees, kissed round, burned their commodes, drank my health, broke their glasses, and so parted.

Ant. Gad-a-mercy, Clody! Nay, 'twas always a wild young rogue!

Cha. I like him the better for't—he's a pleasant one, I'm sure.

Ant. Well, the rogue gives him a rare account of his travels.

Clo. E'gad, sir, I have a cure for the spleen. Ah, ha! I know how to wriggle myself into a lady's favour—give me leave when you please, sir.

Cha. Sir, you shall have it this moment—faith, I like him—you remember the conditions, sir; three parts of your estate to him and his heirs.

Ant. Sir, he deserves it all; 'tis not a trifle shall part them. You see Charles has given over the world: I'll undertake to buy his birth-right for a shelf of new books.

Cha. Aye, aye; get you the writings ready, with your other son's hand to them; for, unless he signs, the conveyance is of no validity.

Ant. I know it, sir—they shall be ready with his hand in two hours.

Cha. Why, then, come along, my lad; and now I'll shew thee to my daughter.

Clo. I dare be shown, sir—Allons! Hey, suivons l'amour. [*Exeunt all but* SANCHO.

San. How! my poor master to be disinherited, his master, Sancho, there, and I a looker on too! If we have studied our majors and our minors, our antecedents and consequents, to be concluded coxcombs at last, we have made a fair hand on't. I'm glad I know of this roguery, however. I'll take care my master's uncle, old don Lewis, shall hear of it; for, though he can hardly read a proclamation, yet he doats upon his learning; and if he be that old, rough, testy blade he used to be, we may chance to have a rubbers with them first—here he comes, *profecto.*

Enter DON LEWIS.

D. Lew. Sancho, where's my boy Charles? What, is he at it? Is he at it? Deep—deep—I warrant him—Sancho—a little peep now—one peep at him, through the key-hole—I must have a peep.

San. Have a care, sir, he's upon a magical point.

D. Lew. What, has he lost any thing?

San. Yes, sir, he has lost, with a vengeance.

D. Lew. But what, what, what, what, sirrah! what is't?

San. Why, his birth-right, sir; he is di—di—dis—disinherited. [*Sobbing.*

D. Lew. Ha! how! when! what! where! who! what dost thou mean?

San. His brother, sir, is to marry Angelina, the great heiress, to enjoy three parts of his father's estate; and my master is to have a whole acre of new books, for setting his hand to the conveyance.

D. Lew. This must be a lie, sirrah; I will have it a lie.

San. With all my heart, sir; but here comes my old master, and the pickpocket the lawyer: they'll tell you more.

Enter ANTONIO, *and a Lawyer.*

Ant. Here, sir, this paper has your full instructions: pray, be speedy, sir; I don't know but we may couple them to-morrow; be sure you make it firm.

Law. Do you secure his hand, sir, I defy the law to give him his title again.

[*Exit Lawyer.*

San. What think you now, sir?

D. Lew. Why, now, methinks I'm pleased—this is right—I'm pleased—must cut that lawyer's throat, though—must bone him—aye, I'll have him boned—and potted.

Ant. Brother, how is it?

D. Lew. Oh, mighty well—mighty well—let's feel your pulse—feverish——

[*Looks earnestly in* ANTONIO's *face, and, after some pause, whistles a piece of a tune.*

Ant. You are merry, brother.

D. Lew. It's a lie.

Ant. How, brother!

D. Lew. A damned lie—I am not merry. [*Smiling.*

Ant. What are you, then?

D. Lew. Very angry.

Ant. Hi, hi, hi! At what, brother?

[*Mimicking him.*

D. Lew. Why, at a very wise settlement I have made lately.

Ant. What settlement, good brother? I find he has heard of it. [*Aside.*

D. Lew. What do you think I have done? I have—this deep head of mine has—disinherited my elder son, because his understanding is an honour to my family; and given it all to my younger, because he's a puppy—a puppy.

Ant. Come, I guess at your meaning, brother.

D. Lew. Do you so, sir? Why, then, I must tell you, flat and plain, my boy Charles must, and shall inherit it.

Ant. I say no, unless Charles had a soul to value his fortune. What! he should manage eight thousand crowns a year out of the metaphysics? astronomy should look to my vineyards; Horace should buy off my wines; tragedy should kill my mutton; history should cut down my hay; Homer should get in my corn; *Tityre tu patulæ* look to my sheep; and geometry bring my harvest home! Hark you, brother, do you know what learning is?

D. Lew. What if I don't, sir? I believe it's a fine thing, and that's enough—though I can speak no Greek, I love and honour the sound of it, and Charles speaks it loftily; E'gad, he thunders it out, sir: and let me tell you, sir, if you had ever the grace to have heard but six lines of Hesiod, or Homer, or Iliad, or any of the Greek poets, od's-heart! would have made your hair stand on end; sir, he has read such things in my hearing——

Ant. But did you understand them, brother?

D. Lew. I tell you, no. What does that signify! The very sound's sufficient comfort to an honest man.

Ant. Fie, fie! I wonder you talk so, you that are old, and should understand.

D. Lew. Should, sir! Yes, and do, sir. Sir, I'd have you to know, I have studied, I have run over history, poetry, philosophy.

Ant. Yes, like a cat over a harpsichord, rare music——You have read catalogues, I believe. Come, come, brotner, my younger boy is a fine gentleman.

D. Lew. A sad dog—I'll buy a prettier fellow in a pennyworth of ginger-bread.

Ant. What I propose, I'll do, sir, say you your pleasure—here comes one I must talk with—well, brother, what news?

Enter CHARINO.

Cha. Oh, to our wishes, sir! Clody's a right bait for a girl, sir; a budding, sprightly fellow: she's a little shy at first; but I gave him his cue, and the rogue does so whisk, and frisk, and sing, and dance her about! Odsbud, he plays like a greyhound. Noble Don Lewis, I am your humble servant. Come, what say you? Shall I prevail with you to settle some part of your estate upon young Clody.

D. Lew. Clody!

Cha. Aye, your nephew, Clody.

D. Lew. Settle upon him!

Cha. Aye.

D. Lew. Why, look you, I ha'nt much land to spare; but I have an admirable horse-pond——I'll settle that upon him, if you will.

Ant. Come, let him have his way, sir; he's old and hasty; my estate's sufficient. How does your daughter, sir?

Cha. Ripe, and ready, sir, like a blushing rose; she only waits for the pulling.

Ant. Why, then, let to-morrow be the day.

Cha. With all my heart; get you the writings ready, my girl shall be here in the morning.

D. Lew. Hark you, sir, do you suppose my Charles shall——

Cha. Sir, I suppose nothing; what I'll do, I'll justify; what your brother does, let him answer.

Ant. That I have already, sir, and so good morrow to your patience, brother.

[*Exit* ANTONIO.

D. Lew. Sancho!

San. Sir?

D. Lew. Fetch me some gunpowder—quick—quick.

San. Sir?

D. Lew. Some gun-powder, I say—a barrel—quickly—and, d'ye hear, three pennyworth of ratsbane; hey! aye, I'll blow up one, and poison the other.

San. Come, sir, I see what you would be at; and if you dare take my advice, (I don't want wit at a pinch, sir) e'en let me try, if I can fire my master enough with the praises of the young lady, to make him rival his brother; that would blow them up, indeed, sir.

D. Lew. Psha! impossible; he never spoke six words to any woman in his life, but his bed-maker.

San. So much the better, sir; therefore, if he speaks at all, its the more likely to be out of the road. Hark, he rings!—I must wait upon him.

[*Exit* SANCHO.

D. Lew. These damned old rogues! I can't look my poor boy in the face: but come, Charles; let them go on; thou shalt not want money to buy thee books, yet—that old fool, thy father, and his young puppy, shall not share a groat of mine between them; nay, to plague them, I could find in my heart to fall sick in a pet, give thee my estate in a passion, and leave the world in a fury.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter ANTONIO *and* SANCHO.

Ant. SIR, he shall have what's fit for him.

San. No inheritance, sir!

Ant. Enough to give him books, and a moderate maintenance: that's as much as he cares for; you talk like a fool, a coxcomb; trouble him with land——

San. Must master Clodio have all, sir?

Ant. All, all; he knows how to use it; he's a man bred in this world; t'other in the skies, his business is altogether above stairs; [*bell rings.*] go, see what he wants.

San. A father, I'm sure.

[*Exit* SANCHO.

Ant. What, will none of my rogues come near me now? Oh, here they are.

Enter three Servants.

Well, sir, in the first place, can you procure me a plentiful dinner for about fifty, within two hours? Your young master is to be married this morning; will that spur you, sir?

Cook. Young master, sir! I wish your honour had given me a little more warning.

Ant. Sir, you have as much as I had: I was not sure of it half an hour ago.

Cook. Sir, I will try what I can do—hey, Pedro! Gusman! Come, stir, ho!

[*Exit Cook.*

Ant. Butler, open the cellar to all good fellows; if any man offers to sneak away sober, knock him down! [*Exeunt.*

CARLOS *alone in his study.* [*A noise of chopping within.*]

Car. What a perpetual noise these people make! my head is broken with several noises, and in every corner. I have forgot to eat and sleep, with reading; all my faculties turn into study. What a misfortune 'tis in human nature, that the body will not live on that, which feeds the mind! How unprofitable a pleasure is eating!——Sancho!

Enter SANCHO.

San. Did you call, sir? [*Chopping again.*

Car. Prithee, what noise is this?

San. The cooks are hard at work, sir, chopping herbs, and mincing meat, and breaking marrow-bones.

Car. And is it thus at every dinner?

San. No, sir; but we have high doings today.

Car. Well, set this folio in its place again; then make me a little fire, and get a manchet; I'll dine alone.—Does my younger brother speak any Greek yet, Sancho?

San. No, sir, but he spits French like a magpie, and that's more in fashion.

Car. He steps before me there; I think I read it well enough to understand it; but, when I am to give it utterance, it quarrels with my tongue. Again that noise! Prithee tell me, Sancho, are there any princes to dine here?

San. Some there are as happy as princes, sir; your brother's married to-day.

Car. What of that? might not six dishes serve them? I never have but one, and eat of that but sparingly.

San. Sir, all the country round is invited; not a dog that knows the house, but comes, too: all open, sir.

Car. Prithee, who is it my brother marries?

San. Old Charino's daughter, sir, the great heiress; a delicate creature; young, soft, smooth, fair, plump, and ripe as a cherry——and, they say, modest too.

Car. That's strange; prithee, how do these modest women look? I never yet conversed with any but my own mother; to me, they ever were but shadows, seen and unregarded.

San. Ah, would you saw this lady, sir! she would draw you farther than your Archimedes; she has a better secret than any's in Aristotle, if you studied for it. E'gad you'd find her the prettiest natural philosopher to play with!

Car. Is she so fine a creature?

San. Such eyes! such looks! such a pair of pretty plump, pouting lips! such softness in her voice! such music, too! and, when she smiles, such roguish dimples in her cheeks! such a clear skin! white neck, and, a little lower, such a pair of round, hard, heaving, what d'ye call-ums—ah!

Car. Why, thou art in love, Sancho.

San. Ay, so would you be, if you saw her, sir.

Car. I don't think so. What settlement does my father make them?

San. Only all his dirty land, sir, and makes your brother his sole heir.

Car. Must I have nothing?

San. Books in abundance; leave to study your eyes out, sir.

Car. I'm the elder born, and have a title, though.

San. No matter for that, sir, he'll have possession—of the lady, too!

Car. I wish him happy—he'll not inherit my little understanding, too!

San. Oh, sir, he's more a gentleman than to do that—Ods me, sir! sir, here comes the very lady, the bride, your sister that must be, and her father.

Enter CHARINO *and* ANGELINA.

Stand close; you'll both see and hear, sir.

Car. I ne'er saw any yet so fair; such sweet-

ness in her look! such modesty! If we may think the eye the window to the heart, she has a thousand treasured virtues there.

San. So! the book is gone. [*Aside.*

Cha. Come, prithee, put on a brisker look; ods-heart, dost thou think in conscience, that's fit for thy wedding-day?

Ang. Sir, I wish it were not quite so sudden: a little time for farther thought, perhaps, had made it easier to me: to change for ever, is no trifle, sir.

Car. A wonder!

Cha. Look you, his fortune I have taken care of, and his person you have no exceptions to.—What, in the name of Venus, would the girl have?

Ang. I never said, of all the world I made him, sir, my choice: nay, though he be yours, I cannot say I am highly pleased with him, nor yet am averse; but I had rather welcome your commands and him, than disobedience.

Cha. Oh, if that be all, madam, to make you easy, my commands are at your service.

Ang. I have done with my objections, sir.

Car. Such understanding in so soft a form! Happy——happy brother! may he be happy, while I sit down in patience and alone! I have gazed too much—Reach me an Ovid.

[*Exeunt* CARLOS *and* SANCHO.

Cha. I say put on your best looks, hussy—for here he comes, faith.

Enter CLODIO.

Ah, my dear Clody!

Clo. My dear, [*Kisses him.*] dear dad. Ha! *Ma princesse! estes vous là donc?* Ah, ha! *Non, non. Je ne m'y connois guères*, &c. [*Sings.*] Look, look—look, o'slyboots; what, she knows nothing of the matter! But you will, child—— E'gad, I shall count the clock extremely to-night. Let me see—what time shall I rise to-morrow? Not till after nine, ten, eleven, for a pistole.—Ah—*C'est à dire, votre cœur insensible est enfin vaincu. Non, non, &c.* [*Sings a second verse.*

Enter ANTONIO, DON LEWIS, *and Lawyer.*

Ant. Well said, Clody! my noble brother, welcome! my fair daughter, I give you joy!

Clo. And so will I, too, sir. *Allons! Vivons! Chantons, dansons! Hey! L'autre jour, &c.*

[*Sings and dances, &c.*

Ant. Well said again, boy. Sir, you and your writings are welcome. What, my angry brother! nay, you must have your welcome, too, or we shall make but a flat feast on it.

D. Lew. Sir, I am not welcome, nor I won't be welcome, nor no-body's welcome, and you are all a parcel of——

Cha. What, sir?

D. Lew. ——Miserable wretches—sad dogs.

Ant. Come, pray, sir, bear with him, he's old and hasty: but he'll dine and be good company for all this.

D. Lew. A strange lie, that.

Clo. Ha, ha, ha! poor Testy, ha, ha!

D. Lew. Don't laugh, my dear rogue, prithee, don't laugh now; faith, I shall break thy head, if thou dost.

Clo. Gad so! why, then, I find you are angry at me, dear uncle!

D. Lew. Angry at thee, hey puppy! Why, what?—what dost thou see in that lovely hatchet-face of thine, that is worth my being out of humour at? Blood and fire, ye dog! get out of my sight, or——

Ant. Nay, brother, this is too far—

D. Lew. Angry at him! a son of a——son's son of a whore!

Cha. Ha, ha! poor peevish——

D. Lew. I'd fain have some body poison him. [*To himself.*] Ah, that sweet creature! Must this fair flower be cropped to stick up in a piece of rascally earthen ware? I must speak to her—— Puppy, stand out of my way.

Clo. Ha, ha! ay, now for it.

D. Lew. [*To* ANGELINA.] Ah! ah! ah! Madam—I pity you; you're a lovely young creature, and ought to have a handsome man yoked to you, one of understanding, too;—I am sorry to say it, but this fellow's skull's extremely thick—he can never get any thing but muffs and snuff-boxes; or, say, he should have a thing shaped like a child, you can make nothing of it but a tailor.

Clo. Odds me! why, you are testy, my dear uncle.

D. Lew. Will nobody take that troublesome dog out of my sight—I cannot stay where he is—I'll go see my poor boy Charles—I've disturbed you, madam; your humble servant.

Ant. You'll come again, and drink the bride's health, brother?

D. Lew. That lady's health I may; and, if she'll give me leave, perhaps sit by her at table, too.

Clo. Ha, ha! bye, nuncle.

D. Lew. Puppy, good bye——

[*Exit* D. LEWIS.

Ang. An odd-humoured gentleman.

Ant. Very odd indeed, child; I suppose, in pure spight, he'll make my son Charles his heir.

Ang. Methinks I would not have a light head, nor one laden with too much learning, as my father says this Carlos is; sure there's something hid in that gentleman's concern for him, that speaks him not so mere a log.

Ant. Come, shall we go and seal, brother? The priest stays for us. When Carlos has signed the conveyance, as he shall presently, we'll then to the wedding, and so to dinner.

Cha. With all my heart, sir.

Clo. *Allons, ma chere princesse!*

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

CARLOS *in his study, with* DON LEWIS, *and* SANCHO.

D. Lew. Nay, you are undone.

Car. Then—I must study, sir, to bear my fortune.

D. Lew. Have you no greater feeling?

San. You were sensible of the great book, sir, when it fell upon your head; and won't the ruin of your fortune stir you?

Car. Will he have my books, too?

D. Lew. No, no; he has a book, a fine one, too, called 'The Gentleman's Recreation; or, The Secret Art of getting Sons and Daughters:' such a creature! a beauty in folio! Would thou hadst her in thy study, Carlos, though it were but to new-clasp her!

San. He has seen her, sir.

D. Lew. Well, and—and——

San. He flung away his book, sir.

D. Lew. Did he faith? would he had flung away his humour, too, and spoke to her.

Car. Must my brother then have all?

D. Lew. All, all.

San. All that your father has, sir.

Car. And that fair creature, too?

San. Aye, sir.

D. Lew. Hey!

Car. He has enough, then. [*Sighing.*

D. Lew. He have her, Charles! why would, would, that is———hey!

Car. May not I see her, sometimes, and call her sister? I'll do her no wrong.

D. Lew. I can't bear this! 'Sheart, I could cry for madness! Flesh and fire! do but speak to her, man.

Car. I cannot, sir; her look requires something of that distant awe, words of that soft respect, and yet such force and meaning, too, that I should stand confounded to approach her, and yet I long to wish her joy. Oh, were I born to give it, too!

D. Lew. Why, thou shalt wish her joy, boy; faith she is a good-humoured creature; she'll take it kindly.

Car. Do you think so, uncle?

D. Lew. I'll to her, and tell of you.

Car. Do sir——Stay, uncle——will she not think me rude? I would not for the world offend her.

D. Lew. 'Fend a fiddle-stick—let me alone—I'll—I'll—

Car. Nay, but, sir! dear uncle!

D. Lew. A hum! a hum! [*Exit* DON LEWIS.

Enter ANTONIO *and the Lawyer, with a writing.*

Ant. Where's my son?

San. There, sir, casting a figure what chopping children his brother shall have, and where he shall find a new father for himself.

Ant. I shall find a stick for you, rogue, I shall. Charles, how dost thou do? Come, hither, boy.

Car. Your pleasure, sir?

Ant. Nay, no great matter, child; only to put your name here a little, to this bit of parchment: I think you write a reasonable good hand, Charles.

Car. Pray, sir, to what use may it be?

Ant. Only to pass your title in the land I have to your brother Clodio.

Car. Is it no more, sir?

Law. That's all, sir.

Ant. No, no, 'tis nothing else; look you, you shall be provided for; you shall have what books you please, and your means shall come in without your care, and you shall always have a servant to wait on you.

Car. Sir, I thank you; but if you please, I had rather sign it before the good company below; it being, sir, so frank a gift, 'twill be some small compliment to have done it before the lady, too: there I shall sign it cheerfully, and wish my brother fortune.

Ant. With all my heart, child; it is the same thing to me.

Car. You'll excuse me, sir, if I make no great stay with you.

Ant. Do as thou wilt; thou shalt do any thing thou hast a mind to. [*Exeunt.*

San. Now has he undone himself for ever; ods-heart, I'll down into the cellar, and be stark drunk for anger. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to a dining-room: a large table spread.*

Enter CHARINO *with* ANGELINA, CLODIO, DON LEWIS, *Ladies, Priests, and a Lawyer.*

Law. Come, let him bring his son's hand, and all's done. Are you ready, sir?

Priest. Sir, I shall dispatch them presently, immediately; for, in truth, I am an hungry.

Clo. Egad, I warrant you, the priest and I could both fall to without saying grace——Ha, you little rogue! what, you think it long too?

Ang. I find no fault, sir; better things were well done, than done too hastily——Sir, you look melancholy. [*To* DON LEWIS.

D. Lew. Sweet-smelling blossom! Ah, that I had the gathering of thee: I would stick thee in the bosom of a pretty young fellow——Ah, thou hast missed a man (but that he is so bewitched to his study, and knows no other mistress than his mind) so far above this feather-headed puppy——

Ang. Can he talk, sir?

D. Lew. Like an angel——to himself——the devil a word to a woman: his language is all upon the high business: to heaven, and heaven-

ly wonders, to nature, and her dark and secret causes.

Ang. Does he speak so well there, sir?

D. Lew. To admiration! Such curiosities! but he can't look a woman in the face; if he does, he blushes like fifteen.

Ang. But a little conversation, methinks——

D. Lew. Why, so I think, too; but the boy's bewitched, and the devil can't bring him to it: shall I try if I can get him to wish you joy?

Ang. I shall receive it as becomes his sister, sir.

Clo. Look, look, old Testy will fall in love by and by; he's hard at it, split me!

Cha. Let him alone; she'll fetch him about, I warrant you.

Clo. So, here my father comes! Now priest. Hey, my brother too! that's a wonder; broke like a spirit from his cell.

Enter ANTONIO *and* CARLOS.

D. Lew. Odso, here he is; that's he; a little inclining to the lean, or so, but his understanding's the fatter for it.

Ant. Come, Carlos, 'twere your desire to see my fair daughter and the good company, and to seal before them all, and give your brother joy.

Cha. He does well; I shall think the better of him as long as I live.

Car. Is this the lady, sir?

Ant. Ay, that's your sister, Charles.

Car. Forbid it, love! [*Aside.*] Do you not think she'll grace our family?

Ant. No doubt on it, sir.

Car. Should I not thank her for so unmerited a grace?

Ant. Ay, and welcome, Charles.

D. Lew. Now, my boy; give her a gentle twist by the finger; lay your lips softly, softly, close and plump to her. [*Apart to* CARLOS.

Car. Pardon a stranger's freedom, lady—— [*Salutes* ANGELINA.] Dissolving softness! Oh, the drowning joy!—Happy, happy he, that sips eternally such nectar down, that, unconfined, may lave and wanton there in sateless draughts of ever-springing beauty!—But you, fair creature, share by far the higher joy; if, as I've read, (nay, now am sure) the sole delight of love lies only in the power to give.

Ang. How near his thoughts agree with mine! this the mere scholar I was told of! [*Aside.*]—I find, sir, you have experienced love; you seem acquainted with the passion.

Car. I've had indeed, a dead pale glimpse in theory, but never saw the enlivening light before.

Ang. Ha, before! [*Aside.*

Ant. Well, these are very fine compliments, Charles; but you say nothing to your brother yet.

Car. Oh, yes, and wish him, sir, with any other beauty (if possible) more lasting joy than I could taste with her!

Ang. He speaks unhappily.

Clo. Ha!——what do you say, brother?

Ant. Nay, for my part, I don't understand him.

Cha. Nor I.

D. Lew. Stand clear! I do——and that sweet creature too, I hope.

Ang. Too well, I fear.

Ant. Come, come, to the writing, Charles; prithee, leave thy studying, man.

Car. I'll leave my life first; I study now to be a man; before, what man was, was but my argument;———I am now on the proof; I find, I feel myself a man———nay, I fear it, too.

D. Lew. He has it! he has it! my boy's in for it.

Clo. Come, come, will you——

D. Lew. Stand out of the way, puppy.

[*Interposing with his back to* CLODIO.

Car. Whence is it, fair, that while I offer speech to you, my thoughts want words, my words their free and honest utterance? Why is it thus I tremble at your touch, and fear your frown, as would a frighted child the dreadful lightning? Yet should my dearest friend or brother dare to check my vain deluded wishes, Oh, I should turn, and tear him like an offended lion——Is this, can it, must it be in a sister's power?

Clo. Come, come, will you sign, brother?

D. Lew. Time enough, puppy.

Car. O! if you knew with what precipitated haste you hurry on a deed, that makes you blessed or miserable for ever, even yet, near as you are to happiness, you'd find no danger in a moment's pause.

Clo. I say, will you sign, brother?

Car. Away, I have no time for trifles! room for an elder brother.

D. Lew. Why, did not I bid thee stand out of the way now?

Ant. Ay, but this is trifling, Charles! Come, come, your hand, man.

Car. Your pardon, sir, I cannot seal yet; had you only shewed me land, I had resigned it free, and proud to have bestowed it to your pleasure: 'tis care, 'tis dirt, and trouble: but you have opened to me such a treasure, such unimagined mines of solid joy, that I perceive my temper stubborn now, ev'n to a churlish avarice of love? —Heaven direct my fortune!

Ant. And so you won't part with your title, sir

Car. Sooner with my soul of reason, be a plant, a beast, a fish, a fly, and only make the number of things up, than yield one foot of land —if she be tied to it.

Cha. I don't like this: he talks oddly, methinks.

Ang. Yet with a bravery of soul might warm the coldest heart. [*Aside.*

Clo. Pshaw, pox! prithee, brother, you had better think of those things in your study, man!

Car. Go you and study, for 'tis time, young brother: turn o'er the tedious volumes I have read; think, and digest them well! the wholesomest food for green consumptive minds; nor dare to dream of marriage-vows, till thou hast taught thy soul, like mine, to love——Is it for thee to wear a jewel of this inestimable worth?

D. Lew. Ah, Charles! [*Kisses him.*] What say you to the scholar now, chicken?

Ang. A wonder!——Is this gentleman your brother, sir! [*To* CLODIO.

Clo. Hey! No, my——Madam, not quite——that is, he is a little a-kin by the———Pox on him! would he were buried——I can't tell what to say to him, split me!

Ant. Positively, you will not seal then, ha?

Car. Neither——I should not blindly say I will not seal——Let me entreat a moment's pause——for, even yet, perhaps I may. [*Sighing.*

Ang. Forbid it, fortune!

Ant. O, may you so, sir!

Clo. Ay! sir, hey! What, you are come to yourself I find, 'sheart!

Cha. Ay, ay, give him a little time, he'll think better on't, I warrant you.

Car. Perhaps, fair creature, I have done you wrong, whose plighted love and hope went hand in hand together; but, I conjure you, think my life were hateful after so base, so barbarous an act as parting them: What! to lay waste at once for ever all the gay blossoms of your forward fortune! O forbid it, Love! forbid it, Nature and Humanity! I have no land, no fortune, life, or being, while your necessity or peace requires them. Say! or give me need to think your smallest hope depends on my objected ruin; my ruin is my safety there; my fortune, or my life resigned with joy, so your account of happy hours were thence but raised to any added number.

Cha. Why ay! there's some civility in this.

Clo. The fellow really talks very prettily.

Car. But if, in bare compliance to a father's will, you now but suffer marriage, or, what's worse, give it as an extorted bond, imposed on the simplicity of your youth, and dare confess you wish some honest friend would save, or free you from its hard conditions; I then again have land, have life, and resolution, waiting still upon your happier fortune.

Clo. Ha, ha! pert enough, that! 'Egad! I long to see what this will come to!

Priest. In truth, unless somebody is married presently, the dinner will be spoiled, and then——no body will be able to eat it.

Ant. Brother, I say, let's remove the lady.

Cha. Force her from him!

Car. 'Tis too late! I have a figure here!——Sooner shall bodies leave their shade; so fixed, so rooted here, is every growing thought of her.

Clo. Gads me! what, now its troublesome again, is it?

Car. Consider, fair one, now's the very crisis of our fate: you cannot have it, sure, to ask, if honour be the parent of my love: if you can love for love, and think your heart rewarded there, like two young vines we'll curl together, circling our souls in never-ending joy: we'll spring together, and we'll bear one fruit; one joy shall make us smile, one sorrow mourn: one age go with us, one hour of death shall close our eyes, and one cold grave shall hold us happy——Say but you hate me not! O speak! Give but the softest breath to that transporting thought!

Ang. Need I then speak, to say, I am far from hating you——I would say more, but there is nothing fit for me to say.

Cha. I'll bear it no longer——

Ang. On this you may depend, I cannot like that marriage was proposed me.

Car. How shall my soul requite this goodness?

Cha. Beyond patience! this is downright insolence! roguery! rape!

Ant. Part them.

Clo. Ay, ay! part them, part them.

D. Lew. Doll! dum! dum!——

[*Sings, and draws in their defence.*

Cha. Call an officer! I'll have them forced asunder.

Ang. Nay, then I am reduced to take protection here. [*Goes to* CARLOS.

Car. O ecstacy of heart! transporting joy!

D. Lew. Lorra! Dorrol! Loll!

[*Sings and dances.*

Cha. A plot! a plot against my honour! Murder! Treason! Gunpowder! I'll be revenged!

Ant. Sir, you shall have satisfaction.

Cha. I'll be revenged!

Ant. Carlos, I say, forego the lady.

Car. Never, while I have sense of being, life, or motion.

Clo. You won't! Gadso! What, then I find I must lug out upon this business? Allons! the lady, sir!

D. Lew. Lorra! Dorrol! Loll!

[*Presenting his point to* CLODIO.

Cha. I'll have his blood! by all the scars and wounds of honour in my family! [*Exit* CHAR.

Car. Hold, uncle! come, brother! sheath your anger——I'll do my best to satisfy you all——but first I would intreat a blessing here.

Ant. Out of my doors! thou art no son of mine. [*Exit* ANT.

Car. I am sorry I have lost a father, sir——For you, brother, since once you had a seeming hope in lieu of what you've lost, half of my birthright——

Clo. No halves! no halves, sir! the whole lady!

Car. Why, then, the whole, if you can like the terms.

Clo. What terms? What terms? Come, quick, quick.

Car. The first is this———[*Snatches* DON LEWIS'S *sword.*] Win her, and wear her; for, on my soul, unless my body fail, my mind shall never yield thee up a thought in love

D. Lew. Gramercy, Charles! To him, boy! E'gad, this love has made a man of him.

Car. This is the first good sword I ever poised in anger yet; 'tis sharp I'm sure; if it but hold my putting home, I shall so hunt your insolence! ——I feel the fire of ten strong spirits in me: wert thou a native fencer, in so fair a cause, I thus should hold thee at the worst defiance.

Clo. Look you, brother, take care of yourself; I shall certainly be in you the first thrust; but if you had rather, d'ye see, we'll talk a little calmly about this business.

Car. Away, trifler! I would be loth to prove thee a coward, too.

Clo. Coward! why, then really, sir, if you please, midriff's the word, brother; you are a son of a whore—Allons!—

[*They fight, and* CLODIO *is disarmed.*

Car. There, sir, take your life——and mend it——

Ang. Are you wounded, sir?

Car. Only in my fears for you: how shall we bestow us, uncle?

D. Lew. Positively, we are not safe here, this lady being an heiress. Follow me.

Car. Good angels guard us!

[*Exeunt with* ANG.

Clo. Gadso! I never fenced so ill in all my life——never in my life, split me!

Enter MONSIEUR.

Mons. Sire, here be de trompete, de haute-boy, de musique, de maitre danser, dat deseer to know if you sal be please to 'ave de masque begin.

Clo. Ha! what does this puppy say now?

Mons. Sire, de musique.

Clo. Why, ay——that's true——but——tell them——plague on them, tell them they are not ready tuned.

Mons. Sire, dare is all tune, all prepare.

Clo. Ay! Why, then, tell them that my brother's wise again, and has spoiled all, and I am bubbled, and so I shan't be married till next time: but I have fought with him, and he has disarmed me; and so he won't release the land, nor give me my mistress again; and I——I am undone, that's all. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter CHARINO, ANTONIO, *Officers and Servants.*

Cha. Officer, do your duty: I say, seize them all.

Ant. Carry them this minute before a——— How now! What! all fled?

Cha. Ha! my girl! my child! my heiress! I am abused! I am cheated! I am robbed! I am ravished! murdered! and flung in a ditch!

Ant. Who let them out? Which way went they, villains?

Serv. Sir, we had no order to stop them; but they went out at the door not six minutes ago.

Cha. I'll pursue them with bills, warrants, actions, writs, and malice: I'm a lawyer, sir; they shall find I understand ruin.

Ant. Nay, they shall be found, sir: Run you to the port, sirrah, see if any ships are going off, and bring us notice immediately.

[*Exeunt Officers and Servants.*

Enter SANCHO *drunk.*

San. Ban, ban, Cac-caliban. [*Sings.*

Ant. Here comes a rogue, I'll warrant, knows the bottom of all! Where's my son, villain?

San. Son, sir!

Cha. Where's my daughter, sirrah?

San. Daughter, sir!

Cha. Ay, my daughter, rascal!

San. Why, sir, they told me just now, sir——that she's—she's run away.

Ant. Dog, where's your master?

San. My master! why, they say he is———

Ant. Where, sirrah?

San. Why, he is—he is—gone along with her.

Ant. Death! you dog, discover him, or——

San. Sir, I will—I will.

Ant. Where is he, villain!

San. Where, sir? Why, to be sure, he is——he is——upon my soul, I don't know, sir.

Ant. No more trifling, rascal!

San. If I do, sir, I wish this may be my poison. [*Drinks.*

Ant. Death! you dog, get out of my house, or I'll——So, sir, have you found him?

Re-enter the Servant, hastily, and CLODIO.

Clo. Ay, sir, have you found them?

Serv. Yes, sir, I had a sight of them; but they were just got on board a small vessel before I could overtake them.

Cha. Death and furies!

Ant. Whither were they bound, sirrah?

Serv. Sir, I could not discover that: but they were full before the wind, with a very smart gale.

Ant. What shall we do, brother?

Clo. Be as smart as they, sir; follow them, follow them.

Cha. Send to the port this moment, and secure a ship; I'll pursue them through all the elements.

Clo. I'll follow you by the northern star.

Ant. Run to the port again, rogue; hire a ship, and tell them they must hoist sail immediately.

Enter MONSIEUR.

Clo. And you, rogue, run to my chamber, fill

up my snuff-box——Cram it hard, you dog, and be here again before you get thither.

Ant. What, will you take nothing else, boy?

Clo. Nothing, sir, but snuff and opportunity—we're in haste. Allons! hey! Je vole. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Lisbon.*

Enter ELVIRA, DON DUART, *and Governor.*

Elv. DEAR brother, let me intreat you, stay: why will you provoke your danger?

D. Du. Madam, my honour must be satisfied

Elv. That's done already, by the degrading blow you gave him.

Gov. Pray, niece, what is it has incensed him?

Elv. Nothing but a needless quarrel.

Gov. I am sorry for him—To whom is all this fury, nephew?

D. Du. To you, sir, or any man that dares oppose me.

Gov. Come, you are too boisterous, sir; and this vain opinion of your courage, taken on your late success in duelling, makes you daily shunned by men of civil conversation. For shame, leave off these senseless brawls; if you are valiant, as you would be thought, turn out your courage to the wars; let your king and country be the better for't.

D. Du. Yes, so I might be general——Sir, no man living shall command me.

Gov. Sir, you shall find that here in Lisbon I will: I'm every hour followed with complaints of your behaviour from men of almost all conditions; and my authority, which you presume will bear you out, because you are my nephew, no longer shall protect you now: expect your next disorder to be punished with as much severity as his that is a stranger to my blood.

D. Du. Punish me! you, nor your office, dare not do it.

Gov. Away! Justice dares do any thing she ought.

Elv. Brother, this brutal temper must be cast off: when you can master that, you shall gladly command my fortune. But if you still persist, expect my prayers and vows for your conversion only; but never means, or favour.

D. Du. Fire! and furies! I'm tutored here like a mere school-boy! Women shall judge of injuries in honour?——For you, sir—I was born free, and will not curb my spirit, nor is it for your authority to tempt it: give me the usage of a man of honour, or 'tis not your government shall protect you. [*Exit.*

Gov. I am sorry to see this, niece, for your sake.

Elv. Would he were not my brother!

Enter DON MANUEL, *and Sailors, with* ANGELINA.

D. Man. Divide the spoil amongst you; this fair captive I only challenge for myself.

Gov. Ha! some prize brought in.

Sail. Sir, she's yours; you fought, and well deserve her.

Gov. Noble Don Manuel! welcome on shore! I see you are fortunate; for I presume that's some uncommon prize.

D. Man. She is, indeed——These ten years I have known the seas, and many rough engagements there; but never saw so small a bark so long defended, with such incredible valour, and by two men scarce armed, too.

Gov. Is it possible?

D. Man. Nay, and their contempt of death, when taken, exceeds even all they acted in their freedom.

Gov. Pray tell us, sir.

D. Man. When they were brought aboard us, both disarmed and ready to be fettered, they looked as they had sworn never to take the bread of bondage, and on a sudden snatching up their swords, (the younger taking first from this fair maid a farewell only with his eyes) both leapt into the sea.

Gov. 'Tis wonderful, indeed!

D. Man. It wrought so much upon me, had not our own safety hindered, (at that time a great ship pursuing us) I would, in charity, have taken them up, and, with their lives, they should have had their liberty.

Ang. Too late, alas! they're lost! (heart-wounding thought!) for ever lost!——I now am friendless, miserable, and a slave!

D. Man. Take comfort, fair one; perhaps you yet again may see them; they were not quite a league from shore, and, with such strength and courage broke through the rolling waves, they could not fail of life and safety.

Ang. In that last hope, I brook a wretched being; but if they're dead, my woes will find so many doors to let out life, I shall not long survive them.

Elv. Alas, poor lady! Come, sir, misery but weeps the more when she is gazed on—we trouble her.

Gov. I wait on you; your servant, sir——

[*Exeunt* ELVIRA *and* GOVERNOR.

D. Man. Now, my fair captive, though I confess you beautiful, yet give me leave to own my heart has long been in another's keeping; therefore, the favour I am about to ask, you may, at least, hear with safety.

Ang. This has engaged me, sir, to hear.

D. Man. These three years have I honourably loved a noble lady; her name Louisa, the beauteous niece of great Ferrara's duke: her person and fortune uncontrouled, sole mistress of her-

self and me, who long have languished in a hopeless constancy. Now, I perceive, in all your language, and your looks, a softening power; nor can a suit, by you promoted, be denied: therefore, I would awhile entreat your leave to recommend you, as her companion, to this lady's favour; and, (as I'm sure you'll soon be near her closest thoughts) if you can think upon the honest courtesies I hitherto have shewn your modesty, and, in your happy talk, but name, with any mark of favour, me, or my unwearied love, 'twould be a generous act would fix me ever grateful to its memory.

Ang. Such poor assistance, sir, as one distressed like me can give, shall willingly be paid: if I can steal but any thoughts from my own misfortunes, rest assured, they'll be employed in healing yours.

D. Man. I'll study to deserve this goodness: for the present, think my poor house your own; at night I'll wait upon you to the lady—till when, I am your guard.

Ang. You have bound me to your service.

[*Exeunt* D. MANUEL *and* ANGELINA.

SCENE II.—*Changes to a church, the vespers supposed to be just ended, several walking out.* CARLOS *and* DON LEWIS *rising near* LOUISA *and* HONORIA. LOUISA *observing* CARLOS.

Hon. Come, madam, shall we walk out? The crowd's pretty well over now.

Lou. But, then, that melancholy softness in his look! [*To herself.*

Hon. Cousin! Donna Louisa!

Lou. Even in his devotions, too; such graceful adorations——so sweet a———

Hon. Cousin, will you go?

Lou. Pshaw, time enough—Prithee, let's walk a little this way.

Hon. What's the matter with her?

[*They walk from* D. LEWIS *and* CARLOS.

Car. For what are we reserved?

D. Lew. For no good, I'm afraid——My ill-luck don't use to give over when her hand's in; she's always in haste——One misfortune generally comes galloping in upon the back of another——Drowning we have escaped miraculously; would the fear of hanging were over, too! our being so strangely saved from one, smells damnably rank of the other. Though I am obliged to thee, Charles, for what life I have, and I'll thank thee for't, if ever I set foot upon my estate again. Faith, I was just gone; if thou hadst not taken me upon thy back the last hundred yards, by this time I had been food for herrings and mackrel——But 'tis pretty well as it is; for there is not much difference between starving and drowning—All in good time—We are poor enough, in conscience, and I don't know but two days more fasting might really make us hungry, too.

Lou. They are strangers, then, and seem in some necessity. [*Aside.*

Car. These are light wants to me; I find them none, when weighed with Angelina's loss; when I reflect on her distress, the hardships and the cries of helpless bondage; the insolent, the deaf desires of men in power; O, I could wish the fate, that saved us from the ocean's fury, in kinder pity of our love's distress, had buried us in one wave, embracing!

Lou. How tenderly he talks! This were, indeed, a lover! [*Aside.*

D. Lew. A most unhappy loss, indeed! But come, don't despair, boy; the ship, that took us, was a Portuguese, of Lisbon too, I believe; who knows but some way or other we may hear of her yet? Come, don't be melancholy.

Car. Have I not cause? Were not my force of faith superior to my hopeless reason, I could not bear the insults of my fortune; but I have raised myself by elevated faith, as far above despair, as reason lifts me from the brute.

D. Lew. Why, now, would not this make any one weep, to hear a young man talk so finely, when he is almost famished?

Lou. What were you saying, cousin?

Hon. I would have said, madam, but you would not hear me.

Lou. Prithee forgive me, I was in the oddest thought: let's walk a little. Did you observe those strangers that have walked by us?

Hon. Not much; but what of them?

Lou. Did you hear nothing of their talk?

Hon. I think I did; one of them, the younger, seemed concerned for a lost mistress.

Lou. Ay, but so near, so tenderly concerned, his looks as well as words, speaking an inward grief, that could not flow from every common passion. I must know more of him.

Hon. What do you mean?

Lou. Must speak to him.

Hon. By no means.

Lou. Why, you see they are strangers; I believe, in some necessity; and since they seem not born to beg relief, to offer it, unasked, would add some merit to the charity.

Hon. Consider.

Lou. I hate it———sir———sir———

D. Lew. Would you speak with me, madam?

Lou. If you please, with your friend—not to interrupt you, sir.

Car. Your pleasure, lady?

Lou. You seem a stranger, sir.

Car. A most unfortunate one.

Lou. If I am not deceived, in want: pardon my freedom——if I have erred, as freely tell me so; if not, as earnest of your better fortune, this trifle sues for your acceptance.

[*Gives him money.*

D. Lew. Take it, boy.

Car. A bounty so unmerited, and from a hand unknown, fills me with surprise and won-

der. But give me leave, in honesty, to warn you, lady, of a too heedless purchase; for, if you mean it as a bribe to any evil you would have me practise, be not offended, if I dare not take it.

Lou. You are too scrupulous; I have no hard designs upon your honesty——only this——be wise and cautious, if you should follow me; I am observed; farewell. Jaques!——Will you walk, cousin?——[*Whispers* JAQUES.] and bring me word immediately——I am going home.

[*Exeunt* LOUISA *and* HONORIA.

D. Lew. Let's see; odsheart! follow her, man—why, 'tis all gold!

Car. Dispose it as you please.

D. Lew. I'll first have a better title to't——No, 'tis all thine, boy——I hold an hundred pistoles she's some great fortune in love with you—I say, follow her——since you have lost one wife before you had her, I'd have you make sure of another before you lose her.

Car. Fortune, indeed, has dispossessed her of my person; but her firm title to my heart, not all the subtle arts or laws of love can shake or violate.

D. Lew. Prithee follow her now; methinks I'd fain see thee in bed with somebody before I die.

Car. Be not so poor in thought; let me intreat you rather to employ them, sir, with mine, in search of Angelina's fortune.

D. Lew. Well, dear Charles, don't chide me now. I do love thee, and will follow thee.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Street.*

Enter ANTONIO *and* CHARINO.

Ant. You heard what the sailor said, brother; such a ship has put in here, and such persons were taken in it. Therefore, my advice is, immediately to get a warrant from the government, to search and take them up, wherever we can find them.

Cha. Sir, you must not tell me—I won't be chousted out of my daughter; I shall expect her, sir; if not, I'll take my course; I know the law.

[*Walks about*

Ant. You really have a great deal of dark wit, brother; but if you know any course better than a warrant to search for her, in the name of wisdom, take it; if not, here's my oath, and yours, and——how now, where's Clody?—Oh, here he comes——

Enter CLODIO, *searching his pockets.*

How now! what's the matter, boy?

Clo. Ay, it's gone, split me!

Ant. What's the matter? [*Louder.*

Clo. The best joint in Christendom.

Ant. Clody!

Clo. Sir, I have lost my snuff-box.

Ant. Psha! a trifle; get thee another, man.

Clo. Sir, 'tis not to be had—besides, I dare not shew my face at Paris without it. What do you hink her grace will say to me?

Cha. Well, upon second thoughts, I am content to search.

Clo. I have searched all my pockets fifty times over, to no purpose.

Cha. Pockets!

Clo. It's impossible to fellow it, but in Paris—I'll go to Paris, split me! [*Aside.*

Cha. To Paris! Why, you don't suppose my daughter's there, sir?

Clo. I don't know but she may, sir: but I am sure they make the best joints in Europe there.

Cha. Joints!——my son-in-law, that should have been, seems strangely altered for the worse. But, come, let's to the governor.

Clo. I'll have it cried, faith; or, if that won't do, I have a lucky thought; I'll offer thirty pistoles to the finder, in the Paris Gazette, in pure compliment to the favours of Madame la Duchess de——Mum. I'll do't, faith.

Ant. Come along, Clody.

[*Exeunt* ANTONIO *and* CHARINO.

Clo. Sir, I must look a little; I'll follow you presently. My poor, pretty box! Ah, plague o' my sea-voyage!

Enter a Servant hastily, with a flambeau.

Serv. By your leave, sir, my master's coming; pray, sir, clear the way.

Clo. Ha! why, thou art pert, my love; prithee, who is thy master, child?

Serv. The valiant Don Duart, sir, nephew to the governor of Lisbon.

Clo. Well, child; and what, does he eat every man he meets?

Serv. No, sir; but he challenges every man, that takes the wall of him, and always sends me before to clear the way.

Clo. Ha! a pretty harmless humour that! Is this he, child?——You may look as terrible as you please; I must banter you, split me. [*Aside.*

Enter DON DUART, *stalking up to* CLODIO.

D. Du. Do you know me, sir?

Clo. Hey, ho!

[*Looks carelessly on him, and gapes.*

D. Du. Do you know me, sir?

Clo. You did not see my snuff-box, sir, did you?

D. Du. Sir, in Lisbon, no man asks me a question covered. [*Strikes off* CLODY'S *hat.*] Now, you know me.

Clo. Perfectly well, sir.—Hi, hi! I like you mightily—you are not a bully, sir?

D. Du. You are saucy, friend.

Clo. Ay, it's a way I have, after I'm affronted—Thou art really the most extraordinary—umph—that ever I met with. Now, sir, do you know me, split me?

D. Du. Know thee! take that, peasant!

[*Strikes him, and both draw.*

Clo. I can't, upon my soul, sir; allons! now we shall come to a right understanding. [*They fight.*

Serv. Help! murder! help!

Clo. Allons! to our better acquaintance, sir—Ah, ha! [DON DUART *falls.*] he has it! Never pushed better in my life, never in my life, split me!

Serv. Oh, my master's killed! help, ho! murder! help!

Clo. Hey! why, faith, child, that's very true, as thou sayest; and so, the devil take the hindmost. [*Exit* CLODIO.

Enter Officers.

1 *Offi.* How now! Who's that cries murder?

Serv. Oh, my master's murdered! some of you follow me; this way he took; let's after him—help! murder! help! [*Exit.*

2 *Offi.* 'Tis Don Duart.

1 *Offi.* So, pride has got a fall; he has paid for't now; you have met with your match, faith, sir. Come, let's carry the body to the good lady, his sister, Donna Elvira; you pursue the murderer. I'll warrant him some civil gentleman; ye need not make too much haste; for, if he does escape, 'tis no great matter——Come along.

[*Exeunt with the body.*

Enter CARLOS *and* DON LEWIS.

D. Lew. Come along, Charles; I'm sure 'tis she, by their description; and, if that brawny dog, the captain, has played her no foul play, she shan't want ransom, if all my estate can purchase it.

Car. Now, fortune guide us. [*Exeunt.*

Enter JAQUES *and Bravoes, with a chair.*

Jaques. That's he, the tallest——be sure you spare his person——only force him into this chair, and carry him as directed.

1 *Brav.* What must be done with the old fellow?

Jaques. We must have him, too, lest he should dog the other, and be troublesome. If he won't come quietly, bring him any how—follow softly; we shall snap them as they turn the corner.

[*Exeunt after them.*

A noise of follow, &c.—Enter CLODIO *hastily from the other side.*

Clo. Ah, pox of their noses! the dogs have smelled me out! What shall I do? If they take me I shall be hanged, split me——Ha! a door open! faith, I'll in, at a venture. [*Exit.*

Re-enter Bravoes with CARLOS *in a chair; some hauling in* DON LEWIS.

D. Lew. Oh, my poor boy, Charles!—Charles!—help! murder!——

1 *Brav.* Hold your peace, fool, if you'd be well used.

D. Lew. Sir, I will not hold my peace; dogs! rogues! villains! help! murder!

1 *Brav.* Nay, then, by your leave, old gentleman.—So, bring him along.

D. Lew. Aw, aw, aw!

[*They gag him, and carry him head and heels.*

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A chamber.*

ELVIRA *and her Servants, with lights.*

Elv. Is not my brother come home yet?

Serv. I have not seen him, madam.

Elv. Go and seek him; go, all of ye, everywhere—I'll not rest 'till your return; take away your lights too; for my devotions are written in my heart, and I shall read them without a taper.

[*Exeunt Servants.*

Enter CLODIO, *stealing in.*

Clo. Ah, poor Clody! what will become of thee? Thy condition, I'm afraid, is but very indifferent—Followed behind, stopped before, and beset on both sides! Ah, pox o' my wit! I must be bantering, must I? But let me see—where am I?—An odd sort of a house, this—all the doors open, and nobody in't; no noise, no whisper, no dog stirring!

Elv. Who's that?

Clo. Ha! a woman's voice!

Elv. Who are you? Who waits there? Stephano! Julia!

Clo. Gadso! 'tis the lady of the house: she can't see my unfortunate face, however. Faith, I'll e'en make a grave speech, tell her my case, and beg her protection.

Elv. Speak! what are you?

Clo. Madam, a most unfortunate young gentleman.

Elv. I am sure you are a man of most ill manners, to press thus boldly to my private chamber. Whither would you? What want you?

Clo. Gracious madam, hear me; I am a stranger most unfortunate, and my distress has made me rudely press for your protection: if you refuse it, madam, I am undone for ever, by—I say, madam, I am utterly undone—'Twas coming, faith! [*Aside.*

Elv. Alas! his fear confounds him. What is it pursues you, sir?

Clo. An outcry of officers; the law's at my heels, madam, though justice I'm not afraid of.

Elv. How could you offend the one and not the other?

Clo. Being provoked, madam, by the insolence of my enemy, in my own defence, I just now left him dead in the street. I am a very young man, madam, and I would not willingly be hanged in a strange country, methinks; which I certainly shall be, unless your tender charity protects me—Gad, I have a rare tongue! I have a rare tongue, faith! [*Aside.*

Elv. Poor wretch, I pity him!

Clo. Madam, your house is now my only sanc-

tuary, my altar; therefore, I beg you, upon my knees, madam, take pity of a poor bleeding victim.

Elv. Are you a Castilian?

Clo. No, madam, I was born in—in—in—what d'ye call'um—in—

Elv. Nay, I ask not with purpose to betray you; were you ten thousand times a Spaniard, the nation we Portuguese most hate, in such distress, I yet would give you my protection.

Clo. May I depend upon you, madam? Am I safe?

Elv. Safe as my power, my word, or vow can make you. Enter that door, which leads you to a closet; should the officers come, as you expect, they owe such reverence to my lodgings, they'll search no further than my leave invites them.

Clo. D'ye think, madam, you can persuade them?

Elv. Fear not; I'll warrant you; away!

Clo. The breath of gods, and eloquence of angels, go long with you. [*Exit.*

Elv. Alas! who knows but that the charity I afford this stranger, perhaps my brother, elsewhere, may stand in need of? How he trembles! I hear his breath come short, hither. Be of comfort, sir; once more I give you my solemn promise for your safety.

Enter Servant and Officers with DON DUART'S *body.*

Serv. Here, bring in the body—Oh, madam! my master's killed!

Elv. What sayest thou?

Serv. Your brother, madam, my master, young Don Duart, is dead! he just now quarrelled with a gentleman, who unfortunately killed him in the street.

Elv. Ah, me!

1 *Offi.* We are informed, madam, that the murderer was seen to enter this house, which made us press into it, to apprehend him.

Elv. Oh! [*Faints.*

Serv. Help, ho! my lady faints!

Offi. Give her air; she'll recover.

[CLODIO *peeps in.*

Clo. Hey!—Why, what the devil! Am I safer than I would be now?—Exactly—I have nicked the house to a hair—Just so I did at Paris, too, when I took a lodging at a bailiff's, that had three writs against me——This damned closet, too, has ne'er a chimney to creep out at——Ah, poor Clody! would thou were fairly in a storm at sea again! for I'm plaguily afraid thou were not born to be drowned.

[*Retires.*

Elv. Stand off; my sorrows will have way. Oh, my unhappy brother! such an end as this, thy haughty mind did long since prophesy; and to encrease my misery, thy wretched sister wilfully must make a breach of what she has vowed, or thou fall unrevenged.

Enter Governor and Servant.

Gov. Where's this unhappy sight?——Alas! he's gone past all recovery.——Reproof comes now too late.

Elv. It shall be so; I'll take the lighter evil of the two, and keep the solemn vow, to which just Heaven was witness: the wounds of perjury never can be cured; but justice may again o'ertake the murderer, when no rash vows protect him.

Gov. Take comfort, niece.

Elv. O forbear! Search for the murderer, and remove the body at your discretion, sir, to be interred, while I shut out the offensive day, and here, in solitude, indulge my sorrow; therefore, I beg my nearest friends, and you, my lord, for some few days, to spare your charitable visits.

Gov. I grieve for your misfortune, niece; but since you'll have it so, we take our leaves. Farewell——bring forth the body.

[*Exeunt Governor, Servants, &c.*

Clo. Hey! what, are they gone away without me, and by her contrivance, too!—Gadso!

Elv. Whoe'er thou art, to whom I've given means of life, to let thee see with what religion I have kept my vow, come fearless forth, while night's thy friend, and pass unknown!

Clo. If this is not love, the devil's in it.

[*Aside.*

Elv. Fly with thy utmost speed, where I may never see thee more.

Clo. Ay, that's her modesty. [*Aside.*

Elv. And let that charitable faith, thou hast found in me, persuade thee to atone thy crime by penitence.

Clo. Poor soul! I may find a better way to thank thee for it.

Elv. You are at the door now; farewell for ever! [*Exit* ELVIRA.

Clo. Which is as much as to say, what would I give to see you again!—All in good time, child—

[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter LOUISA *and* JAQUES.

Lou. Were they both seized?

Jaq. Both, madam, and will be here immediately. I ran before, to give your ladyship notice.

Lou. You know my orders; when they are entered, bar all the doors, and, on your lives, let every one be mute, as I directed—I must retire a while. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Bravoes, who let CARLOS *out of the chair, while others throw down* DON LEWIS, *gagged and bound.*

Car. So, gentlemen, you find I've not resisted you——but now, pray, let me know my crime? Why have you brought me hither? Where am I? If in prison, look in my face; perhaps you have mistaken me for another———[*Jaques holds up his lanthorn, nods and exit with the rest.*] You seem to know me, sir——All dumb and vanished! my fortune's humorous; she sports with me.

D. Lew. Aw, aw!

Car. Do you speak no other language?

D. Lew. Aw, aw aw! [*Louder.*

Car. Nay, that's the same.

D. Lew. Oh! [*Sighing.*

Car. Poor wretch! I am afraid he would speak, if he could.

Re-enter JAQUES, *and Servants with lights, who release* DON LEWIS.

Sure they think I walk in my sleep, and won't speak, for fear of waking me.

D. Lew. Sir, your most humble servant; and now my tongue's at liberty, pray, will you do me the favour to shew me the way home again? What a pox? are you all dumb!——[*Exeunt mute.*] Well, sir, and pray what are ———Charles! ah! my dear boy!

[*Kisses him.*

Car. My uncle! Nay, then, my fortune has not quite forsaken me. How came you hither, sir?

D. Lew. Faith, like a corpse into a church, boy, with my heels foremost; but, prithee, how didst thou come?

Car. You saw the men, that seized us; they forced me into a chair, and brought me.

D. Lew. Well, but a pox plague them, what is all this for? What would they have?

Car. That we must wait their pleasure to be informed of; they have indeed alarmed my reason, not my conscience; that's still at rest, fearless of any danger.

D. Lew. The sons of whores won't speak neither. Hey day! what's to be done, now?

Enter JAQUES, *and Servant, with a banquet, wine, and lights.*

Car. More riddles yet; I dream sure!

[JAQUES *compliments* DON LEWIS *to take his chair.*]

D. Lew. For me? Sir, your most humble servant: [*Sits.*] Charles, sit down, boy. Ha, ha, ha! a parcel of silly dumb dogs! Is this all the business? Puppies! did they think I would not come to supper, without being brought neck and heels to it?

Car. Amazement all! What can it end in?

D. Lew. Never trouble thy head, prithee; pox of questions: fall to, man——Delicate food truly—Here—Dumb! prithee give's a glass of wine, to wet the way a little. Come, Charles, here's, here's—honest Dumb's health to thee: [*Drinks.*] Dumb's a very honest fellow, faith.

[*Claps* JAQUES *on the head.*

Car. What harmony's this? [*A flourish.*

D. Lew. Rare music, indeed; let's eat, and hear it. [*Music here.*] Mighty fine, truly——I have not made a heartier meal a great while.—[*Here* JAQUES *offers a night-cap and gown to* DON LEWIS.] Well, and what's to do now, lad? For me, boy? Odso, we lie here, do we? mighty well that again, faith; (for I was just thinking to go home, but that I had ne'er a lodging: nay, I always said honest Dumb knew how to make his friends welcome——Well, but it's time enough yet; sha'nt we crack a bottle first? Charles is melancholy. [JAQUES *shakes his head.*] What, that's as much as to say, if I won't go, I shall be carried—Sir, your humble servant. [*Puts on the gown.*] Well, Charles, good-night, since they won't let me have a mind to stay any longer.—I'd give a pistole, though, to know what this will come to! Dumb, come along.

[*Exeunt* DON LEWIS *and* JAQUES.

Car. I am buried in amazement—[*Music is heard.*] Ha, more music? I could almost say, 'twere welcome now.

[*Music again. Don* LEWIS *appears above.*

D. Lew. So, at last I have groped out a window, that will let me into the secret; now, if any foul play should happen, I am pretty near the street, too, and can bawl out murder to the watch——But, mum, the door opens.

Enter LOUISA.

Hey! ah! what dull rogues were we not to suspect this before!——Dumb's a sly dog: 'tis she, faith——tum, dum, dum——here will be fine work presently, toll, dum, di, dum——Now, I shall see what mettle the boy's made of; tum, dum, dum.

Lou. You seem amazed, sir.

Car. Your pardon, lady, if I confess it raises

much my wonder, why a stranger, friendless and unknown, should meet, unmerited, such floods of courtesy: for, if I mistake not, once this day before, I've tasted of your bounty.

Lou. I have forgot that; but I confess I saw you, sir.

Car. Why, then, was I forced hither? If you believed me only from a soft compassion of my fortune, you could not think but such humanity might, on the slightest hint, have drawn me to be grateful.

Lou. I own I could not trust you to my fortune: I knew not but some other might have seen you—beside, methought you spoke less kind to me before.

Car. If my poor thanks were offered in too plain a dress, (as I confess, I am little practised in the rules of graced behaviour rather think me ignorant, than rude, and pity what you cannot pardon.

Lou. Fie, you are too modest—how could you charge yourself with such a thought? I scarce can think 'tis in your nature to be rude—at least to our sex.

Car. 'Twere more unpardonable there.

Lou. Nay, now you are too strict on the other side; for there may happen times, when, what the world calls rudeness, a woman might be brought to pardon; seasons, when even modesty were ignorance———Pray be seated, sir—nay, I'll have it so. Suppose a woman were reduced to offer love; suppose yourself the man so loved: where could you find, at such a time, excuses for your modesty?

Car. If I could love again, my eyes would tell her; if not, I should not easily believe, at least, in manners, would not seem to understand her.

Lou. Oh, they have such subtle ways to steal into a lover's heart! nay, if she's resolute, not all your strength of modesty can guard you: she'd press you still with plainer, stronger proofs; her life, her fortune should be yours: for, where a woman loves, such gifts as these are trifles. Thus, like the lazy minutes, would she steal them on, which once but past, are quite forgotten.

[*Gives him jewels.*

Car. Is't possible! can there be such a woman?

Lou. Fie! I could chide you now; you would not, sure, be thought so slow of apprehension.

Car. I would not willingly be thought so vain, or so uncharitable, to suppose there could be such a one.

Lou. Nay, now, you force me to forsake my sex, and tell you plain—I cannot speak it—yet you must know—I am this creature so reduced for you.

Car. Monstrous!

Lou. What is't you start at?

Car. Not for your beauty; though I confess you fair to a perfection, complete in all, that may engage the eye: but, when that beauty fades (as time leaves none unvisited) what charm shall then secure my love? Your riches? No—an honest mind's above the bribes of fortune:—for, though distressed, a stranger, and in want, I thus return them thankless. Be modest, and be virtuous, I'll admire you; all good men will adore you: and, when your beauty and your fortune are no more, will still deliver down your name revered to ages.

Lou. If I appear too free a lover, and talk beyond the usual courage of my sex, forgive me; I'll be again the fearful, softening wretch, that you would have me: my wishes shall be dumb, unless my eyes may speak them: for pity speak, for I confess your hard reproofs have struck upon my heart! Oh! say you will be mine, and make your own conditions. If you suspect my temper, bind me by the most sacred tie, and let my love, my person, and my fortune, lawfully be yours.

Car. Take heed! Consider yet, if even this humility be not the offspring of your first unruly passion: but since, at least, it carries something a better claim to my concern, I'll be at once sincere, and tell you, 'tis impossible that we should ever meet in love.

Lou. Impossible! Oh, why?

Car. Because my love, my vows, and faith, are given to another: therefore, since you find I dare be honest, be early wise, and now release me to my fortune.

Lou. I cannot part with you.

Car. You must! I cannot with my reason—Pray, let me pass! Why do you thus hang upon my arm, and strain your eyes, as if they had power to hold me?

Lou. Ungrateful! Will you go? Take heed! for you have proved I am not mistress of my temper.

Car. I see it, and am sorry, but needed not this threat to drive me; for still I dare be just, and force myself away. [*Exit* CARLOS.

Lou. Oh, torture! left! refused! despised! Have I thrown off my pride for this? Oh, insupportable! If I am not revenged, may all the——well. [*Walks disordered.*

D. Lew. What a pox! are all these fine things come to nothing, then?—Poor soul! she's in great heat, truly——Ah, silly rogue!——now, could I find in my heart to put her into good humour again—I have a great mind, faith—Odd, she's a hummer!———A strange mind, I ha'nt had such a mind a great while—Hey! ay; I'll do't faith—if she does but stay now; ah, if she does but stay! [*As he is getting from the balcony,* LOUISA *is speaking to* JAQUES.]

Lou. Who waits there?

Enter JAQUES.

Where's the stranger?

Jaq. Madam, I met him just now walking hastily about the gallery.

Lou. Are all the doors fast?

Jaq. All barred, madam.

Lou. Put out all your lights, too, and on your lives let no one ask or answer him any question: but be you still near to observe him.

[*Exit* JAQUES.

Ah! [DON LEWIS *drops down.*

D. Lew. Odso, my back!

Lou. Bless me, who's this? what are you?

D. Lew. Not above fifty, madam.

Lou. Whence come you? What is your business?

D. Lew. Finishing.

Lou. Who shewed, who brought you hither?

D. Lew. Dumb, honest Dumb.

Lou. Will you be gone, sir? I have no time to fool away.

D. Lew. Yes, but you have; what! don't I know?

Lou. Pray, sir, who? What is't you take me for?

D. Lew. A delicate piece of work, truly, but not finished; you understand me?

Lou. You are mad, sir!

D. Lew. I say, don't you be so modest; for there are times, do you see, when even modesty is ignorance, (pray be seated, madam—nay, I'll have it so) ah!

[*Sits down, and mimics her behaviour to* CARLOS.]

Lou. Confusion! have I exposed myself to this wretch, too!——had witnesses to my folly! nay, I deserve it. [*Stands mute.*

D. Lew. So, so, I shall bring her to terms presently—you have a world of pretty jewels here, madam—ay, these now—these are a couple of fine large stones, truly; but, where a woman loves, such gifts as these are trifles. [*Mimics again.*

Lou. Insupportable! within there!

Enter Servants and Bravoes.

D. Lew. Hey! [*Rising.*

Ser. Did your ladyship call, madam?

D. Lew. I don't like her looks, faith. [*Aside.*

Lou. Here, take this fool, let him be gagged, tied neck and heels, and locked into a garret; away with him!

D. Lew. Dumb! Dumb! help, Dumb! Dumb! stand by me, Dumb! a pox of my finishing, awe! awe! [*They gag him, and carry him off.*

Lou. The insolence of this fool was more provoking than the other's scorn; but I shall yet find ways to measure my revenge. [*Exit* LOUISA.

Re-enter CARLOS *in the dark.*

Car. What can this evil woman mean me? The doors all barred; the lights put out; the servants mute, and she with fury in her eyes now shot regardless by me. I would the worst would shew itself! Ha! yonder's a light; I'll follow it, and provoke my fortune. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to another room.*

Enter ANGELINA *with a light.*

Ang. I cannot like this house; for now, as going to my rest, my ears were alarmed with the cries of one, that called for help. I've seen strange faces, too, that carry guilt and terror in their looks; and yet the officer, that placed me here, appeared of honest thought—what can this mean? no matter what, since nothing but the loss of him I love, can worse befal me! hark, what noise! is the door fast? ah!

[*Going to shut it.*

Re-enter CARLOS *and* JAQUES, *listening.*

Car. Ha, another lady! and alone!

Ang. Ha, that voice! [*Amazed.*

Car Save me, ye powers! and give me strength to bear this insupportable surprise of rushing joy!

Ang. My Carlos—oh!

Car. 'Tis she! my long lost love, my living Angelina!

[*Embraces her.*

Jaq. Say you so, sir? this shall to my lady.

[*Exit* JAQUES.

Ang. Oh, let me hold you ever thus, lest fate again should part us.

Car. 'Twas death, indeed, to part; but from so hard a separation, thus again to meet, is life restored.

Ang. Oh! I were happy, blessed above my sex, could but my plain simplicity of love deserve your kind endearments.

Car. Is't possible, thou miracle of goodness, that thou canst thus forget the misery, the want, the ruin my unhappy love has brought thee to? Trust me, that stormy thought has clouded even the very joy I had to see thee.

Enter JAQUES *and* LOUISA *at a distance.*

Jaq. They are there; from hence, your ladyship may hear them.

Lou. Leave me.

[*Exit* JAQUES, *and* LOUISA *listens.*

Ang. I cannot bear to see you thus: for my sake, don't despond; for, while you seem in hope, I shall easily be cheerful.

Car. Oh, thou engaging softness! thy courage has revived me; no, we'll not despair; the guardian power, that hitherto has saved us, may now protect, and fix us happy.

Lou. Ha! so near acquainted—— [*Behind.*

Car. And yet our safety bids us part this moment. How came you hither?

Ang. The officer, that made me captive, proved a worthy man, and placed me here, as a companion to the lady of this dwelling.

Car. Ha, to what end?

Ang. He said, to be the advocate of his successless love; for he confessed he wooed her honourably.

Car. Is't possible? Is there a wretch, so cursed among mankind, to be her honourable lover?

Lou. So! [*In anger.*

Car. Take heed, my love; avoid her as a disease to modesty.

Lou. Very well!

Car. Oh, I have a shameful tale to tell thee of her intemperance, as would subject her even to thy loathing.

Lou. Insolent!—well!

Ang. You amaze me! pray, what is it?

Car. This is no time to tell; I had forgot my danger. Let it suffice, the doors are barred against me; now, this moment I am a prisoner to her fury; if thou canst help me to any means of safety, or escape, ask me no questions, but be quick, and tell me.

Ang. Now, you frighten me; but here, through my apartment, leads a passage to the garden; at the lower end, you'll find a mount; if you dare drop from thence, I'll shew you: but can't you say, when I may hope again to see you?

Car. About an hour hence, walking in the garden, ready for your escape; for if I live, I'll come provided with the means to make it sure—Now I dare thank thee, fortune.

Ang. You will not fail?

Car. If I survive, depend on me. 'Till when, may Heaven support thy innocence!

Ang. Follow me—— [*Exeunt hastily.*

Lou. Are you so nimble, sir? Who waits there?

Enter JAQUES.

Run, take help, and stop the stranger: he is now making his escape through the garden; fly!—— [*Exit* JAQUES.]—Love, and revenge, like vipers, gnaw upon my quiet, and I must change their food, or leave my living. No, if I forego a second time that dear support, my pride, may I become as miserable as that wretch, that destined fool, he doats on! Ha! she is returned! yonder she passes; with what assured contentment in her looks!—how pleased the thing is!—strangely impudent—sure! the ugly creature thinks I won't strangle her.

Enter JAQUES.

Now, have you brought him?

Jaq. Madam, we made what haste we could, but the gentleman reached the mount before us, and escaped over the garden wall.

Lou. Escaped, villain! durst thou tell me so?

Jaq. If your ladyship had called me a little sooner, we had taken him. Who the devil is this stranger? [*Aside.*

Lou. Fool, that I am! I betray myself to my own servants. Well, 'tis no matter, bid the bravoes stay; I have directions for them. Go.—[*Exit* JAQUES.]—He has not left me hopeless, yet: an hour hence, he promised to be here again; and, if he keeps his word, (as I've an odious cause to fear he will) he yet, at least in my revenge, shall prove me woman. [*Exit* LOUISA.

SCENE III.—*The Street.*

Enter D. DUART *disguised, with a servant.*

D. Du. Where did you find him!

Ser. Hard by, sir, at an house of civil recreation; he's now coming forth; that's he.

Enter CLODIO.

D. Du. I scarce remember him. I would not willingly mistake—I'll observe him.

Clo. So! now if I can but pick up an honest fellow, to crack one healing bottle, I think I shall finish the day as smartly as the grand signior—Hold, let me see, what has my hasty refreshment cost me here; umb—umb—umb—[*Counts his money.*]—seven pistoles, by Jupiter; why, what a plaguy income this jade must have in a week, if she's thus paid by the hour!

D. Du. 'Tis the same! leave me—[*Exit Servant.*]—Your servant, sir.

Clo. Sir—your humble servant.

D. Du. Pardon a stranger's freedom, sir; but when you know my business——

Clo. Sir, if you'll take a bottle, I shall be proud of your acquaintance; and if I don't do your business before we part, I'll knock under the table.

D. Du. Sir, I shall be glad to drink with you; but at present am incapable of sitting to it.

Clo. Why, then, sir, you shall only drink as long as you can stand; we'll have a bottle here, sir. Hey, Madona! [*Calls at the door.*

D. Du. A very frank humoured gentleman; I'll know him farther—I presume, sir, you are not of Portugal?

Clo. No, sir—I am a kind of a—what d'ye call 'um—a sort of a here—and—thereian; I am a stranger no where.

D. Du. Have you travelled far, sir?

Clo. My tour of Europe, or so, sir——

Enter Servant with wine.

Clo. So, so! here's the wine! come; sir, to our better acquaintance—faith, I like you mightily—Allons!—[*Drinks.*]—Morbleu! ce n'est pas mauvais! Allons, encore, hey! Vive l'amour! Quand Iris, &c. [*Sings.*

D. Du. I find, sir, you have taken a taste of all the countries you have travelled through: but I presume your chief amusement has lain among the ladies. You fared well in France, I hope?

Clo. Yes, faith, as far as my pocket would go: the devil a stroke without it: no money, no mademoiselle; no ducat, no duchess; no pistole, no princess—By the way, let me tell you, sir, your Lisbonites are held up at a pretty smart rate, too—I was forced to come down to the tune of seven pistoles here—a man may keep a pad of

his own, cheaper than he can ride post, split me!

D. Du. I find, sir, you know England, then.

Clo. Aye, sir, and every woman there that's worth knowing.

D. Du. But I wonder, sir, that in a country so famed for handsome women, the men are so generally blamed for their scandalous usage of them.

Clo. Oh, damned scandalous, sir—they use their mistresses as bad as their wives, faith. I tell you what, sir; I knew a citizen's daughter there, that run away with a lord, who, in the first six months of her preferment, never stirred out, but she made the ladies cry at her equipage; and, about eight months after, I think, one morning reeling pretty early into a certain house in the Savoy, I found the self-same, cast-off, solitary lady, in a room with bare walls, dressing her dear, pretty head there, in the corner bit of a looking-glass, prudently supported by a quartern brandy-pot, upon the head of an oyster-barrel.

D. Du. I find few mistresses make their fortunes there; but pray, sir, among all your adventures, has no particular lady's merit encouraged you to advance your own marriage?

Clo. Sir, I have been so near marriage, that my wedding-day has been come; but it was never over yet, split me!

D. Du. How so, sir?

Clo. Why, the priest, the bride, and the dinner, were all ready dressed, faith; but, before I could fall to, my elder brother, sir, comes me in, with a damned long stride, and a sharp stomach—says a short grace, and—whipped her up like an oyster.

D. Du. You had ill fortune, sir.

Clo. Sir, fortune is not much in my debt; for you must know, sir, though I lost my wife, I have escaped hanging since, here in Lisbon.

D. Du. That I know you have; be not amazed, sir.

Clo. Hey! what the devil? have I been all this while treating an officer, that has a warrant against me—Pray, sir, if it be no offence—may I beg the favour to know who you are?

D. Du. Let it suffice, I own myself your friend—I am your debtor, sir; you fought a gentleman they call Don Duart—I knew him well; he was a proud insulting fellow, and my mortal foe: but you killed him, and I thank you; nay, I saw you do it fairly, too; and for the action, I desire you will command my sword or fortune.

Clo. Pray, sir—is there no joke in all this?

D. Du. There, sir, the little all I'm master of, may serve, at present, to convince you of my sincerity; I ask for no return, but to be informed how I may do you farther service.

[*Gives him a purse.*

Clo. Sir, your health——I'll give you information presently.—[*Drinks.*]—Pray, sir, do you know the gentleman's sister, that I fought with? That is, do you know what reputation, what fortune she has?

D. Du. I know her fortune to be worth above twelve thousand pistoles; her reputation yet unsullied; but pray, sir, why may you ask this?

Clo. Now, I'll tell you, sir—twelve thousand pistoles, you say?

D. Du. I speak the least, sir.

Clo. Why, this very lady, after I had killed her brother, gave me the protection of her house; hid me in her closet, while the officers that brought in the dead body came to search for me; and, as soon as their backs were turned, poor soul! hurried me out at a private door, with tears in her eyes, faith! Now, sir, what think you? Is not this hint broad enough for a man to make love upon?

D. Du. Confusion!

[*Aside.*

Clo. Look you, sir, now, if you dare, give me a proof of your friendship; will you do me the favour to carry a letter to her?

D. Du. Let me consider, sir——death and fire! is all her height of sorrow but dissembled, then? A prostitute, even to the man supposed my murderer! If it be true, the consequence is soon resolved——but this requires my farther search.—[*Aside.*]—May I depend on this for truth, sir?

Clo. Why, sir, you don't suppose I'd banter a lady of her quality?

D. Du. Damnation!—[*Aside.*]—Well, sir, I'll take your letter; but first let me be well acquainted with my errand.

Clo. Sir, I'll write this moment; if you please, we'll step into the house here, and finish the business over another bottle.

D. Du. With all my heart.

Clo. Allons! Entrez.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

ELVIRA *is discovered alone in mourning, a lamp by her.* DON DUART *enters behind, disguised.*

D. Du. Thus far I am passed, unknown to any of the servants——now for the proof of what I fear——Ha! yonder she is——This close retirement, those sable colours, the solemn silence that attends her, no friends admitted, nor even the day to visit her—These seem to speak a real sorrow; if not, the counterfeit is deep indeed—I'll fathom it——madam——

Elv. Who's there? another murderer! where are my servants? will nothing but my sorrows wait upon me?

D. Du. Your pardon, lady; I have no evil meaning: this letter will inform you of my business, and excuse this rude intrusion.

Elv. For me! whence comes it, sir?

D. Du. The contents, madam, will explain to you—She seems amazed! looks almost through the letter——I should suspect the stranger had belied her, but that he gave me such convincing circumstances——Ha, she pauses! 'sdeath! a smile too——I fear her now!

Elv. My prayers are heard; justice at length has overtaken the murderer: his vowed protection having been strictly paid, I now, unperjured, may revenge my brother's blood. It lies on me, if I neglect this fair occasion: but 'twere not safe to shew my thought; therefore, to be just, I must dissemble. [*Aside.*] I ask your pardon for my rudeness, sir; upon your friend's account, you might, indeed, have claimed a better welcome.

D. Du. So; then she's damned, I find. But I'll have more, and bring them face to face. [*Aside.*] My friend, madam, thought his visits would be unseasonable, before the sad solemnity of your brother's funeral.

Elv. A needless fear! My brother, sir! Alas, I owe your friend my thanks, for having eased our family of so scandalous a burthen! A riotous, unmannered fellow; I blush to speak of him.

D. Du. Oh, patience! patience! [*Aside.*

Elv. Pray, let him know, his absence was the real cause of this mistaken mourning: 'tis true, indeed, I gave it out 'tis for my brother's death; but womens' hearts and tongues, you know, must not always hold alliance; you'd think us fond and forward, should not we now and then dissemble.

D. Du. How shall I forbear her? [*Aside.*

Elv. I grow impatient till he's wholly mine—to-morrow! 'tis an age! I'll make him mine to-night——I'll write to him this minute——Can you have patience, sir, till I prepare a letter for you?

D. Du. You may command me, madam.

Elv. I'll dispatch immediately——will you walk this way, sir?

D. Du. Madam, I wait on you——Revenge and daggers! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—LOUISA'S *house.*

Enter LOUISA *and* JACQUES.

Lou. Is the lady seized?

Jaq. Yes, madam, and half dead with the fright.

Lou. Let them be ready to produce her, as I directed. When the stranger's taken, bring me immediate notice: 'tis near his time, away.—[*Exit* JAQUES.] Had he not loved another, methinks I could have borne this usage, sat me down alone content, and found a secret pleasure in complaining; but to be slighted for a girl, a sickly, poor, unthinking wretch, incapable of love: that, that stabs home! 'Tis poison to my thoughts, and swells them to revenge! My rival! no, she shall never triumph. Hark! what noise! they have him sure! How now!

Enter JAQUES.

Jaq. Madam, the gentleman is taken.

Lou. Bring him in——Revenge, I thank thee now!

Enter Bravoes with CARLOS *disarmed.*

So, sir, you are returned, it seems; you can love then! You have an heart, I find, though not for me! Perhaps you came to seek a worthier mistress here; 'would be uncharitable to disappoint your love——I'll help your search: if she be here, be sure she's safe—Open that door there.

Enter more Bravoes with ANGELINA, *an handkerchief on her neck, which they hold ready to strangle her.*

Now, sir, is this the lady?

Car. My Angelina! Oh!

Lou. Now, let me see you smile, and rudely throw me from your arms; now scorn my love, my passion, and my fortune; now, let your squeamish virtue fly me as a disease to modesty; and tell her, now, your shameful tale of my intemperance!

Car. Oh, cruelty of fate! that could betray such innocence.

Lou. What, not a word to soften yet thy obstinate aversion! thou wretched fool, thus to provoke thy ruin——End her! [*to the Bravoes.*

Car. Oh, hold! for pity hold, and hear me!

Lou. I've learned from you to use my pity——On one condition yet she lives an hour; but, if refused——

Car. Name not a refusal; be it danger, death, or tortures; any thing that life can do to save her.

Lou. Presuming fool! were I inclined to save her life, (which, by my hopes of peace, I do not mean) canst thou believe this insolent concern for her to my face would not provoke my vengeance?

Car. Yet hold! forgive my rashness, I was to blame, indeed; but passion has transported both of us.

Lou. How he disarms my anger! But must my rival triumph, then?

Ang. Charge me not with such abhorred ingratitude: be witness, Heaven, I'll for ever serve you, court you, and confess you my preserver.

Car. For pity, yet resolve, and force your temper to a moment's pause. See, at your feet, my humbled scorn imploring, crushed, and prostrate, like a vile slave, that falls below your last contempt, and, trembling, begs for mercy.

Lou. He buries my revenge in blushes. Now, live long and happily; forgive my follies past, and you have overpaid me. [*Joins their hands.*

Car. My Angelina! do I then live to hold thee thus? Oh, I have a thousand things to say, to ask, to weep, and hear of thee—But, first, let's kneel and pay our thanks to Heaven, and this our kind preserver.

Lou. Nay, now, you give me a confusion.—[*Raises them.*] But if you dare trust me with the story of your love's distress, as far as my fortune can, command it freely to supply your present wants, or any future means proposed to give you lasting happiness.

Car. Eternal rounds of never-ending peace reward your wondrous bounty!——But I have been too busy in my joy; I almost had forgot my friendly uncle, the ancient gentleman that first came hither with me; how have you disposed of him?

Lou. I think he's here, and safe——who waits there? [*Enter* JAQUES.] Release the gentleman above, and tell him, that his friends desire him. [*Exit* JAQUES.] You'll pardon, sir, the treatment I have shewn him; he made a little too merry with my folly, which, I confess, at that time, something too far incensed me.

Car. He's old and cheerful, apt to be free; but he'll be sorry when his humour gives offence.

Enter DON LEWIS, JAQUES *bowing to him.*

D. Lew. Prithee, honest Dumb, don't be so ceremonious. A pox on thee! I tell thee its very well as it is, (only my jaws ache a little:) but as long as we're all friends, its no great matter——My dear Charles, I must buss thee, faith!——Madam, your humble servant——I beg your pardon, d'ye see——you understand me?

[*Exit* JAQUES.

Lou. I hope we are all friends, sir.

D. Lew. I hope we are, madam——I am an honest old fellow, faith: though, now and then, I'm a little odd, too.

Car. Here's a stranger, uncle.

D. Lew. What, my little blossom! my gilliflower! my rose! my pink! my tulip! faith, I must smell thee. [*Salutes* ANGELINA.] Odd, she's a delicate nosegay! I must have her touzed a little——Charles, you must gather to-night: I can stay no longer——Well, faith, I am heartily joyed to see thee, child.

Ang. I thank you, sir, and wish I may deserve your love: our fortune, once again, is kind; but how it comes about——

D. Lew. Does not signify three-pence; when fortune pays me a visit, I seldom trouble myself to know which way she came——I tell you, I am glad to see you.

Enter JAQUES.

Jaq. Madam, here's the lord governor come to wait upon your ladyship.

Lou. At this late hour! What can his business be? Desire his lordship to walk in.

Enter GOVERNOR.

Gov. Pardon, madam, this unseasonable visit.

Lou. Your lordship does me honour.

Gov. At least, I hope, my business will excuse it. Some strangers, here below, upon their offered oaths, demanded my authority to search your house for a lost young lady, to whom the one of them affirms himself the father: but the respect I owe your ladyship, made me refuse their search, till I had spoken with you.

Ang. It must be they——Now, madam, your protection, or we yet are lost.

Lou. Be not concerned! would you avoid them?

Car. No, we must be found; let them have entrance; we have an honest cause, and would provoke its trial.

Lou. Conduct the gentlemen without. [*Exit* JAQUES.] My lord, I'll answer for their honesty; and, as they are strangers, where the law's severe, must beg you'd favour and assist them.

Gov. You may command me, madam; though there's no great fear: for having heard the most that they could urge against them, I found, in their complaints, more spleen and humour than any just appearance of a real injury.

Enter CHARINO, ANTONIO, *and* CLODIO.

Cha. I'll have justice.

Ant. Don't be too hot, brother.

Cha. Sir, I demand justice.

Car. My father! Sir, your pardon and your blessing.

Ant. Why truly, Charles, I begin to be a little reconciled to the matter; I wish you well, though I can't join you together; for my friend and brother here is very obstinate, and will admit of no satisfaction: but, however, Heaven will bless you, in spite of his teeth.

Cha. This is all contrivance, roguery! I am abused! I say, deliver my daughter——she is an

heiress, sir; and to detain her is a rape in law, sir, and I'll have you all hanged; therefore, no more delays, sir; for I tell you beforehand, I am a wise man, and 'tis impossible to trick me.

Ant. I say, you are too positive, brother; and when you learn more wisdom, you'll have some.

Cha. I say, brother, this is mere malice, when you know, in your own conscience, I have ten times your understanding; for you see I am quite of another opinion: and so, once more, my lord, I demand justice against that ravisher.

Gov. Does your daughter, sir, complain of any violence?

Cha. Your lordship knows young girls never complain, when the violence is over; he has taught her better, I suppose.

Ang. [*To* CHARINO, *kneeling.*] Sir, you are my father, bred me, cherished me, gave me my affections, taught me to keep them hitherto within the bounds of honour and of virtue; let me conjure you, by the chaste love my mother bore you, when she preferred, to her mistaken parents' choice, her being yours without a dower, not to bestow my person, where those affections ne'er can follow—I cannot love that gentleman more than a sister ought; but here my heart's subdued, even to the last compliance with my fortune: he, sir, has nobly wooed, and won me; and I am only his, or miserable.

Cha. Get up again.

Gov. Come, sir, be persuaded; your daughter has made an honourable and happy choice; this severity will but expose yourself and her.

Cha. My lord, I don't want advice: I'll consider with myself, and resolve upon my own opinion.

Enter JAQUES.

Jaq. My lord, here's a stranger without, enquires for your lordship, and for a gentleman that calls himself Clodio.

Clo. Hey! Ah, mon cher ami!

Enter DON DUART, *disguised.*

Well, what news, my dear? Has she answered my letter!

D. Du. There, sir——This to your lordship.

[*Gives him a letter, and whispers.*

Gov. Married to night! and to this gentleman, sayest thou? I'm amazed!

D. Du. Here is her choice, my lord.

Clo. [*Reading the latter.*]—Um—um—charms—irresistible—excuse—so soon—passion—blushes—consent—provision—children—settlement—marriage——If this is not plain, the devil's in't—Hold, here's more, faith— [*Reads to himself.*

Gov. 'Tis very sudden——but give my service, I'll wait upon her.

Clo. Ha, ha, ha! poor soul! I'll be with her presently; and, faith, since I have made my own fortune, I'll e'en patch up my brother's, too. Hark you, my dear dad, that should ha' been—This business is all at an end—for, look you, I find your daughter's engaged; and, to tell you the truth, so am I, faith. If my brother has a mind to marry her, let him; for I shall not, split me——And now, gentlemen and ladies, if you will do me the honour to grace mine and the lady Elvira's wedding, such homely entertainment, as my poor house affords, you shall be all heartily welcome to.

D. Lew. Thy house! ha, ha! Well said, puppy!

Clo. Ha! old Testy!

Cha. What dost thou mean, man?

[*To* CLODIO.

Gov. 'Tis even so, I can assure you, sir; I have, myself, an invitation from the lady's own hand, that confirms it: I know her fortune well, and am surprised at it.

Ang. Blessed news! This seems a forward step to reconcile us all.

Cha. If this be true, my lord, I have been thinking to no purpose; my design is all broke to pieces.

Ant. Come, brother, we'll mend it as well as we can; and since that young rogue has rudely turned tail upon your daughter, I'll fill up the blank with Charles's name, and let the rest of the settlement stand as it was.

Cha. Hold! I'll first see this wedding, and then give you my final resolution.

Clo. Come, ladies, if you please, my friend will shew you.

Lou. Sir, we wait upon you.

Cha. This wedding's an odd thing.

D. Lew. Ha, ha! if it should be a lie, now.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—ELVIRA'S *apartment.*——ELVIRA *alone, with* CLODIO'S *letter in her hand.*

Elv. At how severe a price do women purchase an unspotted fame, when even the justest title cannot assure possession? When we reflect upon the insolent and daily wrongs, which men and scandal throw upon our actions, 'twere enough to make an honest mind despair: If we are fair and chaste, we are proud; if free, we are wanton; cold, we are cunning; and if kind, forsaken—nothing we do or think on, be the motive ever so just or generous, but still the malice, or the guilt of men, interprets to our shame. Why should this stranger, else, this wretched stranger, whose forfeit life I rashly saved, presume, from that mistaken charity, to tempt me with his love?

Enter a Servant.

Hark! what music's that? [*Flourish.*

Serv. Madam, the gentlemen are come.

Elv. 'Tis well; are the officers ready?

Serv. Yes, madam, and know your ladyship's orders.

Elv. Conduct the company. Now, justice shall

uncloud my fame, and see my brother's death revenged.

Enter hautboys playing, CLODIO *singing,* D. DUART, GOVERNOR, D. MANUEL, LOUISA, CARLOS, ANGELINA, ANTONIO, CHARINO, *and* D. LEWIS.

Clo. Well, madam, you see I'm punctual——you've nicked your man, faith; I'm always critical—to a minute. You'll never stay for me. Ladies and gentlemen, I desire you'll do me the honour of being better acquainted here—my lord—

Gov. Give you joy, madam.

Clo. Nay, madam, I have brought you some near relations of my own, too——This Don Antonio, who will shortly have the honour to call you daughter.

Ant. The young rogue has made a pretty choice, faith!

Clo. This Don Charino, who was very near having the honour of calling me son. This my elder brother—and this my noble uncle, Don Choleric Snapshorto de Testy.

D. Lew. Puppy!

Clo. Peevish!

D. Lew. Madam, I wish you joy with all my heart; but, truly, I can't much advise you to marry this gentleman; because, in a day or two, you'll really find him extremely shocking: those, that know him, generally give him the title of Don Dismallo Thickscullo de Halfwitto.

Clo. Well said, nuncle—ha, ha!

D. Du. Are you provided of a priest, sir?

Clo. Ay, ay, pox on him! would he were come, though!

D. Du. So would I; I want the cue to act this justice, on my honour; yet I cannot read the folly in her looks. [*Aside.*

Gov. You have surprised us, madam, by this sudden marriage.

Elv. I may yet surprise you more, my lord.

D. Du. Sir, don't you think your bride looks melancholy?

Clo. Ay, poor fool, she's modest——but I have a cure for that——Well, my princess, why that demure look, now?

Elv. I was thinking, sir———

Clo. I know what you think of——You don't think at all——You don't know what to think—You neither see, hear, feel, smell, nor taste——You han't the right use of one of your senses—In short, you have it. Now, my princess, have not I nicked it?

Elv. I am sorry, sir, you know so little of yourself, or me.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the priest is come.

Elv. Let him wait, we've no occasion yet——Within, there—seize him.

[*Several Officers rush in, who seize* CLODIO, *and bind him.*

D. Du. Ha!

Gov. What can this mean?

Clo. Gads me! what, is my deary in her frolics already?

Elv. And now, my lord, your justice on that murderer.

Gov. How, madam!

Clo. That bitch, my fortune!

D. Lew. Madam, upon my knees, I beg you don't carry the jest too far; but if there be any real hopes of his having a halter, let's know it in three words, that I may be sure at once for ever, that no earthly thing but a reprieve can save him.

[*Apart to* ELVIRA.

Ant. Pray, madam, who accuses him?

Elv. His own confession, sir.

Cha. Of murder, say you, madam?

Elv. The murder of my brother.

Gov. Where was that confession made?

Elv. After the fact was done, my lord, this man, pursued by justice, took shelter here, and, trembling, begged of me for my protection: he seemed, indeed, a stranger, and his complaints so pitiful, that I, little suspicious of my brother's death, promised, by a rash and solemn vow, I would conceal him: which vow, Heaven can witness with what distraction in my thoughts I strictly kept, and paid; but he, alas! mistaking this my hospitable charity, for the effects of a most vile, preposterous love, proceeds upon his error, and in his letter, here, addresses me for marriage; which I, once having paid my vow, answered in such prevailing terms, upon his folly, as now have, unprotected, drawn him into the hands of justice.

D. Du. She is innocent, and well has disappointed my revenge. [*Aside.*

D. Lew. So, now, I am a little easy—the puppy will be hanged.

Gov. Give me leave, madam, to ask you yet some farther questions.

Clo. Ay,—I shall be hanged, I believe.

Cha. Nay, then, 'tis time to take care of my daughter; for I am convinced that my friend Clody is disposed of——and so, without compliment, do you see, children, Heaven bless you together.

[*Joins* CARLOS *and* ANGELINA's *hands.*

Car. This, sir, is a time unfit to thank you as we ought.

Ant. Well, brother, I thank you, however; Charles is an honest lad, and well deserves her; but poor Clody's ill fortune I could never have suspected.

D. Lew. Why, you would be positive, though you know, brother, I always told you, Dismal would be hanged; I must plague him a little, because the dog has been pert with me——Clody, how dost thou do? Ha! why you are tied!

Clo. I hate this old fellow, split me!

D. Lew. Thou hast really made a damned

blunder here, child, to invite so many people to a marriage-knot, and, instead of that, it is like to be one under the left ear.

Clo. I'd fain have him die.

D. Lew. Well, my dear, I'll provide for thy going off, however; let me see—you'll only have occasion for a nosegay, a pair of white gloves, and a coffin: look you, take you no care about the surgeons, you shall not be anatomized—I'll get the body off with a wet finger—Though, methinks, I'd fain see the inside of the puppy, too.

Clo. Oh, rot him! I can't bear this.

D. Lew. Well, I won't trouble you any more now, child; if I am not engaged, I don't know but I may come to the tree, and sing a stave or two with thee—Nay, I'll rise on purpose—though you will hardly suffer before twelve o'clock, neither—ay, just about twelve—about twelve you'll be turned off.

Clo. Oh, curse consume him!

Gov. I am convinced, madam; the fact appears too plain.

D. Lew. Yes, yes, he'll suffer. [*Aside.*

Gov. What says the gentleman? Do you confess the fact, sir?

Clo. Will it do me any good, my lord?

Gov. Perhaps it may, if you can prove it was not done in malice.

Clo. Why, then, to confess the truth, my lord, I did prink him, and am sorry for it; but it was none of my fault, split me.

Elv. Now, my lord, your justice.

D. Du. Hold, madam, that remains in me to give; for know, your brother lives, and happy in the proof of such a sister's virtue.

[*Discovers himself.*

Elv. My brother! Oh, let my wonder speak my joy!

Clo. Hey!

[CLODIO *and his friends seem surprised.*

Gov. Don Duart! living and well! How came this strange recovery?

D. Du. My body's health the surgeon has restored: but here's the true physician of my mind: the hot, distempered blood, which lately rendered me offensive to mankind, his just, resenting sword let forth, which gave me leisure to reflect upon my follies past; and, by reflection, to reform.

Elv. This is indeed a happy change.

Gov. Release the gentleman.

Clo. Here, Testy, prithee do so much as untie this a little.

D. Lew. Why, so I will, sirrah; I find thou hast done a mettled thing; and I don't know whether it is worth my while to be shocked at thee any longer.

Elv. I ask your pardon for the wrong I have done you, sir; and blush to think how much I owe you, for a brother thus restored.

Clo. Madam, your very humble servant; it is mighty well as it is.

D. Du. We are, indeed, his debtors both; and sister, there's but one way now of being grateful. For my sake, give him such returns of love, as he may yet think fit to ask, or you, with modesty, can answer.

Clo. Sir, I thank you; and when you don't think it impudence in me to wish myself well with your sister, I shall beg leave to make use of your friendship,

D. Du. This modesty commends you, sir.

Ant. Sir, you have proposed like a man of honour; and if the lady can but like it, she shall find those among us, that will make up a fortune to deserve her.

Car. I wish my brother well; and as I once offered him to divide my birth-right, I'm ready still to put my words into performance.

D. Lew. Nay, then, since I find the rogue's no longer like to be an enemy to Charles, as far as a few acres go, I'll be his friend, too.

D. Du. Sister!

Elv. This is no trifle, brother; allow me a convenient time to think, and if the gentleman continues to deserve your friendship, he shall not much complain I am his enemy.

D. Lew. So, now it will be a wedding again, faith!

Car. Come, my Angelina,
Our bark, at length, has found a quiet harbour,
And the distressful voyage of our loves
Ends not alone in safety, but reward.
Now we unlade our freight of happiness,
Of which, from thee alone my share's derived;
For all my former search in deep philosophy,
Not knowing thee, was a mere dream of life:
But love, in one soft moment, taught me more
Than all the volumes of the learned could reach;
Gave me the proof, when nature's birth began,
To what great end the ETERNAL formed a man.

[*Exeunt.*

THE

WAY OF THE WORLD.

BY

CONGREVE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

FAINALL, *in love with* MRS MARWOOD.
MIRABELL, *in love with* MRS MILLAMANT.
WITWOULD, PETULANT, } *followers of* MRS MILLAMANT.
SIR WILFUL WITWOULD, *half-brother to* WITWOULD.
WAITWELL, *servant to* MIRABELL.
Footmen and Attendants.

WOMEN.

LADY WISHFORT, *enemy to* MIRABELL.
MRS MILLAMANT, *a fine lady, niece to* LADY WISHFORT, *and loves* MIRABELL.
MRS MARWOOD, *friend to* MR FAINALL, *and likes* MIRABELL.
MRS FAINALL, *daughter to* LADY WISHFORT.
FOIBLE, *woman to* LADY WISHFORT.
MINCING, *woman to* MRS MILLAMANT.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A chocolate house.*

MIRABELL *and* FAINALL, *rising from cards.* BETTY *waiting.*

Mira. You are a fortunate man, Mr Fainall.

Fain. Have we done?

Mira. What you please. I'll play on to entertain you.

Fain. No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the coldness of a losing gamester lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man, that slighted his ill fortune, than I'd make love to a woman, who undervalued the loss of her reputation.

Mira. You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining on your pleasures.

Fain. Prithee, why so reserved? something has put you out of humour.

Mira. Not at all: I happen to be grave today; and you are gay; that's all.

Fain. Confess, Millamant and you quarrelled last night, after I left you; my fair cousin has some humours, that would tempt the patience of a stoic. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well received by her, while you were by?

Mira. Witwould and Petulant! and what was worse, her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius; or, to sum up all in her own name, my old lady Wishfort came in———

Fain. O, there it is, then!——She has a lasting passion for you, and with reason——What! then my wife was there?

Mira. Yes, and Mrs Marwood, and three or four more, whom I never saw before; seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whispered one another, then complained aloud of the vapours, and after, fell into a profound silence.

Fain. They had a mind to be rid of you.

Mira. For which reason, I resolved not to stir. At last, the good old lady broke through her painful taciturnity with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant

joining in the argument, I rose, and, with a constrained smile, told her, I thought nothing was so easy as to know, when a visit began to be troublesome. She reddened, and I withdrew without expecting her reply.

Fain. You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in compliance with her aunt.

Mira. She is more mistress of herself than to be under the necessity of such resignation.

Fain. What! though half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

Mira. I was then in such a humour, that I should have been better pleased, if she had been less discreet.

Fain. Now I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you: last night was one of their cabal nights; they have them three times a-week, and meet by turns at one another's apartments, where they come together, like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week. You and I are excluded; and it was once proposed, that all the male sex should be excepted; but somebody moved, that, to avoid scandal, there might be one man of the community; upon which motion Witwould and Petulant were enrolled members.

Mira. And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My lady Wishfort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation of mankind; and, full of the vigour of fifty-five, declares for a friend and ratafia; and let posterity shift for itself, she'll breed no more.

Fain. The discovery of your sham addresses to her, to conceal your love to her niece, has provoked this separation: had you dissembled better, things might have continued in the state of nature.

Mira. I did as much as man could, with any reasonable conscience; I proceeded to the very last act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a song in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the addresses of a young fellow. The devil's in't if an old woman is to be flattered farther. But for the discovery of this amour, I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs Marwood.

Fain. What should provoke her to be your enemy, unless she has made you advances, which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

Mira. She was always civil to me, till of late. I confess, I am not one of those coxcombs, who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice; and think, that she, who does not refuse them every thing, can refuse them nothing.

Fain. You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and though you may have cruelty enough not to answer a lady's advances, you have too much generosity, not to be tender of her honour. Yet, you speak with an indifference, which seems to be affected; and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

Mira. You pursue the argument with a distrust, that seems to be unaffected, and confesses you are conscious of a concern, for which the lady is more indebted to you, than is your wife.

Fain. Fy, fy, friend! if you grow censorious, I must leave you;——I'll look upon the gamesters in the next room.

Mira. Who are they?

Fain. Petulant and Witwould—Bring me some chocolate. [*Exit.*

Mira. Betty, what says your clock?

Bet. Turned of the last canonical hour, sir.

Mira. How pertinently the jade answers me! ha! almost one o'clock! [*Looking on his watch.*] O, ye are come——

Enter FOOTMAN.

Well, is the grand affair over? You have been something tedious.

Foot. Sir, there's such coupling at Pancras, that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a country dance. Ours was the last couple to lead up; and no hopes appearing of dispatch, besides, the parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his lungs would have failed before it came to our turn; so we drove round to Duke's Place; and there they were rivetted in a trice.

Mira. So, so, you are sure they are married.

Foot. Incontestably, sir: I am witness.

Mira. Have you the certificate?

Foot. Here it is, sir.

Mira. Has the taylor brought Waitwell's clothes home, and the new liveries?

Foot. Yes, sir.

Mira. That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and bid Waitwell shake his ears, and dame Partlet rustle up her feathers, and meet me at one o'clock by Rosamond's pond; that I may see her before she returns to her lady: and, as you tender your ears, be secret. [*Exit Footman.*

Enter FAINALL.

Fain. Joy of your success, Mirabell; you look pleased.

Mira. Ay, I have been engaged in a matter of some sort of mirth, which is not yet ripe for discovery. I am glad this is not a cabal-night. I wonder, Fainall, that you, who are married, and, of consequence, should be discreet, will suffer your wife to be of such a party.

Fain. Faith, I am not jealous. Besides, most, who are engaged, are women and relations; and, for the men, they are of a kind too contemptible to give scandal.

Mira. I am of another opinion. The greater the coxcomb, always the more the scandal: for, a woman, who is not a fool, can have but one reason for associating with a man, who is one.

Fain. Are you jealous as often as you see Witwould entertained by Millamant?

Mira. Of her understanding I am, if not of her person.

Fain. You do her wrong; for, to give her her due, she has wit.

Mira. She has beauty enough to make any man think so; and complaisance enough not to contradict him, who shall tell her so.

Fain. For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

Mira. And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover; for I like her with all her faults; nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those affectations, which, in another woman, would be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall; she once used me with that insolence, that, in revenge, I took her to pieces; sifted her, and separated her failings; I studied them, and got them by rote. The catalogue was so large, that I was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her heartily; to which end I so used myself to think of them, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less disturbance, till, in a few days, it became habitual to me to remember them without being displeased. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties; and, in all probability, in a little time longer I shall like them as well.

Fain. Marry her, marry her; be half as well acquainted with her charms as you are with her defects, and my life on't you are your own man again.

Mira. Say you so?

Fain. I have experience: I have a wife, and so forth.

Enter Messenger.

Mes. Is one 'squire Witwould here?

Bet. Yes; what's your business?

Mes. I have a letter for him, from his brother, sir Wilful, which I am charged to deliver into his own hands.

Bet. He's in the next room, friend——That way. [*Exit Messenger.*

Mira. What, is the chief of that noble family in town? sir Wilful Witwould?

Fain. He is expected to-day. Do you know him?

Mira. I have seen him; he promises to be an extraordinary person; I think you have the honour to be related to him?

Fain. Yes, he is half-brother to this Witwould by a former wife, who was sister to my lady Wishfort, my wife's mother. If you marry Millamant, you must call cousins too.

Mira. I would rather be his relation than his acquaintance.

Fain. He comes to town in order to equip himself for travel.

Mira. For travel! Why, the man, that I mean, is above forty.

Fain. No matter for that; 'tis for the honour of England, that all Europe should know we have blockheads of all ages.

Mira. I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools.

Fain. By no means, 'tis better as it is; 'tis better to trade with a little loss, than to be quite eaten up with being overstocked.

Mira. Pray, are the follies of this knight-errant, and those of the 'squire his brother, any thing related?

Fain. Not at all; Witwould grows by the knight, like a medlar grafted on a crab. One will melt in your mouth, and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all pulp, and the other all core.

Mira. So, one will be rotten before he be ripe, and the other will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.

Fain. Sir Wilful is an odd mixture of bashfulness and obstinacy. But when he's drunk, he's as loving as the monster in the tempest; and much after the same manner. To give t'other his due, he has something of good-nature, and does not always want wit.

Mira. Not always: but as often as his memory fails him, and his common-place of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory, and some few scraps of other folks wit. He is one, whose conversation can never be approved, yet it is now and then to be endured. He has, indeed, one good quality—he is not exceptious; for he so passionately affects the reputation of understanding raillery, that he will construe an affront into a jest; and call downright rudeness and ill language, satire and fire.

Fain. If you have a mind to finish his picture, you have an opportunity to do it at full length. Behold the original.

Enter WITWOULD.

Wit. Afford me your compassion, my dears; pity me, Fainall! Mirabell, pity me!

Mira. I do, from my soul.

Fain. Why, what's the matter?

Wit. No letters for me, Betty?

Bet. Did not a messenger bring you one but now, sir?

Wit. Aye, but no other?

Bet. No, sir.

Wit. That's hard, that's very hard; a messenger, a mule, a beast of burden; he has brought me a letter from the fool, my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another. And what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author, as an epistle dedicatory.

Mira. A fool, and your brother, Witwould!

Wit. Aye, aye, my half brother. My half brother he is; no nearer, upon honour.

Mira. Then, 'tis possible he may be but half a fool.

Wit. Good, good, Mirabell, le drole! Good, good! hang him! don't let us talk of him. Fainall, how does your lady? gad, I say any thing in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon, that I should ask a man of pleasure, and the town, a question at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage; I don't know what I say: but she is the best woman in the world.

Fain. 'Twas well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

Wit. No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall. Your judgment, Mirabell?

Mira. You had better step and ask his wife, if you would be credibly informed.

Wit. Mirabell——

Mira. Aye——

Wit. My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons;—gad, I have forgot what I was going to say to you.

Mira. I thank you heartily, heartily.

Wit. No, but prithee, excuse me—my memory is such a memory.

Mira. Have you a care of such apologies, Witwould; for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain, either of the spleen or his memory.

Fain. What have you done with Petulant?

Wit. He's reckoning his money; my money it was——I have had no luck to-day.

Fain. You may allow him to win of you at play; for you are sure to be too hard for him at repartee: Since you monopolize the wit, that is between you, the fortune must be his of course.

Mira. I don't find, that Petulant confesses the superiority of wit to be your talent, Witwould.

Wit. Come, come, you are malicious now, and would breed debates——Petulant's my friend, and a very pretty fellow, and a very honest fellow, and has a smattering——faith and troth a pretty deal of an odd sort of small wit: nay, I do him justice, I'm his friend, I won't wrong him. And, if he had any judgement in the world, he would not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

Fain. You don't take your friend to be overnicely bred?

Wit. No, no, hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I must own—No more breeding than a bum-baily, that I grant you—'Tis pity; the fellow has fire and life.

Mira. What, courage?

Wit. Hum, faith I don't know as to that,—I can't say as to that. Yes, faith, in controversy, he'll contradict any body.

Mira. Though it were a man, whom he feared; or a woman, whom he loved.

Wit. Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks; we have all our failings: you are too hard upon him; you are, faith. Let me excuse him—I can defend most of his faults, except one or two; one he has, that's the truth on't; if he were my brother, I could not acquit him——that, indeed, I could wish were otherwise.

Mira. Aye marry, what's that, Witwould?

Wit. O pardon me! expose the infirmities of a friend! No, my dear, excuse me there.

Fain. What, I warrant he's insincere, or 'tis some such trifle.

Wit. No, no; what if he be? 'tis no matter for that; his wit will excuse that; a wit should no more be sincere, than a woman constant; one argues a want of parts, as t'other of beauty.

Mira. May be you think him too positive?

Wit. No, no, his being positive is an incentive to argument, and keeps up conversation.

Fain. Too illiterate.

Wit. That! that's his happiness—his want of learning gives him the more opportunity to shew his natural parts.

Mira. He wants words.

Wit. Aye; but I like him for that, now; for his want of words gives me the pleasure very often to explain his meaning.

Fain. He's impudent.

Wit. No, that's not it.

Mira. Vain.

Wit. No.

Mira. What, he speaks unseasonable truths sometimes, because he has not wit enough to invent an evasion.

Wit. Truth! ha, ha, ha! No, no; since you will have it, I mean, he never speaks truth at all, that's all. He will lie like a chambermaid, or a woman of quality's porter. Now, that is a fault.

Enter COACHMAN.

Coach. Is master Petulant here, mistress?

Bet. Yes.

Coach. Three gentlewomen in a coach would speak with him.

Fain. O brave Petulant! three!

Bet. I'll tell him.

Coach. You must bring two dishes of chocolate, and a glass of cinnamon-water.

[*Exeunt* COACHMAN *and* BETTY.

Wit. That should be for two fasting *bona robas*, and a procuress troubled with wind. Now, you may know what the three are.

Mira. You are very free with your friend's acquaintance.

Wit. Aye, aye, friendship without freedom is as dull as love without enjoyment, or wine without toasting; but, to tell you a secret, these are trulls, whom he allows coach-hire, and something more, by the week, to call on him once a day at public places.

Mira. How!

Wit. You shall see he wont go to them, because there's no more company here to take notice of him. Why this is nothing to what he used to do: before he found out this way, I have known him call for himself——

Fain. Call for himself! what dost thou mean?

Wit. Mean! why he would slip you out of this chocolate-house, just when you had been talking to him. As soon as your back was turned——whip he was gone; then trip to his lodging, clap on a hood and a scarf, and a mask, slap into a hackney-coach, and drive hither to the door again in a trice; where he would send in for himself, that is, I mean, call for himself, wait for himself, nay, and what's more, not finding himself, sometimes leave a letter for himself.

Mira. I confess this is something extraordinary. I believe he waits for himself now, he is so long a coming: O, I ask his pardon.

Enter PETULANT *and* BETTY.

Bet. Sir, the coach stays.

Pet. Well, well; I come—'Sbud, a man had as good be a professed midwife, as a professed gallant, at this rate; to be knocked up, and raised at all hours, and in all places. Deuce on them, I wont come—D'ye hear, tell them I wont come———Let them snivel and cry their hearts out. [*Exit* BETTY.

Fain. You are very cruel, Petulant.

Pet. All's one, let it pass———I have a humour to be cruel.

Mira. I hope they are not persons of condition, that you use at this rate.

Pet. Condition! condition's a dried fig, if I am not in humour———By this hand, if they were your——a——a—your what-d'ye-call-'ems themselves, they must wait, or rub off, if I am not in the vein.

Mira. What-d'ye-call-'ems! what are they, Witwould?

Wit. Empresses, my dear——By your what-d'ye-call-'ems he means Sultana queens.

Pet. Aye, Roxalanas!

Mira. Cry you mercy.

Fain. Witwould says they are———

Pet. What does he say they are?

Wit. I? fine ladies, I say.

Pet. Pass on, Witwould—Harkee, by this light his relations—Two co-heiresses, his cousins, and an old aunt, who loves intriguing better than a conventicle.

Wit. Ha, ha, ha! I had a mind to see how the rogue would come off—Ha, ha, ha! gad, I can't be angry with him, if he had said they were my mother and my sisters.

Mira. No!

Wit. No; the rogue's wit and readiness of invention charm me, dear Petulant.

Enter BETTY.

Bet. They are gone, sir, in great anger.

Pet. Enough, let them trundle. Anger helps complexion, saves paint.

Fain. This continence is all dissembled; this is in order to have something to brag of the next time he makes court to Millamant, and swear he has abandoned the whole sex for her sake.

Mira. Have you not left off your impudent pretensions there yet? I shall cut your throat, some time or other, Petulant, about that business.

Pet. Aye, aye, let that pass———There are other throats to be cut———

Mira. Meaning mine, sir?

Pet. Not I; I mean nobody; I know nothing; But there are uncles and nephews in the world; and there may be rivals—What, then? all's one for that———

Mira. Now, harkee, Petulant, come hither—Explain, or I shall call your interpreter.

Pet. Explain! I know nothing———Why you have an uncle, have you not, lately come to town, and lodges by my lady Wishfort's?

Mira. True.

Pet. Why that's enough; you and he are not friends: and if he should marry and have a child, you may be disinherited, ha!

Mira. Where hast thou stumbled upon all this truth!

Pet. All's one for that; why, then, say I know something.

Mira. Come, thou art an honest fellow, Petulant, and shalt make love to my mistress; thou shalt, faith. What hast thou heard of my uncle?

Pet. I! nothing; I! If throats are to be cut, let swords clash: snug's the word; I shrug and am silent.

Mira. O raillery, raillery! Come, I know thou art in the women's secrets—what, you're a cabalist? I know you staid at Millamant's last night, after I went. Was there any mention made of my uncle or me? tell me. If thou hadst but good nature equal to thy wit, Petulant, Tony Witwould, who is now thy competitor in fame, would shew as dim by thee as a dead whiting's eye by a pearl of orient; he would no more be seen by thee, than Mercury is by the sun. Come, I'm sure thou wo't tell me.

Pet. If I do, will you grant me common sense, then, for the future?

Mira. Faith I'll do what I can for thee; and I'll pray that it may be granted thee in the mean time.

Pet. Well, harkee.

[*They talk apart.*

Fain. Petulant and you, both, will find Mirabell as warm a rival as a lover.

Wit. 'Pshaw, 'pshaw! that she laughs at Petulant, is plain. And, for my part—but that it is almost a fashion to admire her, I should——harkee—to tell you a secret, but let it go no farther—between friends, I shall never break my heart for her.

Fain. How!

Wit. She's handsome; but she's a sort of an uncertain woman.

Fain. I thought you had died for her.

Wit. Umph—no——

Fain. She has wit.

Wit. 'Tis what she will hardly allow any body else—now, I should hate that, if she were as handsome as Cleopatra. Mirabell is not so sure of her, as he thinks for.

Fain. Why do you think so?

Wit. We stand pretty late there last night; and heard something of an uncle to Mirabell, who is lately come to town, and is between him and the best part of his estate; Mirabell and he are at some distance, as my lady Wishfort has been told; and, you know, she hates Mirabell worse than a quaker hates a parrot, or than a fishmonger hates a hard frost. Whether this uncle has seen Mrs Millamant or not, I cannot say; but there were items of such a treaty being in embryo; and, if it should come to life, poor Mirabell would be, in some sort, unfortunately fobbed, i'faith!

Fain. 'Tis impossible Millamant should hearken to it.

Wit. Faith, my dear, I can't tell; she's a woman, and a kind of a humourist.

Mira. And this is the sum of what you could collect last night?

Pet. The quintessence. May be Witwould knows more; he staid longer——besides, they never mind him; they say any thing before him.

Mira. I thought you had been the greatest favourite.

Pet. Aye, *tête à tête;* but not in public, because I make remarks.

Mira. You do?

Pet. Aye, aye; I'm malicious, man. Now, he's soft, you know; they are not in awe of him—the fellow's well-bred; he's what you call a—what d'ye-call them, a fine gentleman; but he's silly withal.

Mira. I thank you, I know as much as my curiosity requires. Fainall, are you for the Mall?

Fain. Aye, I'll take a turn before dinner.

Wit. Aye, we'll all walk in the park; the ladies talk of being there.

Mira. I thought you were obliged to watch for your brother sir Wilfull's arrival.

Wit. No, no; he comes to his aunt's, my lady Wishfort: plague on him, I shall be troubled with him, too; what shall I do with the fool?

Pet. Beg him for his estate, that I may beg you afterwards; and so have but one trouble with you both.

Wit. O rare Petulant! thou art as quick as fire in a frosty morning; thou shalt to the Mall with us, and we'll be very severe.

Pet. Enough, I'm in a humour to be severe.

Mira. Are you? Pray, then, walk by yourselves—let not us be accessary to your putting the ladies out of countenance with your senseless ribaldry, which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and, when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

Pet. What, what? then let them either shew their innocence, by not understanding what they hear, or else shew their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand.

Mira. But hast not thou, then, sense enough to know, that thou ought'st to be most ashamed thyself, when thou hast put another out of countenance?

Pet. Not I, by this hand———I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt, or ill-breeding.

Mira. I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the error of your judgment, in defence of your practice.

Where modesty's ill manners, 'tis but fit
That impudence and malice pass for wit.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*St James's Park.*

Enter MRS FAINALL, *and* MRS MARWOOD.

Mrs Fain. AYE, aye, dear Marwood, if we will be happy, we must find the means in ourselves, and among ourselves. Men are ever in extremes; either doating, or averse. While they are lovers, if they have fire and sense, their jealousies are insupportable: and, when they cease to love, (we ought to think at least) they loathe: they look upon us with horror and distaste; they meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and, as from such, fly from us.

Mrs Mar. True; 'tis an unhappy circumstance of life, that love should ever die before us; and that the man so often should outlive the lover. But, say what you will, 'tis better to be left, than never to have been loved. To pass our youth in dull indifference, to refuse the sweets of life, because they once must leave us, is as preposterous, as to wish to have been born old, because we one day must be old. For my part, my youth may wear and waste, but it shall never rust in my possession.

Mrs Fain. Then, it seems, you dissemble an aversion to mankind, only in compliance to my mother's humour.

Mrs Mar. Certainly. To be free; I have no taste of those insipid, dry discourses, with which our sex, of force, must entertain themselves

apart from men. We may affect endearments to each other, profess eternal friendships, and seem to dote like lovers; but 'tis not in our natures long to persevere. Love will resume his empire in our breasts, and every heart, or soon or late, resume and re-admit him as its lawful tyrant.

Mrs Fain. Bless me! how have I been deceived? Why, you're a professed libertine.

Mrs Mar. You see my friendship by my freedom. Come, be as sincere; acknowledge that your sentiments agree with mine.

Mrs Fain. Never.

Mrs Mar. You hate mankind?

Mrs Fain. Heartily, inveterately.

Mrs Mar. Your husband?

Mrs Fain. Most transcendently; aye, though I say it, meritoriously.

Mrs Mar. Give me your hand upon it.

Mrs Fain. There.

Mrs Mar. I join with you; what I have said, has been to try you.

Mrs Fain. Is it possible? dost thou hate those vipers, men?

Mrs Mar. I have done hating them, and am now come to despise them; the next thing I have to do, is eternally to forget them.

Mrs Fain. There spoke the spirit of an Amazon, a Penthesilea.

Mrs Mar. And yet I am thinking sometimes to carry my aversion farther.

Mrs Fain. How?

Mrs Mar. By marrying; if I could but find one, that loved me very well, and would be thoroughly sensible of ill usage, I think I should do myself the violence of undergoing the ceremony.

Mrs Fain. You would not dishonour him?

Mrs Mar. No, but I'd make him believe I did, and that's as bad.

Mrs Fain. Why, had you not as good do it?

Mrs Mar. Oh, if he should ever discover it, he would then know the worst, and be out of his pain; but I would have him ever to continue upon the rack of fear and jealousy.

Mrs Fain. Ingenious mischief! would thou wert married to Mirabell!

Mrs Mar. Would I were!

Mrs Fain. You change colour?

Mrs Mar. Because I hate him.

Mrs Fain. So do I; but I can hear him named. But what reason have you to hate him in particular?

Mrs Mar. I never loved him; he is, and always was, insufferably proud.

Mrs Fain. By the reason you give for your aversion, one would think it dissembled; for you have laid a fault to his charge, of which his enemies must acquit him.

Mrs Mar. Oh, then, it seems you are one of his favourable enemies. Methinks you look a little pale, and now you flush again.

Mrs Fain. Do I? I think I am a little sick o' the sudden.

Mrs Mar. What ails you?

Mrs Fain. My husband. Don't you see him? He turned short upon me unawares, and has almost overcome me.

Enter FAINALL *and* MIRABELL.

Mrs Mar. Ha, ha, ha! he comes opportunely for you.

Mrs Fain. For you; for he has brought Mirabell with him.

Fain. My dear!

Mrs Fain. My soul!

Fain. You don't look well to-day, child.

Mrs Fain. D'ye think so?

Mira. He's the only man that does, madam.

Mrs Fain. The only man that would tell me so, at least; and the only man from whom I could hear it without mortification.

Fain. Oh, my dear, I am satisfied of your tenderness; I know you cannot resent any thing from me; especially what is an effect of my concern.

Mrs Fain. Mr Mirabell, my mother interrupted you in a pleasant relation, last night; I could fain hear it out.

Mira. The persons, concerned in that affair, have yet a tolerable reputation. I am afraid Mr Fainall will be censorious.

Mrs Fain. He has a humour more prevailing than his curiosity, and will willingly dispense with the hearing of one scandalous story, to avoid giving an occasion to make another, by being seen to walk with his wife. This way, Mr Mirabell, and, I dare promise, you will oblige us both.

[*Exeunt* MRS FAINALL *and* MIRABELL.

Fain. Excellent creature! well, sure, if I should live to be rid of my wife, I should be a miserable man.

Mrs Mar. Aye?

Fain. For, having only that one hope, the accomplishment of it, of consequence, must put an end to all my hopes; and what a wretch is he, who must survive his hopes! nothing remains, when that day comes, but to sit down and weep like Alexander, when he wanted other worlds to conquer.

Mrs Mar. Will you not follow them?

Fain. No, I think not.

Mrs Mar. Pray let us; I have a reason.

Fain. You are not jealous?

Mrs Mar. Of whom?

Fain. Of Mirabell.

Mrs Mar. If I am, is it inconsistent with my love to you, that I am tender of your honour?

Fain. You would intimate, then, as if there were a particular understanding between my wife and him?

Mrs Mar. I think she does not hate him to that degree she would be thought.

Fain. But he, I fear, is too insensible.

Mrs Mar. It may be, you are deceived.

Fain. It may be so. I do not now begin to apprehend it.

Mrs Mar. What?

Fain. That I have been deceived, madam, and you are false.

Mrs Mar. That I am false! What mean you?

Fain. To let you know, I see through all your little arts—come, you both love him, and both have equally dissembled your aversion. Your mutual jealousies of one another have made you clash, till you have both struck fire. I have seen the warm confession reddening on your cheeks, and sparkling from your eyes.

Mrs Mar. You do me wrong.

Fain. I do not—'Twas for my ease to over see and wilfully neglect the gross advances made him by my wife; that, by permitting her to be engaged, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasures; and take you oftener to my arms in full security. But could you think, because the nodding husband would not wake, that e'er the watchful lover slept?

Mrs Mar. And wherewithal can you reproach me?

Fain. With infidelity; with loving another; with love of Mirabell.

Mrs Mar. 'Tis false. I challenge you to shew an instance, that can confirm your groundless accusation. I hate him.

Fain. And wherefore do you hate him? He is insensible, and your resentment follows his neglect. An instance! The injuries you have done him are a proof: your interposing in his love. What cause had you to make discoveries of his pretended passion? to undeceive the credulous aunt, and be the officious obstacle of his match with Millamant?

Mrs Mar. My obligations to my lady urged me: I had professed a friendship to her; and could not see her easy nature so abused by that dissembler.

Fain. What, was it conscience, then? Professed a friendship! O the pious friendships of the female sex!

Mrs Mar. More tender, more sincere, and more enduring, than all the vain and empty vows of men, whether professing love to us, or mutual faith to one another.

Fain. Ha, ha, ha! you are my wife's friend, too.

Mrs Mar. Shame and ingratitude! Do you reproach me? You, you upbraid me! Have I been false to her through strict fidelity to you, and sacrificed my friendship to keep my love inviolate? and have you the baseness to charge me with the guilt, unmindful of the merit! To you it should be meritorious, that I have been vicious; and do you reflect that guilt upon me, which should lie buried in your bosom?

Fain. You misinterpret my reproof. I meant but to remind you of the slight account you once could make of strictest ties, when set in competition with your love to me.

Mrs Mar. 'Tis false; you urged it with deliberate malice—'Twas spoke in scorn, and I never will forgive it.

Fain. Your guilt, not your resentment, begets your rage. If yet you loved, you could forgive a jealousy: but you are stung to find, you are discovered.

Mrs Mar. It shall be all discovered. You, too, shall be discovered; be sure you shall. I can but be exposed—If I do it myself I shall prevent your baseness.

Fain. Why, what will you do?

Mrs Mar. Disclose it to your wife; own what has past between us.

Fain. Frenzy!

Mrs Mar. By all my wrongs, I'll do it!—I'll publish to the world the injuries you have done me, both in my fame and fortune: with both I trusted you; you, bankrupt in honour, as indigent of wealth.

Fain. Your fame I have preserved. Your fortune has been bestowed, as the prodigality of your love would have it, in pleasures, which we both have shared. Yet, had not you been false, I had, ere this, repaid it—'Tis true—had you permitted Mirabell with Millamant to have stolen their marriage, my lady had been incensed beyond all means of reconcilement: Millamant had forfeited the moiety of her fortune, which then would have descended to my wife. And wherefore did I marry, but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you?

Mrs Mar. Deceit and frivolous pretence.

Fain. Death! am I not married? what's pretence? Am I not imprisoned, fettered? have I not a wife? nay, a wife, that was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow; and would be again a widow, but that I have a heart of proof, and something of a constitution to bustle through the ways of wedlock and this world? Will you be reconciled to truth and me?

Mrs Mar. Impossible. Truth and you are inconsistent————I hate you, and shall for ever.

Fain. For loving you?

Mrs Mar. I loath the name of love after such usage; and next to the guilt, with which you would asperse me, I scorn you most. Farewell.

Fain. Nay, we must not part thus.

Mrs Mar. Let me go.

Fain. Come, I'm sorry.—

Mrs Mar. I care not————Let me go.————Break my hands, do————I'd leave them to get loose.

Fain. I would not hurt you for the world. Have I no other hold to keep you here?

Mrs Mar. Well, I have deserved it all.

Fain. You know I love you.

Mrs Mar. Poor dissembling! O that——— Well, it is not yet——

Fain. What? what is it not? what is not yet? is it not yet too late-——

Mrs Mar. No, it is not yet too late——I have that comfort.

Fain. It is, to love another.

Mrs Mar. But not to loath, detest, abhor mankind, myself, and the whole treacherous world.

Fain. Nay, this is extravagance—Come, I ask your pardon——No tears——I was to blame; I could not love you and be easy in my doubts—Pray forbear——I believe you; I'm convinced I've done you wrong; and any way, every way will make amends;——I'll hate my wife yet more, damn her; I'll part with her, rob her of all she's worth, and we'll retire somewhere, any where, to another world. I'll marry thee—Be pacified——'Sdeath! they come, hide your face, your tears——You have a mask, wear it a moment. This way, this way—be persuaded! [*Exeunt.*

Enter MIRABELL *and* MRS FAINALL.

Mrs Fain. They are here yet.

Mira. They are turning into the other walk.

Mrs Fain. While I only hated my husband, I could bear to see him; but since I have despised him, he is too offensive.

Mira. O you should hate with prudence.

Mrs Fain. Yes, for I have loved with indiscretion.

Mira. You should have just so much disgust for your husband, as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover.

Mrs Fain. You have been the cause, that I have loved without bounds; and would you set limits to that aversion, of which you have been the occasion? why did you make me marry this man?

Mira. Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous actions? To save that idol reputation. If the familiarities of our loves had produced that consequence, of which you were apprehensive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit, but on a husband? I knew Fainall to be a man lavish of his morals, an interested and professing friend, a false and a designing lover; yet one whose wit and outward fair behaviour have gained a reputation with the town, enough to make that woman stand excused, who has suffered herself to be won by his addresses. A better man ought not to have been sacrificed to the occasion; a worse had not answered to the purpose. When you are weary of him, you know your remedy.

Mrs Fain. I ought to stand in some degree of credit with you, Mirabell.

Mira. In justice to you, I have made you privy to my whole design, and put it in your power to ruin or advance my fortune.

Mrs Fain. Whom have you instructed to represent your pretended uncle?

Mira. Waitwell, my servant.

Mrs Fain. He is a humble servant to Foible, my mother's woman, and may win her to your interest.

Mira. Care is taken for that—she is won and worn by this time. They were married this morning.

Mrs Fain. Who?

Mira. Waitwell and Foible. I would not tempt my servant to betray me by trusting him too far. If your mother, in hopes to ruin me, should consent to marry my pretended uncle, he might, like Mosca in the Fox, stand upon terms; so I made him sure before-hand.

Mrs Fain. So, if my poor mother is caught in a contract, you will discover the imposture betimes; and release her, by producing a certificate of her gallant's former marriage?

Mira. Yes, upon condition that she consent to my marriage with her niece, and surrender the moiety of her fortune in her possession.

Mrs Fain. She talked last night of endeavouring at a match between Millamant and your uncle.

Mira. That was by Foible's direction, and my instruction, that she might seem to carry it more privately.

Mrs Fain. Well, I have an opinion of your success; for I believe my lady will do any thing to get a husband, and when she has this, which you have provided for her, I suppose she will submit to any thing to get rid of him.

Mira. Yes, I think the good lady would marry any thing that resembled a man, though 'twere no more than what a butler could pinch out of a napkin.

Mrs Fain. Female frailty! we must all come to it, if we live to be old, and feel the craving of a false appetite, when the true is decayed.

Mira. An old woman's appetite is depraved like that of a girl—'tis the green-sickness of a second childhood; and, like the faint offer of a latter spring, serves but to usher in the fall, and withers in an affected bloom.

Mrs Fain. Here's your mistress.

Enter MRS MILLAMANT, WITWOULD, *and* MINCING.

Mira. Here she comes, i'faith, full sail, with her fan spread, and streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders—ha, no; I cry her mercy.

Mrs Fain. I see but one poor empty sculler; and he tows her woman after him.

Mira. You seem to be unattended, madam—You used to have the beau-monde throng after you, and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

Wit. Like moths about a candle—I had like

to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

Mill. O I have denied myself airs to-day. I have walked as fast through the crowd——

Wit. As a favourite just disgraced; and with as few followers.

Mill. Dear Mr Witwould, truce with your similitudes: for I am as sick of them——

Wit. As a physician of a good air—I cannot help it, madam, though 'tis against myself.

Mill. Yet again! Mincing, stand between me and his wit.

Wit. Do Mrs Mincing, like a screen before a great fire. I confess I do blaze to-day; I am too bright.

Mrs Fain. But, dear Millamant, why were you so long?

Mill. Long! lud! have I not made violent haste? I have asked every living thing I met for you; I have inquired after you, as after a new fashion.

Wit. Madam, truce with your similitudes—no, you met her husband, and did not ask him for her.

Mir. By your leave, Witwould, that were like inquiring after an old fashion, to ask a husband for his wife.

Wit. Hum! a hit, a hit, a palpable hit, I confess it.

Min. You were dressed before I came abroad.

Mill. Ay, that's true—O but then I had—— Mincing, what had I? why was I so long?

Min. O mem, your la'ship staid to peruse a pacquet of letters.

Mill. O ay, letters—I had letters—I am persecuted with letters—I hate letters—nobody knows how to write letters; and yet one has them, one does not know why—they serve one to pin up one's hair.

Wit. Is that the way? Pray, madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters? I find I must keep copies.

Mill. Only with those in verse, Mr Witwould. I never pin up my hair with prose. I think, I tried once, Mincing?

Min. O mem, I shall never forget it.

Wit. Ay, poor Mincing tift and tift all the morning.

Min. Till I had the cramp in my fingers, I'll vow, mem, and all to no purpose. But when your la'ship pins it up with poetry, it sits so pleasant the next day as any thing, and is so pure and so crips.

Wit. Indeed! so crips?

Min. You're such a critic, Mr Witwould.

Mill. Mirabell, did you take exceptions last night? O ay, and went away——Now I think on't I'm angry—No, now I think on't I'm pleased——For I believe I gave you some pain.

Mir. Does that please you?

Mill. Infinitely; I love to give pain.

Mir. You would affect a cruelty, which is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

Mill. O, I ask your pardon for that—One's cruelty is one's power, and when one parts with one's cruelty, one parts with one's power; and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mir. Ay, ay, suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover—And then, how vain, how lost a thing you'll be! Nay, 'tis true: you are no longer handsome, when you have lost your lover; your beauty dies upon the instant; for beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he bestows your charms——Your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet, after commendation, can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it; for that reflects our praises, rather than your face.

Mill. O the vanity of these men! Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now, you must know, they could not commend one, if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift!——Dear me, what is a lover, that it can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases: and then, if one pleases, one makes more.

Wit. Very pretty! Why you make no more of making of lovers, madam, than of making so many card-matches.

Mill. One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than one's wit to an echo: they can but reflect what we look and say; vain, empty things if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

Mir. Yet, to those two vain, empty things, you owe two of the greatest pleasures of your life.

Mill. How so?

Mir. To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised; and to an echo, the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

Wit. But I know a lady, that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait till she dies, before it can catch her last words.

Mill. O fiction! Fainall, let us leave these men.

Mira. Draw off Witwould.

[*Aside to* MRS FAINALL.

Mrs Fain. Immediately: I have a word or two for Mr Witwould.

[*Exeunt* MRS FAINALL *and* WITWOULD.

Mira. I would beg a little private audience, too——You had the tyranny to deny me last night; though you knew I came to impart a secret to you, that concerned my love.

Mill. You saw I was engaged.

Mira. Unkind! You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools; things, who visit you from their excessive idleness; bestowing on your easiness that time, which is the incumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they should admire you; they are

not capable; or if they were, it should be to you as a mortification; for sure to please a fool is some degree of folly.

Mill. I please myself——Besides, sometimes to converse with fools is for my health.

Mira. Your health! Is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools?

Mill. Yes, the vapours; fools are physic for it next to assafœtida.

Mira. You are not in a course of fools?

Mill. Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom—you'll displease me—I think I must resolve, after all, not to have you——We shan't agree.

Mira. Not in our physic, it may be.

Mill. And yet our distemper, in all likelihood, will be the same; for we shall be sick of one another. I shan't endure to be reprimanded, nor instructed; 'tis so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults—— I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you, Mirabell——I'm resolved——I think——you may go ——Ha, ha, ha! What would you give, that you could help loving me?

Mira. I would give something that you did not know I could not help it.

Mill. Come, don't look grave, then. Well, what do you say to me?

Mira. I say, that a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain-dealing and sincerity.

Mill. Sententious, Mirabell? Prithee don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child, in an old tapestry hanging.

Mira. You are merry, madam; but I would persuade you for a moment to be serious.

Mill. What, with that face? No, if you keep your countenance, 'tis impossible I should hold mine. Well, after all, there is something very moving in a love-sick face. Ha, ha, ha!—Well, I won't laugh, don't be peevish——Heigho! now I'll be melancholy; as melancholy as a watch-light. Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me, woo me now——Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well; I see they are walking away.

Mira. Can you not find in the variety of your disposition one moment——

Mill. To hear you tell me Foible's married, and your plot like to speed——No!

Mira. But how you came to know it——

Mill. Without the help of conjuration, you can't imagine; unless she should tell me herself. Which of the two it may have been, I will leave you to consider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me.

[*Exeunt* MILLAMANT *and* MINCING.

Mira. I have something more——Gone——Think of you! to think of a whirlwind, though 'twere in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation; a very tranquillity of mind and mansion. A fellow, that lives in a windmill, has not a more whimsical dwelling than the heart of a man, that is lodged in a woman. There is no point of the compass, to which they cannot turn, and by which they are not turned; and by one as well as another; for motion, not method, is their occupation. To know this, and yet continue to be in love, is to be made wise from the dictates of reason, and yet persevere to play the fool by the force of instinct—O here come my pair of turtles—What! billing so sweetly! is not Valentine's day over with you yet? [*Enter* WAITWELL *and* FOIBLE.] Sirrah, Waitwell, why sure you think you were married for your own recreation, and not for my conveniency.

Wait. Your pardon, sir. With submission, we have indeed been billing; but still with an eye to business, sir. I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your directions as readily as my instructions, sir, your affairs are in a prosperous way.

Mira. Give you joy, Mrs Foible.

Foi. O-las, sir, I'm so ashamed——I'm afraid my lady has been in a thousand inquietudes for me. But I protest, sir, I made as much haste as I could.

Wait. That she did indeed, sir. It was my fault that she did not make more.

Mira. That I believe.

Foi. I told my lady as you instructed me, sir: that I had a prospect of seeing Sir Rowland, your uncle; and that I would put her ladyship's picture in my pocket to shew him; which, I'll be sure to say has made him so enamoured of her beauty, that he burns with impatience to lie at her ladyship's feet, and worship the original.

Mira. Excellent Foible! Matrimony has made you eloquent in love.

Wait. I think she has profited, sir; I think so.

Foi. You have seen madam Millamant, sir?

Mira. Yes.

Foi. I told her, sir, because I did not know that you might find an opportunity; she had so much company last night.

Mira. Your diligence will merit more—in the mean time—— [*Gives money.*

Foi. O dear sir, your humble servant!

Wait. Spouse!

Mira. Stand off, sir, not a penny——Go on and prosper, Foible——The lease shall be made good, and the farm stocked, if we succeed.

Foi. I don't question your generosity, sir: and you need not doubt of success. If you have no more commands, sir, I'll be gone; I'm sure my lady is at her toilet, and can't dress till I come—O dear, I'm sure that [*looking out*] was Mrs Marwood that went by in a mask; if she has seen me with you I'm sure she'll tell my lady. I'll make haste home and prevent her. Your servant, sir. B'w'ye, Waitwell. [*Exit.*

Wait. Sir Rowland, if you please. The jade's so pert upon her preferment, she forgets herself.

Mira. Come, sir, will you endeavour to forget yourself—and transform into sir Rowland?

Wait. Why, sir, it will be impossible I should remember myself. [*Exit* MIRABELL.] Married, knighted, and attended all in one day! 'tis enough to make any man forget himself. The difficulty will be how to recover my acquaintance and familiarity with my former self; and fall from my transformation to a reformation into Waitwell. Nay, I shan't be quite the same Waitwell, neither; for now, I remember, I'm married, and can't be my own again.

Ay, there's my grief; that's the sad change of life;
To lose my title, and yet keep my wife.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A room in* LADY WISHFORT'S *house.*

LADY WISHFORT *at her toilet,* PEG *waiting.*

Lady Wish. MERCIFUL, no news of Foible yet?

Peg. No, madam.

Lady Wish. I have no more patience—If I have not fretted myself till I am pale again, there's no veracity in me. Fetch me the red—the red, do you hear, sweet-heart! an arrant ash-colour, as I'm a person. Look you how this wench stirs! why dost thou not fetch me a little red? didst thou not hear me, mopus?

Peg. The red ratafia, does your ladyship mean, or the cherry-brandy?

Lady Wish. Ratafia, fool! no, fool, not the ratafia, fool!—Grant me patience! I mean the Spanish paper, ideot; complexion. Darling paint, paint, paint! dost thou understand that, changeling? dangling thy hands like bobbins before thee! why dost thou not stir, puppet? thou wooden thing upon wires.

Peg. Lord, madam, your ladyship is so impatient—I cannot come at the paint, madam; Mrs Foible has locked it up, and carried the key with her.

Lady Wish. Plague take you both———Fetch me the cherry-brandy, then. [*Exit* PEG.] I'm as pale and as faint—I look like Mrs Quadrisick, the curate's wife, that's always breeding——Wench, come, come, wench, what art thou doing? sipping! tasting! save thee, dost thou not know the bottle?

Enter PEG *with a bottle and china cup.*

Lady Wish. A cup, save thee! and what a cup hast thou brought! dost thou take me for a fairy, to drink out of an acorn? why didst thou not bring thy thimble? hast thou ne'er a brass thimble clinking in thy pocket, with a bit of nutmeg? I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill——So—again. See who that is. [*One knocks.*] Set down the bottle first.—Here, here, under the table—What, would'st thou go with the bottle in thy hand, like a tapster? [*Exit* PEG.] As I'm a person, this wench has lived in an inn upon the road, before she came to me, like Maritornes, the Asturian, in Don Quixote.

Enter PEG.

No Foible yet?

Peg. No, madam, Mrs Marwood.

Lady Wish. O, Marwood! let her come in. Come in, good Marwood.

Enter MRS MARWOOD.

Mrs Mar. I'm surprised to find your ladyship in dishabille at this time of day.

Lady Wish. Foible's a lost thing; has been abroad since morning, and never heard of since.

Mrs Mar. I saw her but now, as I came masked through the park, in conference with Mirabell.

Lady Wish. With Mirabell! you call my blood into my face, with mentioning that traitor. She durst not have the confidence. I sent her to negociate an affair, in which, if I'm detected, I'm undone. If that wheedling villain has wrought upon Foible to detect me, I'm ruined. Oh, my dear friend! I'm a wretch of wretches, if I'm detected.

Mrs Mar. O, madam, you cannot suspect Mrs Foible's integrity.

Lady Wish. O, he carries poison in his tongue, that would corrupt integrity itself. If she has given him an opportunity, she has as good as put her integrity into his hands. Ah, dear Marwood! what's integrity to an opportunity?—Hark, I hear her!—Dear friend, retire into my closet, that I may examine her with more freedom—You'll pardon me, dear friend, I can make bold with you—There are books over the chimney—Quarles and Pryn, and the Short View of the Stage, with Bunyan's works, to entertain you——

[*Exit* MRS MARWOOD.

Go, you thing, and send her in. [*Exit* PEG.

Enter FOIBLE.

Lady Wish. O, Foible! where hast thou been? what hast thou been doing?

Foi. Madam, I have seen the party.

Lady Wish. But what hast thou done?

Foi. Nay, 'tis your ladyship has done, and are to do; I have only promised. But a man so enamoured!—so transported! well, if worshipping of pictures be a sin—poor sir Rowland, I say.

Lady Wish. The miniature has been counted

like—But hast thou not betrayed me, Foible? hast thou not detected me to that faithless Mirabell?—What hadst thou to do with him in the park? answer me, has he got nothing out of thee?

Foi. So, mischief has been before-hand with me; what shall I say? [*Aside.*] Alas! madam, could I help it, if I met that confident thing? was I in fault? If you had heard how he used me, and all upon your ladyship's account, I'm sure you would not suspect my fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst, I could have borne it: but he had a fling at your ladyship, too; and, then, I could not hold: but, i'faith, I gave him his own.

Lady Wish. Me! what did the filthy fellow say?

Foi. O, madam! 'tis a shame to say what he said—With his taunts and his fleers, tossing up his nose. 'Humph,' says he, 'what, you are a hatching some plot,' says he, 'you are so early abroad, or catering,' says he, 'ferreting for some disbanded officer, I warrant—Half-pay is but thin subsistence!'—says he. 'Well, what pension does your lady propose? Let me see;' says he, 'what, she must come down pretty deep now; she's superannuated,' says he, 'and—

Lady Wish. Odds my life, I'll have him—I'll have him murdered! I'll have him poisoned! Where does he eat? I'll marry a drawer, to have him poisoned in his wine.

Foi. Poison him! poisoning's too good for him. Starve him, madam, starve him; marry sir Rowland, and get him disinherited. O, you would bless yourself, to hear what he said.

Lady Wish. A villain! superannuated!

Foi. 'Humph,' says he, 'I hear you are laying designs against me, too;' says he, 'and Mrs Millamant is to marry my uncle;'—he does not suspect a word of your ladyship: 'but,' says he, 'I'll fit you for that; I warrant you;' says he, 'I'll hamper you for that,' says he, 'you, and your old frippery, too,' says he, 'I'll handle you—'

Lady Wish. Audacious villain! handle me! would he durst?—Frippery! old frippery! Was there ever such a foul-mouthed fellow? I'll be married to-morrow; I'll be contracted to-night.

Foi. The sooner the better, madam.

Lady Wish. Will sir Rowland be here, say'st thou? when, Foible?

Foi. Incontinently, madam. No new sheriff's wife expects the return of her husband after knighthood, with that impatience, in which sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your ladyship's hand after dinner.

Lady Wish. Frippery! superannuated frippery! I'll frippery the villain; I'll reduce him to frippery and rags: A tatterdemallion—I hope to see him hung with tatters, like a Long-lane penthouse, or a gibbet thief: A slander-mouthed railer! I warrant the spendthrift prodigal is in debt as much as the million lottery, or the whole court upon a birth-day. I'll spoil his credit with his taylor. Yes, he shall have my niece with her fortune, he shall.

Foi. He! I hope to see him lodge in Ludgate first, and angle into Black Friars for brass farthings, with an old mitten.

Lady Wish. Ay, dear Foible; thank thee for that, dear Foible. He has put me out of all patience. I shall never recompose my features, to receive sir Rowland with any œconomy of face. The wretch has fretted me, that I am absolutely decayed. Look, Foible!

Foi. Your ladyship has frowned a little too rashly, indeed, madam. There are some cracks discernible in the white varnish.

Lady Wish. Let me see the glass—Cracks, say'st thou? why, I am arrantly flayed!—I look like an old peeled wall. Thou must repair me, Foible, before sir Rowland comes, or I shall never keep up to my picture.

Foi. I warrant you, madam; a little art once made your picture like you; and, now, a little of the same art must make you like your picture. Your picture must sit for you, madam.

Lady Wish. But art thou sure sir Rowland will not fail to come? or will he not fail, when he does come? will he be importunate, Foible? for, if he should not be importunate—I shall never break decorums—I shall die with confusion, if I am forced to advance—Oh, no! I can never advance!—I shall swoon if he should expect advances. No, I hope sir Rowland is better bred, than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy, neither.—I won't give him despair—But a little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring.

Foi. A little scorn becomes your ladyship.

Lady Wish. Yes, but tenderness becomes me best—A sort of a dyingness!—You see that picture has a—sort of a—Ha, Foible? a swimmingness in the eyes!—Yes, I'll look so!—My niece affects it, but she wants features. Is sir Rowland handsome? let my toilet be removed—I'll dress above. I'll receive sir Rowland here. Is he handsome? don't answer me. I won't know: I'll be surprised; I'll be taken by surprise.

Foi. By storm, madam, sir Rowland's a brisk man.

Lady Wish. Is he? O, then, he'll importune, if he's a brisk man. Let my things be removed, good Foible. [*Exit* LADY WISHFORT.

Enter MRS FAINALL.

Mrs Fain. O, Foible, I have been in a fright lest I should come too late! That devil, Marwood, saw you in the park with Mirabell, and, I'm afraid, will discover it to my lady.

Foi. Discover what, madam!

Mrs Fain. Nay, nay, put not on that strange face. I am privy to the whole design, and know that Waitwell, to whom thou wert this morning married, is to personate Mirabell's uncle, and, as such, winning my lady, to involve her in those

difficulties, from which Mirabell only must release her, by his making his conditions to have my cousin, and her fortune, left to her own disposal.

Foi. O, dear madam, I beg your pardon! It was not my confidence in your ladyship, that was deficient; but, I thought the former good correspondence between your ladyship and Mr Mirabell might have hindered his communicating this secret.

Mrs Fain. Dear Foible, forget that.

Foi. O, dear madam, Mr Mirabell is such a sweet winning gentleman—But your ladyship is the pattern of generosity—Sweet lady, to be so good! Mr Mirabell cannot chuse but be grateful. I find your ladyship has his heart still. Now, madam, I can safely tell your ladyship our success. Mrs Marwood has told my lady; but, I warrant, I managed myself. I turned it all for the better. I told my lady that Mr Mirabell railed at her. I laid horrid things to his charge, I'll vow; and my lady is so incensed, that she'll be contracted to sir Rowland to-night, she says; —I warrant I worked her up, that he may have her for asking for, as they say of a Welch maidenhead.

Mrs Fain. O rare Foible!

Foi. Madam, I beg your ladyship to acquaint Mr Mirabell of his success. I would be seen as little as possible to speak to him; besides, I believe madam Marwood watches me—She has a penchant; but, I know Mr Mirabell can't abide her.—[*Calls.*]—John—remove my lady's toilet. Madam, your servant. My lady is so impatient, I fear she'll come for me, if I stay.

Mrs Fain. I'll go with you up the back-stairs, lest I should meet her. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MRS MARWOOD, *from the closet.*

Mrs Mar. Indeed, Mrs Engine, is it thus with you? Are you become a go-between of this importance? Yes, I shall watch you. Why, this wench is the *pass-partout*, a very master-key to every body's strong-box. My friend Fainall, have you carried it so swimmingly? I thought there was something in it; but it seems it is over with you. Your loathing is not from a want of appetite, then, but from a surfeit; else you could never be so cool to fall from a principal to be an assistant: to procure for him! a pattern of generosity, that I confess. Well, Mr Fainall, you have met with your match. O man, man! woman, woman! The devil's an ass! if I were a painter, I would draw him like an idiot, a driveller, with a bib and bells. Man should have his head and horns, and woman the rest of him. Poor simple fiend! Madam Marwood has a penchant, but he can't abide her—'Twere better for him you had not been his confessor in that affair, without you could have kept his counsel closer. I shall not prove another pattern of generosity—he has not obliged me to that with those excesses of himself; and now I'll have none of him. Here comes the good lady, panting ripe; with a heart full of hope, and a head full of care, like any chemist upon the day of projection.

Enter LADY WISHFORT.

Lady Wish. O dear Marwood, what shall I say for this rude forgetfulness? But my dear friend is all goodness.

Mrs Mar. No apologies, dear madam. I have been very well entertained.

Lady Wish. As I'm a person, I am in a very chaos to think I should so forget myself—But I have such an olio of affairs, really I know not what to do—[*Calls.*]—Foible!—I expect my nephew, sir Wilfull, every moment, too—Why, Foible—He means to travel for improvement.

Mrs Mar. Methinks sir Wilfull should rather think of marrying, than travelling at his years. I hear he is turned of forty.

Lady Wish. O, he's in less danger of being spoiled by his travels—I am against my nephew's marrying too young. It will be time enough, when he comes back, and has acquired discretion to chuse for himself.

Mrs Mar. Methinks Mrs Millamant and he would make a very fit match. He may travel afterwards. 'Tis a thing very usual with young gentlemen.

Lady Wish. I promise you I have thought on't—And, since 'tis your judgment, I'll think on't again. I assure you I will; I value your judgement extremely. On my word I'll propose it. [*Enter* FOIBLE.] Come, come, Foible—I had forgot my nephew will be here before dinner—I must make haste.

Foi. Mr Witwould and Mr Petulant are come to dine with your ladyship.

Lady Wish. O dear, I can't appear, till I am dressed. Dear Marwood, shall I be free with you again, and beg you to entertain them? I'll make all imaginable haste. Dear friend, excuse me. [*Exeunt* LADY WISHFORT *and* FOIBLE.

Enter MRS MILLAMANT *and* MINCING.

Mill. Sure, never any thing was so unbred as that odious man. Marwood, your servant.

Mrs Mar. You have a colour; what's the matter?

Mill. That horrid fellow, Petulant, has provoked me into a flame—I have broke my fan—Mincing, lend me yours—is not all the powder out of my hair?

Mrs Mar. No. What has he done?

Mill. Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talked—Nay, he has said nothing, neither; but he has contradicted every thing, that has been said. For my part, I thought Witwould and he would have quarrelled.

Min. I vow, mem, I thought once they would have fit.

Mill. Well, 'tis a lamentable thing, I swear, that one has not the liberty of chusing one's acquaintance, as one does one's clothes.

Mrs Mar. If we had that liberty, we should be as weary of one set of acquaintance, though never so good, as we are of one suit, though never so fine. A fool and a Doily stuff would now and then find days of grace, and be worn for variety.

Mill. I could consent to wear them, if they would wear alike; but fools never wear out—They are such *drap-de-berry* things! without one could give them to one's chambermaid, after a day or two.

Mrs Mar. 'Twere better so, indeed. Or what think you of the play-house? A fine gay glossy fool should be given there, like a new masking habit after the masquerade is over, and we have done with the disguise. For a fool's visit is always a disguise; and never admitted by a woman of wit, but to blind her affair with a lover of sense. If you would but appear bare-faced now, and own Mirabell, you might as easily put off Petulant and Witwould, as your hood and scarf. And indeed 'tis time, for the town has found it: the secret is grown too big for the pretence. Indeed, Millamant, you can no more conceal it, than my lady Strammel can her face, that goodly face, which, in defiance of her Rhenish-wine tea, will not be comprehended in a mask.

Mill. I'll take my death, Marwood, you are more censorious than a decayed beauty, or a discarded toast. Mincing, tell the men they may come up. My aunt is not dressing here; their folly is less provoking than your malice. [*Exit* MINCING.] The town has found it! what has it found? That Mirabell loves me, is no more a secret, than it is a secret, that you discovered it to my aunt, or than the reason why you discovered it is a secret.

Mrs Mar. You are nettled.

Mill. You're mistaken. Ridiculous!

Mrs Mar. Indeed, my dear, you'll tear another fan, if you don't mitigate those violent airs.

Mill. Oh silly! Ha, ha, ha! I could laugh immoderately. Poor Mirabell! His constancy to me has quite destroyed his complaisance for all the world beside. I swear, I never enjoined it him, to be so coy—If I had the vanity to think he would obey me, I would command him to shew more gallantry. 'Tis hardly well-bred to be so particular on one hand, and so insensible on the other. But I despair to prevail, and so let him follow his own way. Ha, ha, ha! Pardon me, dear creature, I must laugh, ha, ha, ha! though, I grant you, 'tis a little barbarous, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Mar. What pity 'tis, so much fine raillery, and delivered with so significant gesture, should be so unhappily directed to miscarry!

Mill. Ha? Dear creature, I ask your pardon—I swear I did not mind you.

Mrs Mar. Mr Mirabell, and you both, may think a thing impossible, when I tell him, by telling you——

Mill. O dear! what? for 'tis the same thing, if I hear it—Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Mar. That I detest him, hate him, madam.

Mill. O madam! why, so do I—And yet the creature loves me; ha, ha, ha! How can one forbear laughing to think of it?—I am a sybil, if I am not amazed to think what he can see in me. I'll take my death, I think you are handsomer—and within a year or two as young—If you could but stay for me, I should overtake you—But that cannot be—Well, that thought makes me melancholic—Now I'll be sad.

Mrs Mar. Your merry note may be changed sooner than you think.

Mill. Do ye say so? Then, I'm resolved I'll have a song to keep up my spirits.

Enter MINCING.

Min. The gentlemen stay but to comb, madam; and will wait on you.

Enter PETULANT *and* WITWOULD.

Mill. Is your animosity composed, gentlemen?

Wit. Raillery, raillery, madam; we have no animosity—We hit off a little wit now and then, but no animosity—The falling-out of wits is like the falling-out of lovers—We agree in the main, like treble and base. Ha, Petulant!

Pet. Ay, in the main—But when I have a humour to contradict—

Wit. Ay, when he has a humour to contradict, then I contradict, too. What, I know my cue. Then we contradict one another like two battledores; for contradictions beget one another, like Jews.

Pet. If he says black's black—If I have a humour to say 'tis blue—Let that pass—All's one for that. If I have a humour to prove it, it must be granted.

Wit. Not positively must—But it may—it may.

Pet. Yes, it positively must, upon proof positive.

Wit. Ay, upon proof positive it must; but upon proof presumptive it only may. That's a logical distinction, now, madam.

Mrs Mar. I perceive your debates are of importance, and very learnedly handled.

Pet. Importance is one thing, and learning is another; but a debate's a debate, that I assert.

Wit. Petulant's an enemy to learning; he relies altogether on his parts.

Pet. No, I'm no enemy to learning; it hurts not me.

Mrs Mar. That's a sign indeed 'tis no enemy to you.

Pet. No, no, 'tis no enemy to any body, but them that have it.

Mill. Well, an illiterate man's my aversion. I wonder at the impudence of an illiterate man, to offer to make love.

Wit. That, I confess, I wonder at, too.

Mill. Ah! to marry an ignorant! that can hardly read or write.

Pet. Why should a man be any further from being married though he can't read, than he is from being hanged? The ordinary's paid for setting the psalm, and the parish priest for reading the ceremony. And for the rest which is to follow in both cases, a man may do it without book—So all's one for that.

Mill. D'ye hear the creature? Lord, here's company! I'll be gone.

[*Exeunt* MILLAMANT *and* MINCING.

Enter SIR WILFULL WITWOULD, *in a riding dress, and Footman.*

Wit. In the name of Bartholomew and his fair, what have we here?

Mrs Mar. 'Tis your brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

Wit. Not I—Yes, I think it is he—I've almost forgot him; I have not seen him since the revolution.

Foot. Sir, my lady's dressing. Here's company; if you please to walk in, in the mean time.

Sir Wil. Dressing! What, 'tis but morning here, I warrant, with you in London; we should count it towards afternoon in our parts, down in Shropshire—Why, then, belike my aunt han't dined yet—Ha, friend?

Foot. Your aunt, sir?

Sir Wil. My aunt, sir! yes, my aunt, sir, and your lady, sir; your lady is my aunt, sir—Why, what, dost thou not know me, friend? Why, then, send somebody hither, that does. How long hast thou lived with thy lady, fellow, ha?

Foot. A week, sir; longer than any in the house, except my lady's woman.

Sir Wil. Why, then, belike thou dost not know thy lady, if thou seest her; ha, friend?

Foot. Why, truly, sir, I cannot safely swear to her face in a morning, before she is dressed. 'Tis like I may give a shrewd guess at her by this time.

Sir Wil. Well, prithee, try what thou canst do; if thou canst not guess, inquire her out;—dost hear, fellow? and tell her, her nephew, Sir Wilful Witwould, is in the house.

Foot. I shall, sir.

Sir Wil. Hold ye—hear me, friend; a word with you in your ear: Prithee, who are these gallants?

Foot. Really, sir, I cannot tell; there come so many here, 'tis hard to know them all. [*Exit.*

Sir Wil. Oons, this fellow knows less than a starling; I don't think a' knows his own name.

Mrs Mar. Mr Witwould, your brother is not behind-hand in forgetfulness—I fancy he has forgot you, too.

Wit. I hope so—The deuce take him, that remembers first, I say.

Sir Wil. Save you, gentleman and lady.

Mrs Mar. For shame, Mr Witwould! why, won't you speak to him? And you, sir.

Wit. Petulant, speak.

Pet. And you, sir.

Sir Wil. No offence, I hope.

[*Salutes* MARWOOD.

Mrs Mar. No sure, sir.

Wit. This is a vile dog, I see that already.—No offence! Ha, ha, ha! to him; to him, Petulant; smoke him.

Pet. It seems as if you had come a journey, sir; hem, hem. [*Surveying him round.*

Sir Wil. Very likely, sir, that it may seem so.

Pet. No offence, I hope, sir,

Sir Wil. May be not, sir; thereafter as 'tis meant, sir.

Wit. Smoke the boots, the boots; Petulant, the boots; ha, ha, ha!

Pet. Sir, I presume upon the information of your boots.

Sir Wil. Why, 'tis like you may, sir: if you are not satisfied with the information of my boots, sir, if you will step to the stable, you may inquire further of my horse, sir.

Pet. Your horse, sir! your horse is an ass, sir!

Sir Wil. Do you speak by way of offence, sir?

Mrs Mar. The gentleman's merry, that's all, sir—S'life, we shall have a quarrel betwixt a horse and an ass, before they find one another out. You must not take any thing amiss from your friends, sir. You are among your friends, here, though it may be you don't know it—— If I am not mistaken, you are sir Wilfull Witwould.

Sir Wil. Right, lady; I am sir Wilfull Witwould; so I write myself; no offence to any body, I hope; and nephew to the lady Wishfort of this mansion.

Mrs Mar. Don't you know this gentleman, sir?

Sir Wil. Hum! What, sure 'tis not—Yea, by'r lady but 'tis—'Sheart! I know not whether 'tis or no—Yea, but 'tis, by the wrekin. Brother Anthony! what Tony, i'faith! what, dost thou not know me? By'r lady nor I thee, thou art so belaced, and so beperiwigged——'Sheart! what dost not speak? art thou o'erjoyed?

Wit. 'Odso, brother, is it you? your servant, brother.

Sir Wil. Your servant! why yours, sir. Your servant again—'Sheart, and your friend and servant to that—And a—(*puff*) and a flap-dragon for your service, sir; and a hare's foot, and a hare's scut for your service, sir; an' you be so cold and so courtly!

Wit. No offence, I hope, brother.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, sir, but there is, and much offence—A plague! is this your inns o'court breeding, not to know your friends and your relations, your elders, and your betters?

Wit. Why, brother Wilfull of Salop, you may be as short as a Shrewsbury cake, if you please; but I tell you, 'tis not modish to know relations in town. You think you're in the country, where great lubberly brothers slabber and kiss one another, when they meet, like a call of serjeants—'Tis not the fashion here; 'tis not, indeed, dear brother.

Sir Wil. The fashion's a fool: and you're a fop, dear brother. 'Sheart, I have suspected this—By'r lady, I conjectured you were a fop, since you began to change the style of your letters, and write in a scrap of paper gilt round the edges, no bigger than a subpœna. I might expect this, when you left off *honoured brother;* and *hoping you are in good health*——To begin with a *Rat me, knight, I'm so sick of a last night's debauch*—Ods heart, and then tell a familiar tale of a cock and a bull, and a wench and a bottle, and so conclude—You could write news before you were out of your time, when you lived with honest Pimple-Nose, the attorney of Furnival's inn—You could intreat to be remembered then to your friends round the wrekin. We could have gazettes, then, and Dawk's letter, and the Weekly Bill, till of late days.

Pet. 'Slife, Witwould, were you ever an attorney's clerk? of the family of the Furnival's—Ha, ha, ha!

Wit. Aye, aye, but that was but for a while. Not long, not long; pshaw, I was not in my own power, then. An orphan, and this fellow was my guardian; aye, aye, I was glad to consent to that, man, to come to London. He had the disposal of me, then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound 'prentice to a felt-maker in Shrewsbury; this fellow would have bound me to a maker of felts.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, and better than be bound to a maker of fops, where, I suppose, you have served your time; and now you may set up for yourself.

Mrs Mar. You intend to travel, sir, as I'm informed.

Sir Wil. Belike I may, madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt seas, if my mind hold.

Pet. And the wind serve.

Sir Wil. Serve or not serve, I sha'nt ask licence of you, sir; nor the weather-cock your companion. I direct my discourse to the lady, sir; 'tis like my aunt may have told you, madam—Yes, I have settled my concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see foreign parts.—If an how that the peace hold, whereby, that is, taxes abate.

Mrs Mar. I thought you had designed for France at all adventures.

Sir Wil. I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a resolution; because, when I make it, I keep it. I don't stand shill I, shall I, then; if I say't, I'll do't: but I have thoughts to tarry a small matter in town, to learn somewhat of your lingo first, before I cross the seas. I'd gladly have a spice of your French, as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries.

Mrs Mar. Here's an academy in town for that and dancing, and curious acomplishments, calculated purely for the use of grown gentlemen.

Sir Wil. Is there? 'tis like there may.

Mrs Mar. No doubt, you will return very much improved.

Wit. Yes, refined like a Dutch skipper from the whale-fishing.

Enter LADY WISHFORT *and* FAINALL.

Lady Wish. Nephew, you are welcome.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.

Fain. Sir Wilfull, your most faithful servant.

Sir Wil. Cousin Fainall, give me your hand.

Lady Wish. Cousin Witwould, your servant; Mr Petulant, your servant——Nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink any thing after your journey, nephew, before you eat? dinner's almost ready.

Sir Wil. I'm very well, I thank you, aunt—However, I thank you for your courteous offer. 'Sheart, I was afraid you would have been in the fashion, too, and have remembered to have forgot your relations. Here's your cousin Tony; belike I may'nt call him brother for fear of offence.

Lady Wish. O he's a rallier, nephew—My cousin's a wit: and your great wits always rally their best friends to chuse. When you have been abroad, nephew, you'll understand raillery better.

[FAINALL *and Mrs* MARWOOD *talk apart.*

Sir Wil. Why, then, let him hold his tongue in the mean time; and rail, when that day comes.

Enter MINCING.

Min. Mem, I am come to acquaint your la'ship that dinner is impatient.

Sir Wil. Impatient! why, then, belike it won't stay, till I pull off my boots. Sweet-heart, can you help me to a pair of slippers? My man is with his horses, I warrant.

Lady Wish. Fy, fy, nephew! you would not pull off your boots here—Go down into the hall. Dinner shall stay for you——

[*Exeunt* MINCING *and* SIR WILFULL.

My nephew's a little unbred; you'll pardon him, madam. Gentlemen, will you walk? Marwood?

Mrs Mar. I follow you, madam, before sir Wilfull is ready.

[*Exeunt* LADY WISHFORT, PETULANT, *and* WITWOULD.

Fain. Why, then, Foible's a procuress; an arrant, rank, match-making procuress. And I, y

seems, am a husband, a rank husband; and my wife a very arrant, rank wife—all in the way of the world. 'Sdeath! to be a cuckold by anticipation, a cuckold in embryo! Sure I was born with budding antlers like a young satyr, or a citizen's child. 'Sdeath! to be outwitted, out-jilted, out-matrimonied! If I had kept my speed like a stag, 'twere somewhat! but to crawl after, with my horns like a snail, and be out-stripped by my wife—'tis scurvy wedlock.

Mrs Mar. Then shake it off; you have often wished for an opportunity to part; and now you have it. But first prevent their plot; the half of Millamant's fortune is too considerable to be parted with to a foe, to Mirabell.

Fain. Aye, that had been mine, had you not made that fond discovery; that had been forfeited, had they been married. My wife had added lustre to my dishonour by that increase of fortune. I could have worn them tipt with gold, though my forehead had been furnished like a deputy-lieutenant's hall.

Mrs Mar. They may prove a cap of maintenance to you still, if you can away with your wife. And she's no worse than when you had her. You married her to keep you; and if you can contrive to have her keep you better than you expected, why should you not keep her longer than you intended?

Fain. The means, the means.

Mrs Mar. Discover to my lady your wife's conduct; threaten to part with her; my lady loves her, and will come to any composition to save her reputation. Take the opportunity of breaking it, just upon the discovery of this imposture. My lady will be enraged beyond bounds and sacrifice nicce, and fortune, and all at that conjuncture. And let me alone to keep her warm; if she should flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

Fain. This has an appearance.

Mrs Mar. I'm sorry I hinted to my lady to endeavour a match between Millamant and sir Wilfull; that may be an obstacle.

Fain. O, for that matter, leave me to manage him; I'll disable him for that; he will drink like a Dane: after dinner, I'll set his hand in.

Mrs Mar. Well, how do you stand affected towards your lady?

Fain. Why, faith, I am thinking of it. Let me see—I am married already; so that's over. My wife has played the jade with me—Well, that's over too—I never loved her, or if I had, why that would have been over, too, by this time—Jealous of her I cannot be, for I am certain; so there's an end of jealousy. Weary of her, I am, and shall be—No, there's no end of that; no, no, that were too much to hope. Thus far concerning my repose. Now, for my reputation. As to my own, I married not for it; so that's out of the question. And as to my part in my wife's—why, she had parted with hers before; so, bringing none to me, she can take none from me; 'tis against all rule of play, that I should lose to one, who has not wherewithal to stake.

Mrs Mar. Besides you forget, marriage is honourable.

Fain. Hum! faith, and that's well thought on; marriage is honourable, as you say; and, if so, wherefore should cuckoldom be a discredit, being derived from so honourable a root?

Mrs Mar. Nay, I know not; if the root be honourable, why not the branches?

Fain. So, so, why this point is clear—Well, how do we proceed?

Mrs Mar. I will contrive a letter, which shall be delivered to my lady at the time, when that rascal, who is to act sir Rowland, is with her. It shall come as from an unknown hand—for the less I appear to know of the truth, the better I can play the incendiary. Besides, I would not have Foible provoked, if I could help it, because you know she knows some passages: Nay, I expect all will come out; but let the mine be sprung first; and then I care not, if I am discovered.

Fain. If the worst come to the worst, I'll turn my wife to grass——I have already a deed of settlement to the best part of her estate, which I wheedled out of her; and that you shall partake at least.

Mrs Mar. I hope you are convinced, that I hate Mirabell now? you'll be no more jealous?

Fain. Jealous! no—by this kiss—let husbands be jealous; but let the lover still believe: or, if he doubt, let it be only to endear his pleasure, and prepare the joy that follows, when he proves his mistress true. But let husbands' doubts convert to endless jealousy; or, if they have belief, let it corrupt to superstition, and blind credulity. I am single, and will herd no more with them. True, I wear the badge, but I'll disown the order. And, since I take my leave of them, I care not if I leave them a common motto to their common crest.

All husbands must or pain or shame endure;
The wise too jealous are, fools too secure.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter LADY WISHFORT *and* FOIBLE.

Lady Wish. Is sir Rowland coming, say'st thou, Foible? and are things in order?

Foi. Yes, madam. I have put wax-lights in the sconces, and placed the footmen in a row in the hall, in their best liveries, with the coachman and postilion to fill up the equipage.

Lady Wish. Have you pulvilled the coachman and postilion, that they may not stink of the stable, when sir Rowland comes by?

Foi. Yes, madam.

Lady Wish. And are the dancers and the music ready, that he may be entertained in all point with correspondence to his passion?

Foi. All is ready, madam.

Lady Wish. And—well—and how do I look, Foible?

Foi. Most killing well, madam.

Lady Wish. Well, and how shall I receive him? in what figure shall I give his heart the first impression? there is a great deal in the first impression. Shall I sit? No, I won't sit—I'll walk—aye, I'll walk from the door upon his entrance; and then turn full upon him—no, that will be too sudden. I'll lie—aye, I'll lie down—I'll receive him in my little dressing room.—— There's a couch—Yes, yes, I'll give the first impression on a couch—I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one elbow, with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way—yes—and then, as soon as he appears, start, aye, start and be surprised, and rise to meet him in a pretty disorder——yes——oh! nothing is more alluring than a levee from a couch in some confusion——it shews the foot to advantage, and furnishes with blushes, and recomposing airs beyond comparison. Hark! there's a coach.

Foi. 'Tis he, madam.

Lady Wish. O dear! has my nephew made his addresses to Millamant? I ordered him.

Foi. Sir Wilfull is set in to drinking, madam, in the parlour.

Lady Wish. Odds my life, I'll send him to her. Call her down, Foible; bring her hither. I'll send him as I go—when they are together, then come to me, Foible, that I may not be too long alone with sir Rowland.

[*Exit* LADY WISHFORT.

Enter MILLAMANT *and* MRS FAINALL.

Foi. Madam, I staid here, to tell your ladyship that Mr Mirabell has waited this half hour for an opportunity to talk with you, though my lady's orders were to leave you and sir Wilfull together. Shall I tell Mr Mirabell that you are at leisure?

Mil. No—what would the dear man have? I am thoughtful, and would amuse myself. Bid him come another time.

There never yet was woman made,
Nor shall, but to be cursed.

[Repeating and walking about. That's hard!

Mrs Fain. You are very fond of sir John Suckling to-day, Millamant, and the poets.

Mil. He? aye, and filthy verses—So I am.

Foi. Sir Wilfull is coming, madam. Shall I send Mr Mirabell away?

Mil. Aye, if you please, Foible, send him away—or send him hither—just as you will, dear Foible. I think I'll see him—shall I? aye, let the wretch come.

Thyrsis, a youth of the inspired train.

[Repeating

Dear Fainall, entertain sir Wilfull—thou hast philosophy to undergo a fool; thou art married, and hast patience——I would confer with my own thoughts.

Mrs Fain. I am obliged to you, that you would make me your proxy in this affair; but I have business of my own.

Enter SIR WILFULL.

Oh! sir Wilful, you are come at the critical instant. There's your mistress up to the ears in love and contemplation; pursue your point; now or never.

Sir Wil. Yes; my aunt will have it so—I would gladly have been encouraged with a bottle or two, because I'm somewhat wary at first, before I am acquainted; but I hope, after a time, I shall break my mind—that is, upon further acquaintance——[*This while* MILLAMANT *walks about, repeating to herself.*]—So, for the present, cousin, I'll take my leave—if 'so be, you'll be so kind to make my excuse: I'll return to my company———

Mrs Fain. O fy, sir Wilfull! what, you must not be daunted.

Sir Wil. Daunted! no, that's not it; it is not so much for that—for, if so be that I set on't, I'll do't. But only for the present, 'tis sufficient till further acquaintance, that's all—your servant.

Mrs Fain. Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so favourable an opportunity, if I can help it.—I'll leave you together, and lock the door.

[*Exeunt* MRS FAINALL *and* FOIBLE.

Sir Wil. Nay, nay, cousin—I have forgot my gloves. What d'ye do? 'Sheart, a' has locked the door, indeed. I think—nay, cousin Fainall, open the door—'Pshaw, what a vixen trick is this!—nay, now, a' has seen me, too—cousin, I made bold to pass through, as it were—I think this door's enchanted———

Mil. [*Repeating.*]

I prithee, spare me, gentle boy,
Press me no more for that slight toy.

Sir Wil. Anan! cousin, your servant.

Mil. *That foolish trifle of a heart*——
—Sir Wilfull!

Sir Wil. Yes—your servant. No offence, I hope, cousin.

Mill. [Repeating.]

I swear it will not do its part,
Though thou dost thine, employ'st thy power and art.

Natural, easy Suckling!

Sir Wil. Anan! Suckling! No such suckling, neither, cousin, nor stripling; I thank Heaven, I'm no minor.

Mill. Ah, rustic! ruder than Gothic!

Sir Wil. Well, well, I shall understand your lingo one of these days, cousin; in the mean while, I must answer in plain English.

Mill. Have you any business with me, sir Wilfull?

Sir Wil. Not at present, cousin. Yes, I made bold to see, to come and know if that how you were disposed to fetch a walk this evening; if so be, that I might not be troublesome, I would have sought a walk with you.

Mill. A walk? what then?

Sir Wil. Nay, nothing—only for the walk's sake, that's all———

Mill. I nauseate walking; 'tis a country diversion; I loath the country, and every thing that relates to it.

Sir Wil. Indeed! ha! look ye, look ye, you do? nay' tis like you may—here are choice of pastimes here, in town, as plays, and the like; that must be confessed, indeed.

Mill. Ah l'étourdie! I hate the town, too.

Sir Wil. Dear heart, that's much—ha! that you should hate them both! ha! 'tis like you may; there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away with the country—'tis like you may be one of those, cousin.

Mill. Ha, ha, ha! Yes, 'tis like I may. You have nothing further to say to me?

Sir Wil. Not at present, cousin. 'Tis like, when I have an opportunity to be more private, I may break my mind in some measure—I conjecture you partly guess——however, that's as time shall try—but spare to speak, and spare to speed, as they say.

Mill. If it is of no great importance, sir Wilfull, you will oblige me by leaving me. I have, just now, a little business———

Sir Wil. Enough, enough, cousin; yes, yes, all a case—when you're disposed. Now's as well as another time; and another time as well as now. All's one for that—yes, yes, if your concerns call you, there's no haste; it will keep cold, as they say—cousin, your servant. I think this door's locked.

Mill. You may go this way, sir.

Sir Wil. Your servant, then; with your leave I'll return to my company. [*Exit* SIR WILFULL.

Mil. Aye, aye; ha, ha, ha!

Like Phœbus sung the no less am'rous boy.

Enter MIRABELL.

Mira. *Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy.* Do you lock yourself up from me, to make my search more curious? Or is this pretty artifice contrived, to signify that here the chase must end, and my pursuit be crowned, for you can fly no further?

Mill. Vanity! No—I'll fly, and be followed to the last moment; though I am upon the very verge of matrimony, I expect you should solicit me as much, as if I were wavering at the grate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last, nay, and afterwards.

Mira. What, after the last?

Mill. Oh! I should think I was poor, and had nothing to bestow, if I were reduced to an inglorious ease, and freed from the agreeable fatigues of solicitation.

Mira. But do you not know, when favours are conferred upon instant and tedious solicitation, that they diminish in their value, and that both the giver loses the grace, and the receiver lessens his pleasure.

Mill. It may be in things of common application; but never, sure, in love. Oh! I hate a lover, that can dare to think he draws a moment's air, independent on the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature, as the saucy look of an assured man, confident of success. The pedantic arrogance of a very husband has not so pragmatical an air. Ah! I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

Mira. Would you have them both before marriage? Or will you be acquainted with only the first, now?

Mill. Ah! don't be impertinent—my dear liberty, shall I leave thee? my faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you, then, adieu? aye, adieu—my morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, ye douceurs, ye sommeils du matin, adieu—I can't do it; 'tis more than impossible—positively, Mirabell, I'll lie a-bed in a morning, as long as I please.

Mira. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

Mill. Ah! idle creature, get up when you will—and, d'ye hear, I won't be called names, after I am married; positively, I won't be called names.

Mira. Names!

Mill. Aye, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar——I shall never bear that——good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my lady Fadler and sir Francis: nor go in public, together, the first Sunday, in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whis-

pers; and then never be seen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well-bred: let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while; and as well-bred, as if we were not married at all.

Mira. Have you any more conditions to offer? hitherto, your demands are very reasonable.

Mill. Trifles—as liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please; and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits, that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance; or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations: come to dinner, when I please; dine in my dressing-room, when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason: to have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave: and, lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door, before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may, by degrees, dwindle into a wife.

Mira. Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions—that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?

Mill. You have free leave; propose your utmost; speak, and spare not.

Mira. I thank you. *Imprimis*, then, I covenant, that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confidante, or intimate of your own sex: no she friend to skreen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual secresy: no decoy-duck to wheedle you a fop-scrambling to the play in a mask——then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out—and rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic, which you had to pick me up, and prove my constancy.

Mill. Detestable *imprimis!* I go to the play in a mask!

Mira. Item, I article, that you continue to like your own face, as long as I shall: and, while it passes current with me, that you endeavour not to new-coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night made of oiled-skins, and I know not what. In short, I forbid all commerce with the gentlewoman in What-d'ye-call-it court. *Item*, I shut my doors against all procuresses with baskets, and pennyworths of muslin, china, fans, &c.——*Item*, when you shall be breeding——

Mill. Ah! name it not!

Mira. I denounce against all strait-lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mould my boy's head like a sugar-loaf! and, instead of a man-child, make me father to a crooked-billet. Lastly, to the dominion of the tea-table I submit—But with proviso, that you exceed not in your province, but restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks—as tea, chocolate, and coffee. As likewise to genuine and authorised tea-table talk—such as mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth—But that, on no account, you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which, I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea-table—as orange-brandy, all anniseed, cinnamon, citron, and Barbadoes-waters, together with ratafia, and the most noble spirit of Clary—But for cowslip-wine, poppy-water, and all dormitives, those I allow.——These provisos admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

Mill. O horrid provisos! filthy strong waters! I toast fellows! odious men! I hate your odious provisos.

Mira. Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

Enter MRS FAINALL.

Mill. Fainall, what shall I do? Shall I have him? I think I must have him.

Mrs Fain. Ay, ay, take him, take him! what should you do?

Mill. Well, then—I'll take my death, I'm in a horrid fright.—Fainall, I shall never say it—well—I think—I'll endure you.

Mrs Fain. Fy, fy! have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms; for I am sure you have a mind to him.

Mill. Are you? I think I have—and the horrid man looks as if he thought so, too. Well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you—I won't be kissed, nor I won't be thanked—Here, kiss my hand though—so hold your tongue now; don't say a word.

Mrs Fain. Mirabell, there's a necessity for your obedience; you have neither time to talk, nor stay. My mother is coming; and, in my conscience, if she should see you, would fall into fits, and, may be, not recover time enough to return to sir Rowland, who, as Foible tells me, is in a fair way to succeed. Therefore, spare your ecstacies for another occasion, and slip down the back-stairs, where Foible waits to consult you.

Mill. Ay, go, go! In the mean time, I'll suppose you have said something to please me.

Mira. I am all obedience. [*Exit* MIRA.

Mrs Fain. Yonder's sir Wilfull drunk; and so noisy, that my mother has been forced to leave sir Rowland to appease him; but he answers her only with singing and drinking—What they may

have done by this time I know not; but Petulant and he were upon quarrelling as I came by.

Mill. Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing; for I find I love him violently.

Mrs Fain. So it seems; for you mind not what is said to you.—If you doubt him, you had better take up with sir Wilfull.

Mill. How can you name that superannuated lubber? foh!

Enter WITWOULD *from drinking.*

Mrs Fain. So! is the fray made up, that you have left them?

Wit. Left them? I could stay no longer——I have laughed like ten christenings—I am tipsy with laughing—If I had staid any longer I should have burst—I must have been let out, and pierced in the sides like an unsized camlet——Yes, yes, the fray is composed; my lady came in like a *nolli prosequi*, and stopt the proceedings.

Mill. What was the dispute?

Wit. That's the jest; there was no dispute. They could neither of them speak for rage; and so fell a sputtering at one another, like two roasting apples.

Enter PETULANT *drunk.*

Now, Petulant? all's over, all's well? gad, my head begins to whim it about—why dost thou not speak? thou art both as drunk and as mute as a fish.

Pet. Look you, Mrs Millamant—if you can love me, dear nymph—say it—and that's the conclusion—pass on, or pass off—that's all.

Wit. Thou hast uttered volumes, folios, in less than decimo sexto, my dear Lacedemonian. Sirrah, Petulant, thou art an epitomizer of words!

Pet. Witwould—You are an annihilator of sense!

Wit. Thou art a retailer of phrases; and dost deal in remnants of remnants, like a maker of pincushions!—Thou art, in truth, (metaphorically speaking) a speaker of short-hand!

Pet. Thou art (without a figure) just one-half of an ass, and Baldwin, yonder, thy half-brother, is the rest!—a gemini of asses split would make just four of you!

Wit. Thou dost bite, my dear mustard-seed! Kiss me for that.

Pet. Stand off! I'll kiss no more males. I have kissed your twin yonder in a humour of reconciliation, till he [*Hiccup.*] rises upon my stomach like a raddish.

Mill. Eh! filthy creature—what was the quarrel?

Pet. There was no quarrel—there might have been a quarrel.

Wit. If there had been words enow between them to have expressed provocation, they had gone together, by the ears, like a pair of castanets.

Pet. You were the quarrel.

Mill. Me!

Pet. If I have the humour to quarrel, I can make less matters conclude premises—if you are not handsome, what then, if I have a humour to prove it?—If I shall have my reward, say so; if not, fight for your face the next time yourself—I'll go sleep.

Wit. Do, wrap thyself up like a woodlouse, and dream revenge—and, hear me, if thou canst learn to write by to-morrow morning, pen me a challenge; I'll carry it for thee!

Pet. Carry your mistress's monkey a spider! go flea dogs, and read romances!—I'll go to bed. [*Exit* PETULANT.

Mrs Fain. He's horridly drunk——how came you all in this pickle?

Wit. A plot, a plot, to get rid of the knight!—Your husband's advice; but he sneaked off.

Enter SIR WILFULL *drunk, and* LADY WISHFORT.

Lady Wish. Out upon't, out upon't! at years of discretion, and comport yourself at this rantipole rate!

Sir Wil. No offence, aunt.

Lady Wish. Offence! as I'm a person, I'm ashamed of you—fogh! how you stink of wine! d'ye think my niece will ever endure such a borachio? You're an absolute borachio.

Sir Wil. Borachio!

Lady Wish. At a time when you should commence an amour, and put your best foot foremost——

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, an you grudge me your liquor, make a bill—give me more drink, and take my purse.

Sings. *Prithee fill me the glass*
Till it laugh in my face,
With ale that is potent and mellow;
He that whines for a lass
Is an ignorant ass,
For a bumper has not its fellow.

But if you would have me marry my cousin, say the word, and I'll do it—Wilfull will do it, that's the word—Wilfull will do it, that's my crest—my motto I have forgot.

Lady Wish. My nephew's a little overtaken, cousin—but 'tis with drinking your health—On my word, you are obliged to him——

Sir Wil. In vino veritas, aunt: if I drunk your health to day, cousin—I am a borachio. But if you have a mind to be married, say the word, and send for the piper; Wilfull will do it. If not, dust it away, and let's have t'other round—Tony, ods-heart, where's Tony?—Tony's an honest fellow; but he spits after a bumper, and that's a fault.

Sings. *We'll drink, and we'll never ha' done, boys.*
Put the glass, then, around with the sun, boys.

Let Apollo's example invite us;
For he is drunk every night,
And that makes him so bright,
That he's able next morning to light us.

The sun's a good pimple, an honest soaker, he has a cellar at your antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at your antipodes—your antipodes are a good rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows—if I had a bumper, I'd stand upon my head and drink a health to them—A match or no match, cousin with the hard name?—aunt, Wilfull will do it.

Mill. Your pardon, madam, I can stay no longer—Sir Wilfull grows very powerful. Egh! how he smells! I shall be overcome, if I stay. Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt* MILLAMANT *and* MRS FAINALL.

Lady Wish. Smells! he would poison a tallow-chandler and his family. Beastly creature, I know not what to do with him.—Travel quoth a! ay, travel, travel; get thee gone, get thee gone, get thee but far enough, to the Saracens, or the Tartars, or the Turks—for thou art not fit to live in a Christian commonwealth, thou beastly pagan!

Sir Wil. Turks! no; no Turks, aunt; your Turks are infidels, and believe not in the grape. Your Mahometan, your Musselman, is a dry stinkard—No offence, aunt. My map says that your Turk is not so honest a man as your Christian—I cannot find by the map, that your Mufti is orthodox—whereby it is a plain case, that orthodox is a hard word, aunt, and [*Hiccup.*] Greek for claret.

Sings. *To drink is a Christian diversion,*
Unknown to the Turk or the Persian:
Let Mahometan fools
Live by heathenish rules,
And be damned over tea-cups and coffee;
But let British lads sing,
Crown a health to the king,
And a fig for your sultan and sophi.

Enter FOIBLE, *and whispers* LADY WISHFORT.

Eh, Tony!

Lady Wish. Sir Rowland impatient! good lack, what shall I do with this beastly tumbril?—go lie down and sleep, you sot—or, as I'm a person, I'll have you bastinadoed with broomsticks. Call up the wenches with broomsticks.

Sir Wil. Ahey! wenches? where are the wenches?

Lady Wish. Dear cousin Witwould, get him away, and you will bind me to you inviolably. I have an affair of moment, that invades me with some precipitation—you will oblige me to all futurity.

Wit. Come, knight——plague on him, I don't know what to say to him—will you go to a cock-match?

Sir Wil. With a wench, Tony? let me bite your cheek for that.

Wit. Horrible! he has a breath like a bagpipe—Ay, ay, come, will you march, my Salopian?

Sir Wil. Lead on, little Tony—I'll follow thee, my Anthony, my Tanthony; sirrah, thou shalt be my Tantony, and I'll be thy pig.

——*And a fig for your sultan and sophi.*

[*Exeunt* SIR WILFULL, MR WITWOULD, *and* FOIBLE.

Lady Wish. This will never do. It will never make a match—At least, before he has been abroad.

Enter WAITWELL, *disguised, as for* SIR ROWLAND.

Dear sir Rowland, I am confounded with confusion at the retrospection of my own rudeness.—I have more pardons to ask than the pope distributes in the year of jubilee. But, I hope, where there is likely to be so near an alliance—we may unbend the severity of decorum——and dispense with a little ceremony.

Wait. My impatience, madam, is the effect of my transport; and, till I have the possession of your adorable person, I am tantalized on the rack, and do but hang, madam, on the tenter of expectation.

Lady Wish. You have excess of gallantry, sir Rowland; and press things to a conclusion with a most prevailing vehemence—But a day or two for decency of marriage.

Wait. For decency of funeral, madam. The delay will break my heart—or, if that should fail, I shall be poisoned. My nephew will get an inkling of my designs, and poison me—and I would willingly starve him before I die—I would gladly go out of the world with that satisfaction. That would be some comfort to me, if I could but live so long as to be revenged on that unnatural viper.

Lady Wish. Is he so unnatural, say you? truly, I would contribute much, both to the saving of your life, and the accomplishment of your revenge.—Not that I respect myself; though he has been a perfidious wretch to me.

Wait. Perfidious to you!

Lady Wish. O, sir Rowland, the hours, that he has died away at my feet; the tears, that he has shed; the oaths, that he has sworn; the palpitations, that he has felt; the trances and tremblings, the ardours and the ecstasies, the kneelings and the risings, the heart-heavings and the hand-grippings, the pangs and the pathetic regards of his protesting eyes! O, no memory can register.

Wait. What, my rival! is the rebel my rival? a'dies.

Lady Wish. No, don't kill him at once, sir Rowland; starve him gradually, inch by inch.

Wait. I'll do it. In three weeks he shall be

barefoot; in a month out at knees with begging an alms—he shall starve upward and upward, till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a stink, like a candle's end upon a save-all.

Lady Wish. Well, sir Rowland, you have the way—You are no novice in the labyrinth of love—You have the clue—But, as I am a person, sir Rowland, you must not attribute my yielding to any sinister appetite, or indigestion of widowhood; nor impute my complacency to any lethargy of continence—I hope you do not think me prone to any iteration of nuptials—

Wait. Far be it from me—

Lady Wish. If you do, I protest I must recede—or think that I have made a prostitution of decorums; but, in the vehemence of compassion, and to save the life of a person of so much importance—

Wait. I esteem it so—

Lady Wish. Or else you wrong my condescension—

Wait. I do not. I do not—

Lady Wish. Indeed, you do.

Wait. I do not, fair shrine of virtue.

Lady Wish. If you think the least scruple of carnality was an ingredient—

Wait. Dear madam, no. You are all camphire and frankincense; all chastity and odour.

Lady Wish. Or that—

Enter FOIBLE.

Foi. Madam, the dancers are ready, and there's one with a letter, who must deliver it into your own hands.

Lady Wish. Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? think favourably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a person, who would suffer racks in honour's cause, dear sir Rowland, and will wait on you incessantly

[*Exit* LADY WISHFORT.

Wait. Fy, fy!—What a slavery have I undergone! Spouse, hast thou any cordial? I want spirits.

Foi. What a washy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and swearing to a fine lady!

Wait. O, she is the antidote to desire. Spouse, thou wilt fare the worse for it. By this hand, I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days—than act sir Rowland till this time to-morrow.

Enter LADY WISHFORT *with a letter.*

Lady Wish. Call in the dancers;—Sir Rowland, we'll sit, if you please, and see the entertainment. [*Dance.*] Now, with your permission, sir Rowland, I will peruse my letter—I would open it in your presence, because I would not make you uneasy. If it should make you uneasy I would burn it—speak, if it does—but you may see, the superscription is like a woman's hand.

Foi. By heaven! Mrs Marwood's. I know it. My heart akes—get it from her— [*To him.*

Wait. A woman's hand! No, madam, that's no woman's hand, I see that already. That's somebody, whose throat must be cut.

Lady Wish. Nay, sir Rowland, since you give me a proof of your passion by your jealousy, I promise you I'll make a return, by a frank communication—You shall see it—we'll open it together—look you here.—*Reads*—'Madam, though unknown to you,' (Look you there, 'tis from nobody, that I know) 'I have that honour for your character, that I think myself obliged to let you know you are abused. He, who pretends to be sir Rowland, is a cheat and a rascal—' O heaven's! what's this?

Foi. Unfortunate, all's ruined!

Wait. How, how! let me see, let me see;—[*Reading.*]—'A rascal, and disguised, and suborned for that imposture,'—O villainy! O villainy!—'By the contrivance of—

Lady Wish. I shall faint, I shall die, ho!

Foi. Say, 'tis your nephew's hand.—Quickly, his plot, swear it, swear it.—

Wait. Here's a villain, madam! don't you perceive it, don't you see it?

Lady Wish. Too well, too well; I have seen too much.

Wait. I told you at first I knew the hand: a woman's hand! The rascal writes a sort of a large hand; your Roman hand—I saw there was a throat to be cut presently. If he were my son, as he is my nephew, I'd pistol him—

Foi. O, treachery! But are you sure, sir Rowland, it is his writing?

Wait. Sure! Am I here? Do I live? Do I love this pearl of India? I have twenty letters in my pocket from him, in the same character.

Lady Wish. How!

Foi. O, what luck it is, sir Rowland, that you were present at this juncture! this was the business that brought Mr Mirabell disguised to madam Millamant this afternoon. I thought something was contriving, when he stole by me, and would have hid his face.

Lady Wish. How, how!—I heard the villain was in the house, indeed; and, now, I remember, my niece went away abruptly, when sir Wilfull was to have made his addresses.

Foi. Then, then, madam, Mr Mirabell waited for her in her chamber! but, I would not tell your ladyship, to discompose you, when you were to receive sir Rowland.

Wait. Enough, his date is short.

Foi. No, good sir Rowland, don't incur the law.

Wait. Law! I care not for law. I can but die; and, 'tis in a good cause—My lady shall be satisfied of my truth and innocence, though it cost me my life.

Lady Wish. No, dear sir Rowland, don't fight; if you should be killed, I must never shew my

face: Or hanged!—O, consider my reputation, sir Rowland!—No, you shan't fight—I'll go in and examine my niece; I'll make her confess. I conjure you, sir Rowland, by all your love, not to fight.

Wait. I am charmed, madam; I obey. But some proof you must let me give you. I'll go for a black box, which contains the writings of my whole estate, and deliver that into your hands.

Lady Wish. Ay, dear sir Rowland, that will be some comfort; bring the black box.

Wait. And, may I presume to bring a contract to be signed this night? May I hope so far?

Lady Wish. Bring what you will; but come alive, pray, come alive. O, this is a happy discovery!

Wait. Dead or alive, I'll come—and, married we will be, in spite of treachery. Come, my buxom widow:

Ere long, you shall substantial proof receive,
That I'm an arrant knight——

Foi. Or arrant knave. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

LADY WISHFORT *and* FOIBLE.

Lady Wish. Out of my house, out of my house, thou viper, thou serpent, that I have fostered! thou bosom traitress, that I raised from nothing! Begone, begone, begone! go, go!—That I took from washing of old gauze, and weaving of dead hair, with a bleak blue nose, over a chaffing-dish of starved embers, and dining behind a traverse-rag, in a shop no bigger than a birdcage,—go, go! starve again, do, do.

Foi. Dear madam, I'll beg pardon on my knees.

Lady Wish. Away! out, out! go, set up for yourself again—do, drive a trade, do, with your three-pennyworth of small ware, flaunting upon a pack-thread, under a brandy-seller's bulk, or against a dead wall by a ballad-monger. Go, hang out an old frisoneer-gorget, with a yard of yellow Colberteen, again; do; an old gnawed mask, two rows of pins, and a child's fiddle; a glass necklace, with the beads broken, and a quilted night-cap with one ear. Go, go, drive a trade. These were your commodities, you treacherous trull! this was the merchandise you dealt in, when I took you into my house, placed you next myself, and made you governante of my whole family. You have forgot this, have you, now you have feathered your nest?

Foi. No, no, dear madam! Do but hear me; have but a moment's patience—I'll confess all. Mr Mirabell seduced me; I am not the first, that he has wheedled with his dissembling tongue; your ladyship's own wisdom has been deluded by him; then, how should I, a poor ignorant, defend myself? O, madam! if you knew but what he promised me; and how he assured me your ladyship should come to no damage—Or else the wealth of the Indies should not have bribed me to conspire against so good, so sweet, so kind a lady as you have been to me.

Lady Wish. No damage! What! to betray me, and marry me to a cast serving-man! to make me a receptacle, an hospital for a decayed pimp! No damage! O thou frontless impudence, more than a big-bellied actress!

Foi. Pray, do but hear me, madam; he could not marry your ladyship, madam—No, indeed, his marriage was to have been void in law; for, he was married to me first, to secure your ladyship. Yes, indeed; I inquired of the law in that case, before I would meddle or make.

Lady Wish. What, then, I have been your property, have I? I have been convenient to you, it seems—while you were catering for Mirabell, I have been broker for you! What, have you made a passive bawd of me?—This exceeds all precedent; I am brought to fine uses, to become a botcher of second-hand marriages between Abigails and Andrews! I'll couple you. Yes, I'll baste you together, you and your Philander. I'll Duke's-Place you, as I'm a person. Your turtle is in custody already: you shall coo in the same cage, if there be a constable or warrant in the parish. [*Exit.*

Foi. O that ever I was born! O that I was ever married!—a bride! ay, I shall be a Bridewell bride, oh!

Enter MRS FAINALL.

Mrs Fain. Poor Foible, what's the matter?

Foi. O madam, my lady's gone for a constable! I shall be had to a justice, and put to Bridewell to beat hemp; poor Waitwell's gone to prison already.

Mrs Fain. Have a good heart, Foible; Mirabell's gone to give security for him. This is all Marwood's and my husband's doing.

Foi. Yes, yes, I know it, madam; she was in my lady's closet, and overheard all that you said to me before dinner. She sent the letter to my lady; and that missing effect, Mr Fainall laid this plot to arrest Waitwell, when he pretended to go for the papers; and, in the mean time, Mrs Marwood declared all to my lady.

Mrs Fain. Was there no mention made of me in the letter?——My mother does not suspect my being in the confederacy? I fancy Marwood has not told her, though she has told my husband.

Foi. Yes, madam; but my lady did not see that part: we stifled the letter before she read

so far. Has that mischievous devil told Mr Fainall of your ladyship then?

Mrs Fain. Ay, all's out; my affair with Mirabell, every thing discovered. This is the last day of our living together, that's my comfort.

Foi. Indeed, madam! and so 'tis a comfort, if you knew all—he has been even with your ladyship; which I could have told you long enough since; but I love to keep peace and quietness by my good will: I had rather bring friends together, than set them at distance. But Mrs Marwood and he are nearer related than ever their parents thought for.

Mrs Fain. Say'st thou so, Foible? Canst thou prove this?

Foi. I can take my oath of it, madam; so can Mrs Mincing. We have had many a fair word from madam Marwood, to conceal something, that passed in our chamber one evening, when we were at Hyde Park;—and we were thought to have gone a walking: but we went up unawares,——though we were sworn to secrecy, too; madam Marwood took a book, and swore us upon it: but it was but a book of poems.—So long as it was not a bible-oath, we may break it with a safe conscience.

Mrs Fain. This discovery is the most opportune thing I could wish—Now, Mincing!

Enter MINCING.

Min. My lady would speak with Mrs Foible, mem. Mr Mirabell is with her; he has set your spouse at liberty, Mrs Foible, and would have you hide yourself in my lady's closet, till my old lady's anger is abated. O, my old lady is in a perilous passion, at something Mr Fainall has said; he swears, and my old lady cries. There's a fearful hurricane, I vow. He says, mem, how that he'll have my lady's fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorced.

Mrs Fain. Does your lady or Mirabell know that!

Min. Yes, mem, they have sent me to see if Sir Wilfull be sober, and to bring him to them. My lady is resolved to have him, I think, rather than lose such a vast sum as six thousand pounds. O, come Mrs Foible; I hear my old lady.

Mrs Fain. Foible, you must tell Mincing, that she must prepare to vouch when I call her.

Foi. Yes, yes, madam.

Min. O, yes, mem, I'll vouch any thing for your ladyship's service, be what it will.

[*Exeunt* FOIBLE *and* MINCING.

Enter LADY WISHFORT *and* MRS MARWOOD.

Lady Wish. O my dear friend, how can I enumerate the benefits that I have received from your goodness! To you, I owe the timely discovery of the false vows of Mirabell; to you, I owe the detection of the impostor sir Rowland: and now, you are become an intercessor with my son-in-law, to save the honour of my house, and compound for the frailties of my daughter. Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad world, or else I would retire to deserts and solitudes, and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves, and be shepherdesses.

Mrs Mar. Let us first dispatch the affair in hand, madam. We shall have leisure to think of retirement afterwards. Here is one who is concerned in the treaty.

Lady Wish. O daughter, daughter! is it possible thou shouldst be my child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and, as I may say, another me, and yet transgress the minute particle of severe virtue? Is it possible you should lean aside to iniquity, who have been cast in the direct mould of virtue?

Mrs Fain. I don't understand your ladyship.

Lady Wish. Not understand! why, have you not been naught? have you not been sophisticated? Not understand! here I am ruined to compound for your caprices, and your cuckoldoms. I must part with my plate and my jewels, and ruin my niece, and all little enough—

Mrs Fain. I am wronged and abused, and so are you. 'Tis a false accusation, as false as hell! as false as your friend there, ay, or your friend's friend, my false husband!

Mrs Mar. My friend! Mrs Fainall? your husband my friend! what do you mean?

Mrs Fain. I know what I mean, madam, and so do you: and so shall all the world at a time convenient.

Mrs Mar. I am sorry to see you so passionate, madam. More temper would look more like innocence. But I have done. I am sorry my zeal to serve your ladyship and family should admit of misconstruction, or make me liable to affronts. You will pardon me, madam, if I meddle no more with an affair, in which I am not personally concerned.

Lady Wish. O dear friend, I am so ashamed that you should meet with such returns!—you ought to ask pardon on your knees, ungrateful creature! she deserves more from you, than all your life can accomplish—O don't leave me destitute in this perplexity!—no, stick to me, my good genius!

Mrs Fain. I tell you, madam, you're abused—Stick to you? ay, like a leech, to suck your best blood—she'll drop off, when she's full. Madam, you shan't pawn a bodkin, nor part with a brass counter, in composition for me. I defy them all. Let them prove their aspersions: I know my own innocence, and dare stand a trial.

[*Exit.*

Lady Wish. Why, if she should be innocent, if she should be wronged after all, ha! I don't know what to think—and, I promise you, her

education has been very unexceptionable—I may say it: for I chiefly made it my own care to initiate her very infancy in the rudiments of virtue, and to impress upon her tender years a young odium and aversion to the very sight of men ——ay, friend, she would ha' shrieked, if she had but seen a man, till she was in her teens. As I'm a person, 'tis true—She was never suffered to play with a male child, though but in coats; nay, her very babies were of the feminine gender —O, she never looked a man in the face, but her own father, or the chaplain, and him we made a shift to put upon her for a woman, by the help of his long garments and his sleek face, till she was going in her fifteen. O dear friend, I can't believe it. No, no; as she says, let him prove it, let him prove it.

Mrs Mar Prove it, madam? what, and have your name prostituted in a public court; yours and your daughter's reputation worried at the bar by a pack of bawling lawyers! to be ushered in with an O-yes of scandal; and have your case opened by an old fumbling letcher in a coif like a man-midwife, to bring your daughter's infamy to light; to be a theme for legal punsters, and quibblers by the statute; and become a jest, against a rule of court, where there is no precedent for a jest in any record, not even in Doomsday-book; to discompose the gravity of the bench, and provoke naughty interrogatories in more naughty law Latin; while the good judge, tickled with the proceeding, simpers under a grey beard, and fidgets off and on his cushion, as if he had swallowed cantharides, or sat upon cow-itch!

Lady Wish. O, 'tis very hard!

Mrs Mar. And then to have my young revellers of the Temple take notes, like 'prentices at a conventicle; and after talk it over again in commons, or before drawers in an eating-house!

Lady Wish. Worse and worse.

Mrs Mar. Nay, this is nothing; if it would end here, 'twere well. But it must, after this, be consigned by the short-hand writers to the public press; and from thence be transferred to the hands, nay, into the throats and lungs of hawkers, with voices more licentious than the loud flounder-man's; and this you must hear till you are stunned; nay, you must hear nothing else for some days.

Lady Wish. O, 'tis insupportable! No, no, dear friend, make it up, make it up; ay, ay, I'll compound. I'll give up all, myself and my all, my niece and her all—any thing, every thing for composition.

Mrs Mar. Nay, madam, I advise nothing; I only lay before you, as a friend, the inconveniences which, perhaps, you have overseen. Here comes Mr Fainall; if he will be satisfied to huddle up all in silence, I shall be glad. You must think I would rather congratulate than condole with you.

Enter FAINALL.

Lady Wish. Ay, ay, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood: no, no, I do not doubt it.

Fain. Well, madam, I have suffered myself to be overcome by the importunity of this lady, your friend; and am content you shall enjoy your own proper estate during life; on condition you oblige yourself never to marry, under such penalty as I think convenient.

Lady Wish. Never to marry!

Fain. No more sir Rowlands—the next imposture may not be so timely detected.

Mrs Mar. That condition, I dare answer, my lady will consent to, without difficulty; she has already but too much experienced the perfidiousness of men. Besides, madam, when we retire to our pastoral solitude, we shall bid adieu to all other thoughts.

Lady Wish. Ay, that's true.

Fain. Next, my wife shall settle on me the remainder of her fortune, not made over already; and, for her maintenance, depend entirely on my discretion.

Lady Wish. This is most inhumanly savage; exceeding the barbarity of a Muscovite husband.

Fain. I learned it from his Czarish majesty's retinue, in a winter evening's conference over brandy and pepper, amongst other secrets of matrimony and policy, as they are at present practised in the northern hemisphere. But this must be agreed unto, and that positively. Lastly, I will be endowed, in right of my wife, with that six thousand pounds, which is the moiety of Mrs Millamant's fortune in your possesion; and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last-will and testament of your deceased husband, sir Jonathan Wishfort), by her disobedience in contracting herself against your consent or knowledge, and by refusing the offered match with Sir Wilfull Witwould, which you, like a careful aunt, had provided for her.

Lady Wish. My nephew was *non compos;* and could not make his addresses.

Fain. I come to make demands—I'll hear no objections.

Lady Wish. You will grant me time to consider?

Fain. Yes, while the instrument is drawing, to which you must set your hand till more sufficient deeds can be perfected, which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the mean while, I will go for the said instrument, and till my return, you may balance this matter in your own discretion. [*Exit.*

Lady Wish. This insolence is beyond all precedent, all parallel; must I be subject to this merciless villain?

Mrs Mar. 'Tis severe, indeed, madam, that you should smart for your daughter's failings.

Lady Wish. 'Twas against my consent, that she married this barbarian: but she would have

him, though her year was not out—ah! her first husband, my son Languish, would not have carried it thus. Well, that was my choice, this is hers; she is matched now, with a witness—I shall be mad, dear friend; is there no comfort for me? Must I live to be confiscated at this rebel-rate? Here come two more of my Egyptian plagues, too.

Enter MILLAMANT *and* SIR WILFULL.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.

Lady Wish. Out, caterpillar! call not me aunt; I know thee not.

Sir Wil. I confess I have been a little in disguise, as they say——'Sheart! and I'm sorry for't. What would you have? I hope I committed no offence, aunt——and, if I did, I am willing to make satisfaction; and what can a man say fairer? If I have broke any thing, I'll pay for't, an' it cost a pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more words. For what's to come, to pleasure you, I'm willing to marry my cousin. So, pray, let's all be friends; she and I are agreed upon the matter before a witness.

Lady Wish. How's this, dear niece? have I any comfort? can this be true?

Mill. I am content to be a sacrifice to your repose, madam; and, to convince you that I had no hand in the plot, as you were misinformed, I have laid my commands on Mirabell to come in person, and be a witness, that I give my hand to this flower of knighthood; and, for the contract that passed between Mirabell and me, I have obliged him to make a resignation of it in your ladyship's presence;—he is without, and waits your leave for admittance.

Lady Wish. Well, I'll swear I am something revived at this testimony of your obedience; but I cannot admit that traitor—I fear I cannot fortify myself to support his appearance. He is as terrible to me as a Gorgon; if I see him, I fear I shall turn to stone, and petrify incessantly.

Mill. If you disoblige him, he may resent your refusal, and insist upon the contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

Lady Wish. Are you sure it will be the last time? if I were sure of that—shall I never see him again?

Mill. Sir Wilfull, you and he are to travel together, are you not?

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, the gentleman's a civil gentleman; aunt, let him come in; why, we are sworn brothers, and fellow-travellers. We are to be Pylades and Orestes, he and I—he is to be my interpreter in foreign parts. He has been over-seas once already; and, with proviso that I marry my cousin, will cross them once again, only to bear me company. 'Sheart, I'll call him in—an' I set on't once, he shall come in; and see who'll hinder him. [*Goes to the door, and hems.*

Mrs Mar. This is precious fooling, if it would pass; but I'll know the bottom of it.

Lady Wish. Oh, dear Marwood, you are not going.

Mrs Mar. Not far, madam; I'll return immediately.

[*Exit* MRS MARWOOD.

Enter MIRABELL.

Sir Wil. Look up, man, I'll stand by you; 'sbud, an' she do frown—she can't kill you; besides—harkee, she dare not frown desperately, because her face is none of her own; 'sheart, an' she should, her forehead would wrinkle like the coat of a cream-cheese; but mum for that, fellow-traveller.

Mira. If a deep sense of the many injuries I have offered to so good a lady, with a sincere remorse, and a hearty contrition, can but obtain the least glance of compassion, I am too happy. Ah, madam! there was a time—but let it be forgotten—I confess I have deservedly forfeited the high place, I once held, of sighing at your feet; nay, kill me not, by turning from me in disdain—I come not to plead for favour; nay, not for pardon; I am a supplicant only for pity—I am going where I never shall behold you more.

Sir Wil. How, fellow-traveller! you shall go by yourself, then.

Mira. Let me be pitied first: and afterwards forgotten—I ask no more.

Sir Wil. By'r lady, a very reasonable request, and will cost you nothing, aunt. Come, come, forgive and forget, aunt; why, you must, an' you are a Christian.

Mira. Consider, madam, in reality, you could not receive much prejudice; it was an innocent device; though, I confess, it had a face of guiltiness—it was at most an artifice, which love contrived—and errors, which love produces, have ever been accounted venial. At least think it is punishment enough, that I have lost what, in my heart, I hold most dear; that to your cruel indignation I have offered up this beauty, and with her my peace and quiet; nay, all my hopes of future comfort.

Sir Wil. An' he does not move me, would I may never be o' the quorum! An' it were not as good a deed as to drink, to give her to him again, I would I might never take shipping!—Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I shall melt, I can tell you that. My contract went no farther than a little mouth-glue, and that's hardly dry; one doleful sigh more from my fellow-traveller, and 'tis dissolved.

Lady Wish. Well, nephew, upon your account—ah! he has a false, insinuating tongue. Well, sir, I will stifle my just resentment, at my nephew's request—I will endeavour what I can to forget—but, on proviso, that you resign the contract with my niece immediately.

Mira. It is in writing, and with papers of

concern; but I have sent my servant for it, and will deliver it to you, with all acknowledgments for your transcendent goodness.

Lady Wish. Oh, he has witchcraft in his eyes and tongue! when I did not see him, I could have bribed a villain to his assassination; but his appearance rakes the embers which have so long lain smothered in my breast.

[*Aside.*

Enter FAINALL *and* MRS MARWOOD.

Fain. Your debate of deliberation, madam, is expired. Here is the instrument; are you prepared to sign?

Lady Wish. If I were prepared, I am not empowered. My niece exerts a lawful claim, having matched herself, by my direction, to sir Wilfull.

Fain. That sham is too gross to pass on me—though 'tis imposed on you, madam.

Mill. Sir, I have given my consent.

Mira. And, sir, I have resigned my pretensions.

Sir Wil. And, sir, I assert my right; and will maintain it, in defiance of you, sir, and of your instrument. 'Sheart, an' you talk of an instrument, sir, I have an old fox by my thigh, shall hack your instrument of ram vellum to shreds, sir. It shall not be sufficient for a mittimus, or a tailor's measure; therefore, withdraw your instrument, or by'r lady, I shall draw mine.

Lady Wish. Hold, nephew, hold!

Mill. Good sir Wilfull, respite your valour.

Fain. Indeed? Are you provided of your guard, with your single beef-eater there? But I am prepared for you; and insist upon my first proposal. You shall submit your own estate to my management, and absolutely make over my wife's to my sole use, as pursuant to the purport and tenor of this other covenant. I suppose, madam, your consent is not requisite in this case; nor, Mr Mirabell, your resignation; nor, sir Wilfull, your right—you may draw your fox, if you please, sir, and make a bear-garden flourish somewhere else; for, here, it will not avail. This, my lady Wishfort, must be subscribed, or your darling daughter's turned adrift, like a leaky hulk, to sink or swim, as she and the current of this town can agree.

Lady Wish. Is there no means, no remedy, to stop my ruin? Ungrateful wretch! dost thou not owe thy being, thy subsistence, to my daughter's fortune?

Fain. I'll answer you, when I have the rest of it in my possession.

Mira. But that you would not accept of a remedy from my hands—I own I have not deserved you should owe any obligation to me; or else, perhaps, I could advise——

Lady Wish. O what! what! to save me and my child from ruin, from want, I'll forgive all that's past; nay, I'll consent to any thing to come, to be delivered from this tyranny.

Mira. Ay, madam; but that is too late; my reward is intercepted. You have disposed of her, who only could have made me a compensation for all my services: but be it as it may, I am resolved I'll serve you; you shall not be wronged in this savage manner.

Lady Wish. How! dear Mr Mirabell, can you be so generous at last! but it is not possible. Harkee, I'll break my nephew's match; you shall have my niece yet, and all her fortune, if you can but save me from this imminent danger.

Mira. Will you? I take you at your word. I ask no more. I must have leave for two criminals to appear.

Lady Wish. Aye, aye; any body, any body.

Mira. Foible is one, and a penitent.

Enter Mrs FAINALL, FOIBLE, *and* MINCING.

Mrs Mar. O, my shame! [MIRABELL *and* LADY WISHFORT *go to Mrs* FAINALL *and* FOIBLE.] these corrupt things are brought hither to expose me. [*To* FAINALL.

Fain. If it must all come out, why let them know it; 'tis but the *Way of the World.* That shall not urge me to relinquish or abate one tittle of my terms; no, I will insist the more.

Foi. Yes, indeed, madam; I'll take my bible-oath of it.

Min. And so will I, mem.

Lady Wish. O Marwood, Marwood, art thou false! My friend deceive me! Hast thou been a wicked accomplice with that profligate man?

Mrs Mar. Have you so much ingratitude and injustice, to give credit, against your friend, to the aspersions of two such mercenary trulls?

Min. Mercenary, mem! I scorn your words. 'Tis true, we found you and Mr Fainall in the blue garret; by the same token, you swore us to secrecy upon Messalina's poems. Mercenary! No, if we would have been mercenary, we should have held our tongues; you would have bribed us sufficiently.

Fain. Go, you are an insignificant thing.—— Well, what are you the better for this? Is this Mr Mirabell's expedient? I'll be put off no longer—You, thing, that was a wife, shall smart for this. I will not leave thee wherewithal to hide thy shame: Your person shall be naked as your reputation.

Mrs Fain. I despise you, and defy your malice—You have aspersed me wrongfully—I have proved your falsehood——Go, you and your treacherous— I will not name it, but starve together—Perish!

Fain. Not while you are worth a groat, indeed, my dear—madam, I'll be fooled no longer.

Lady Wish. Ah, Mr Mirabell, this is small comfort, the detection of this affair.

Mira. O, in good time—Your leave for the other offender and penitent to appear, madam.

Enter WAITWELL, *with a box of writings.*

Lady Wish. O sir Rowland—Well, rascal?

Wait. What your ladyship pleases—I have brought the black box at last, madam.

Mira. Give it me. Madam, you remember your promise.

Lady Wish. Aye, dear sir.

Mira. Where are the gentlemen?

Wait. At hand, sir, rubbing their eyes—just risen from sleep.

Fain. 'Sdeath! what's this to me? I'll not wait your private concerns.

Exit.

Enter PETULANT *and* WITWOULD.

Pet. How now? what is the matter? whose hand's out?

Wit. Heyday! what, are you all together, like players at the end of the last act?

Mira. You may remember, gentlemen, I once requested your hands as witnesses to a certain parchment.

Wit. Aye I do, my hand I remember—Petulant set his mark.

Mira. You wrong him; his name is fairly written, as shall appear. You do not remember, gentlemen, any thing of what that parchment contained?—

[*Undoing the box.*

Wit. No.

Pet. Not I. I writ, I read nothing.

Mira. Very well, now you shall know—madam, your promise.

Lady Wish. Aye, aye, sir, upon my honour.

Mira. Mr Fainall, it is now time that you should know, that your lady, while she was at her own disposal, and before you had, by your insinuations, wheedled her out of a pretended settlement of the greatest part of her fortune——

Fain. Sir! pretended!

Mira. Yes, sir, I say, that this lady while a widow, having, it seems, received some cautions respecting your inconstancy and tyranny of temper, which, from her own partial opinion and fondness of you, she could never have suspected——— She did, I say, by the wholesome advice of friends, and of sages learned in the laws of this land, deliver this same, as her act and deed, to me, in trust, and to the uses within mentioned. You may read if you please [*Holding the parchment*]; though, perhaps, what is written on the back may serve your occasions.

Fain. Very likely, sir. What's here? Damnation!

[*Reads.*] 'A deed of conveyance of the whole 'estate real of Arabella Languish, widow, in 'trust, to Edward Mirabell.'

Confusion!

Mir. Even so, sir; 'tis *The Way of the World*, sir; of the widows of the world. I suppose this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtained from your lady.

Fain. Perfidious fiend! then thus I'll be revenged——

[*Offers to run at Mrs* FAINALL.

Sir Wil. Hold, sir! now you may make your Bear-garden flourish somewhere else, sir.

Fain. Mirabell, you shall hear of this, sir; be sure you shall—Let me pass, oaf. [*Exit.*

Mrs Fain. Madam, you seem to stifle your resentment; you had better give it vent.

Mrs Mar. Yes, it shall have vent—and to your confusion, or I'll perish in the attempt.

[*Exit.*

Lady Wish. O daughter, daughter! 'tis plain thou hast inherited thy mother's prudence.

Mrs Fain. Thank Mr Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whose advice all is owing.

Lady Wish. Well, Mr Mirabell, you have kept your promise; and I must perform mine. First, I pardon, for your sake, sir Rowland there and Foible. The next thing is to break the matter to my nephew—and how to do that——

Mira. For that, madam, give yourself no trouble—let me have your consent—Sir Wilfull is my friend; he has had compassion upon lovers, and generously engaged a volunteer in this action, for our service; and now designs to prosecute his travels.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, aunt, I have no mind to marry. My cousin's a fine lady, and the gentleman loves her, and she loves him, and they deserve one another; my resolution is to see foreign parts—I have set on it—and when I'm set on't, I must do it. And if these two gentlemen would travel, too, I think they may be spared.

Pet. For my part, I say little—I think things are best; off or on.

Wait. Egad, I understand nothing of the matter—I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing-school.

Lady Wish. Well, sir, take her, and with her all the joy I can give you.

Mill. Why does the man not take me? Would you have me give myself to you over again?

Mira. Aye, and over and over again! [*Kisses her hand.*] I would have you as often as possibly I can. Well, Heaven grant I love you not too well; that's all my fear.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, you'll have time enough to toy after you're married; or, if you will toy now, let us have a dance in the mean time; that we, who are not lovers, may have some other employment, besides looking on.

Mira. With all my heart, dear sir Wilfull.—What shall we do for music?

Foi. O, sir, some that were provided for sir Rowland's entertainment are yet within call.

[*A dance.*

Lady Wish. As I am a person, I can hold out

no longer: I have wasted my spirits so to day already, that I am ready to sink under the fatigue: and I cannot but have some fears upon me yet, that my son Fainall will pursue some desperate course.

Mira. Madam, disquiet not yourself on that account; to my knowledge his circumstances are such, he must of force comply. For my part, I will contribute all that in me lies to a re-union: in the mean time, madam, [*To Mrs Fainall.*] let me, before these witnesses, restore to you this deed of trust; it may be a means, well managed, to make you live easily together.

From hence, let those be warned, who mean to wed,
Lest mutual falsehood stain the bridal-bed:
For each deceiver to his cost may find,
That marriage frauds too oft are paid in kind.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

LOVE FOR LOVE.

BY

CONGREVE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR SAMPSON LEGEND, *an old knight.*
VALENTINE, *his son.*
SCANDAL, *satirical—his friend.*
TATTLE, *a coxcomb.*
BEN, *brother to* VALENTINE, *a blunt tar.*
FORESIGHT, *an old dotard.*
JEREMY, *valet to* VALENTINE.
TRAPLAND, *an usurer.*
BUCKRAM, *a tailor.*

WOMEN.

ANGELICA, *attached to* VALENTINE.
MRS FORESIGHT, *wife to* FORESIGHT.
MRS FRAIL, *a woman of easy character.*
MISS PRUE, *a country hoyden.*
Nurse.
JENNY.

A Steward, Officers, Sailors, and several Servants.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

VALENTINE *in his chamber reading;* JEREMY *waiting.—Several books upon the table.*

Val. JEREMY!

Jer. Sir.

Val. Here, take away; I'll walk a turn, and digest what I have read.

Jer. You'll grow devilish fat upon this paper diet!

[*Aside, and taking away the books.*

Val. And d'ye hear? go you to breakfast—— There's a page doubled down in Epictetus, that is a feast for an emperor.

Jer. Was Epictetus a real cook, or did he only write receipts?

Val. Read, read, sirrah, and refine your appetite; learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind, and mortify your flesh. Read, and take your nourishment in at your eyes; shut up your mouth, and chew the cud of understanding. So Epictetus advises.

Jer. O lord! I have heard much of him, when I waited upon a gentleman at Cambridge. Pray, what was that Epictetus?

Val. A very rich man—not worth a groat!

Jer. Humph! and so he has made a very fine feast, where there is nothing to be eaten!

Val. Yes.

Jer. Sir, you're a gentleman, and probably understand this fine feeding; but, if you please, I had rather be at board-wages. Does your Epictetus, or your Seneca here, or any of these poor rich rogues, teach you how to pay your debts without money? Will they shut up the mouths of your creditors? Will Plato be bail for you? or Diogenes, because he understands confinement, and lived in a tub, go to prison for you? 'Slife, sir, what do you mean, to mew yourself up here with three or four musty books, in commendation of starving and poverty?

Val. Why, sirrah, I have no money, you know it; and therefore resolve to rail at all that have: and in that I but follow the examples of the wi-

sest and wittiest men in all ages—these poets and philosophers, whom you naturally hate, for just such another reason; because they abound in sense, and you are a fool.

Jer. Ay, sir, I am a fool, I know it; and yet, Heaven help me! I'm poor enough to be a wit. But I was always a fool, when I told you what your expences would bring you to; your coaches and your liveries; your treats and your balls; your being in love with a lady that did not care a farthing for you in your prosperity; and keeping company with wits, that cared for nothing but your prosperity, and now, when you are poor, hate you as much as they do one another.

Val. Well! and now I am poor, I have an opportunity to be revenged on them all; I'll pursue Angelica with more love than ever, and appear more notoriously her admirer in this restraint, than when I openly rivalled the rich fops, that made court to her. So shall my poverty be a mortification to her pride, and perhaps make her compassionate the love, which has principally reduced me to this lowness of fortune. And for the wits, I'm sure I am in a condition to be even with them.

Jer. Nay, your condition is pretty even with theirs, that's the truth on't.

Val. I'll take some of their trade out of their hands.

Jer. Now, Heaven of mercy continue the tax upon paper!—You don't mean to write?

Val. Yes, I do; I'll write a play.

Jer. Hem!—Sir, if you please to give me a small certificate of three lines—only to certify those whom it may concern, that the bearer hereof, Jeremy Fetch by name, has, for the space of seven years, truly and faithfully served Valentine Legend, esquire; and that he is not now turned away for any misdemeanour, but does voluntarily dismiss his master from any future authority over him—

Val. No, sirrah; you shall live with me still.

Jer. Sir, it's impossible—I may die with you, starve with you, or be damned with your works: but to live, even three days, the life of a play, I no more expect it, than to be canonized for a muse after my decease.

Val. You are witty, you rogue, I shall want your help—I'll have you learn to make couplets, to tag the end of acts. D'ye hear? get the maids to crambo in an evening, and learn the knack of rhyming; you may arrive at the height of a song sent by an unknown hand, or a chocolate-house lampoon.

Jer. But, sir, is this the way to recover your father's favour? Why, sir Sampson will be irreconcileable. If your younger brother should come from sea, he'd never look upon you again. You're undone, sir; you're ruined; you won't have a friend left in the world, if you turn poet. Ah, pox confound that Will's coffee-house! it has ruined more young men than the Royal Oak lottery! Nothing thrives that belongs to it. The man of the house would have been an alderman by this time, with half the trade, if he had set up in the city. For my part, I never sit at the door, that I don't get double the stomach that I do at a horse-race. The air upon Banstead Downs is nothing to it for a whetter; yet I never see it, but the spirit of famine appears to me—sometimes like a decayed porter, worn out with pimping, and carrying billet-doux and songs; not like other porters for hire, but for the jest's sake. Now, like a thin chairman, melted down to half his proportion, with carrying a poet upon tick, to visit some great fortune; and his fare to be paid him, like the wages of sin, either at the day of marriage, or the day of death.

Enter SCANDAL.

Scand. What! Jeremy holding forth?

Val. The rogue has (with all the wit he could muster up) been declaiming against wit.

Scand. Ay? Why, then, I'm afraid Jeremy has wit: for wherever it is, it's always contriving its own ruin.

Jer. Why, so I have been telling my master, sir. Mr Scandal, for Heaven's sake, sir, try if you can dissuade him from turning poet.

Scand. Poet! He shall turn soldier first, and rather depend upon the outside of his head, than the lining! Why, what the devil! has not your poverty made you enemies enough? must you needs shew your wit to get more?

Jer. Ay, more indeed: for who cares for any body that has more wit than himself?

Scand. Jeremy speaks like an oracle. Don't you see how worthless great men and dull rich rogues avoid a witty man of small fortune? Why, he looks like a writ of inquiry into their titles and estates; and seems commissioned by Heaven to seize the better half.

Val. Therefore, I would rail in my writings, and be revenged.

Scand. Rail! at whom? the whole world? Impotent and vain! Who would die a martyr to sense, in a country where the religion is folly? You may stand at bay for a while; but, when the full cry is against you, you shan't have fair play for your life. If you can't be fairly run down by the hounds, you will be treacherously shot by the huntsmen. No; turn pimp, flatterer, quack, lawyer; any thing but poet. A modern poet is worse, more servile, timorous, and fawning, than any I have named: without you could retrieve the ancient honours of the name, recal the stage of Athens, and be allowed the force of open honest satire.

Val. You are as inveterate against our poets, as if your character had been lately exposed upon the stage. Nay, I am not violently bent upon the trade.—[*One knocks.*] Jeremy, see who's there. [JEREMY *goes to the door.*]—But tell me

what you would have me do?—What do the world say of me, and my forced confinement?

Scand. The world behaves itself, as it uses to do on such occasions. Some pity you, and condemn your father: others excuse him, and blame you. Only the ladies are merciful, and wish you well: since love and pleasurable expence have been your greatest faults.

JEREMY *returns.*

Val. How now?

Jer. Nothing new, sir. I have dispatched some half a dozen duns with as much dexterity as an hungry judge does causes at dinner time.

Val. What answer have you given them?

Scand. Patience, I suppose—the old receipt!

Jer. No, faith, sir: I have put them off so long with patience and forbearance, and other fair words, that I was forced to tell them in plain downright English—

Val. What?

Jer. That they should be paid.

Val. When?

Jer. To-morrow.

Val. And how the devil do you mean to keep your word?

Jer. Keep it? Not at all: it has been so very much stretched, that I reckon it will break of course by to-morrow, and nobody be surprised at the matter!—[*knocking.*]—Again! Sir, if you don't like my negociation, will you be pleased to answer these yourself?

Val. See who they are. [*Exit* JEREMY.] By this, Scandal, you may see what it is to be great. Secretaries of state, presidents of the council, and generals of an army, lead just such a life as I do: have just such crowds of visitants in a morning, all soliciting of past promises; which are but a civiller sort of duns, that lay claim to voluntary debts.

Scand. And you, like a truly great man, having engaged their attendance, and promised more than ever you intended to perform, are more perplexed to find evasions, than you would be to invent the honest means of keeping your word, and gratifying your creditors.

Val. Scandal, learn to spare your friends, and do not provoke your enemies. This liberty of your tongue will one day bring confinement on your body, my friend.

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. O, sir, there's Trapland the scrivener, with two suspicious fellows, like lawful pads, that would knock a man down with pocket tipstaves!——And there's your father's steward; and the nurse, with one of your children, from Twitnam.

Val. Pox on her! could she find no other time to bring brats to my door? Here! give her this, [*gives money.*] and bid her trouble me no more.

Scand. What, is it bouncing Margery, with my godson?

Jer. Yes, sir.

Scand. My blessing to the boy, with this token [*gives money.*] of my love.

Val. Bid Trapland come in. If I can give that Cerberus a sop, I shall be at rest for one day.

[JEREMY *goes out, and brings in* TRAPLAND.

O Mr Trapland! my old friend! welcome. Jeremy, a chair, quickly: a bottle of sack, and a toast—fly—a chair first.

Trap. A good morning to you, Mr Valentine; and to you, Mr Scandal.

Scand. The morning's a very good morning, if you don't spoil it.

Val. Come, sit you down; you know his way.

Trap. [*sits.*] There is a debt, Mr Valentine, of fifteen hundred pounds, of pretty long standing——

Val. I cannot talk about business with a thirsty palate. Sirrah! the sack!

Trap. And I desire to know what course you have taken for the payment.

Val. Faith, and troth, I am heartily glad to see you—my service to you! fill, fill, to honest Mr Trapland—fuller.

Trap. Hold! sweetheart—this is not to our business. My service to you, Mr Scandal!—[*drinks.*]——I have forborn as long—

Val. T'other glass, and then we'll talk—Fill, Jeremy.

Trap. No more, in truth—I have forborn, I say—

Val. Sirrah! fill! when I bid you. And how does your handsome daughter?—Come, a good husband to her. [*drinks.*

Trap. Thank you—I have been out of this money—

Val. Drink first. Scandal, why do you not drink? [*They drink.*

Trap. And, in short, I can be put off no longer.

Val. I was much obliged to you for your supply: it did me signal service in my necessity. But you delight in doing good. Scandal, drink to me, my friend Trapland's health. An honester man lives not, nor one more ready to serve his friend in distress, though I say it to his face. Come, fill each man his glass.

Scand. What? I know Trapland has been a whoremaster, and loves a wench still. You never knew a whoremaster, that was not an honest fellow.

Trap. Fie, Mr Scandal, you never knew!—

Scand. What don't I know?——I know the buxom black widow in the Poultry—Eight hundred pounds a-year jointure, and twenty thousand pounds in money. Ahah! old Trap.

Val. Say you so, i'faith? Come, we'll remember the widow: I know whereabouts you are; come, to the widow.

Trap. No more, indeed.

Val. What! the widow's health? Give it him—off with it. [*They drink.*]—A lovely girl, i' faith! black sparkling eyes, soft pouting ruby lips! Better sealing there, than a bond for a million, ha!

Trap. No, no, there's no such thing; we'd better mind our business—You're a wag!

Val. No, faith, we'll mind the widow's business: fill again. Pretty round heaving breasts, a Barbary shape, would stir an anchorite; and the prettiest foot! Oh, if a man could but fasten his eyes to her feet, as they steal in and out, and play at bo-peep under her petticoats—ha! Mr Trapland!

Trap. Verily, give me a glass—you're a wag—and here's to the widow. [*Drinks.*

Scand. He begins to chuckle—ply him close, or he'll relapse into a dun.

Enter Officer.

Offi. By your leave, gentlemen.—Mr Trapland, if we must do our office, tell us.—We have half a dozen gentlemen to arrest in Pall-mall and Covent-garden; and if we don't make haste, the chairmen will be abroad, and block up the chocolate-houses; and then our labour's lost.

Trap. Odso, that's true. Mr Valentine, I love mirth; but business must be done; are you ready to——

Jer. Sir, your father's steward says, he comes to make proposals concerning your debts.

Val. Bid him come in: Mr. Trapland, send away your officer; you shall have an answer presently.

Trap. Mr Snap, stay within call. [*Exit Officer.*

Enter Steward, who whispers VALENTINE.

Scand. Here's a dog now, a traitor in his wine! Sirrah, refund the sack: Jeremy, fetch him some warm water, or I'll rip up his stomach, and go the shortest way to his conscience.

Trap. Mr Scandal, you are uncivil. I did not value your sack; but you cannot expect it again, when I have drunk it.

Scand. And how do you expect to have your money again, when a gentleman has spent it?

Val. You need say no more. I understand the conditions; they are very hard, but my necessity is very pressing: I agree to them. Take Mr Trapland with you, and let him draw the writing.—Mr Trapland, you know this man; he shall satisfy you.

Trap. Sincerely, I am loth to be thus pressing; but my necessity—

Val. No apology, good Mr Scrivener; you shall be paid.

Trap. I hope you forgive me; my business requires—

[*Exeunt* TRAPLAND, *Steward and* JEREMY.

Scand. He begs pardon like a hangman at an execution.

Val. But I have got a reprieve.

Scand. I am surprised; what, does your father relent?

Val. No; he has sent me the hardest conditions in the world. You have heard of a booby brother of mine, that was sent to sea three years ago? This brother, my father hears, is landed; whereupon he very affectionately sends me word, 'If I will make a deed of con-'veyance of my right to his estate after his 'death to my younger brother, he will im-'mediately furnish me with four thousand 'pounds to pay my debts, and make my 'fortune.' This was once proposed before, and I refused it; but the present impatience of my creditors for their money, and my own impatience of confinement, and absence from Angelica, force me to consent.

Scand. A very desperate demonstration of your love to Angelica! and I think she has never given you any assurance of hers.

Val. You know her temper; she never gave me any great reason either for hope or despair.

Scand. Women of her airy temper, as they seldom think before they act, so they rarely give us any light to guess at what they mean: but you have little reason to believe that a woman of this age, who has had an indifference for you in your prosperity, will fall in love with your ill fortune. Besides, Angelica has a great fortune of her own; and great fortunes either expect another great fortune, or a fool.

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. More misfortunes, sir.

Val. What, another dun?

Jer. No, sir; but Mr Tattle is come to wait upon you.

Val. Well, I cannot help it——you must bring him up; he knows I don't go abroad.

[*Exit* JEREMY.

Scand. Pox on him! I'll be gone.

Val. No, prithee stay: Tattle and you should never be asunder; you are light and shadow, and shew one another. He is perfectly thy reverse, both in humour and understanding; and, as you set up for defamation, he is a mender of reputations.

Scand. A mender of reputations! ay, just as he is a keeper of secrets, another virtue that he sets up for in the same manner. For the rogue will speak aloud in the posture of a whisper; and deny a woman's name, while he gives you the marks of her person. He will forswear receiving a letter from her, and at the same time shew you her hand in the superscription: and yet, perhaps, he has counterfeited her hand too, and sworn to a truth; but he hopes not to be believed; and refuses the reputation of a lady's favour, as a doctor says no to a bishoprick, only that it may be granted him.—In short, he is a public professor of secrecy, and makes pro-

clamation that he holds private intelligence.—He is here.

Enter TATTLE.

Tatt. Valentine, good morrow: Scandal, I am yours——that is, when you speak well of me.

Scand. That is, when I am yours? for while I am my own, or any body's else, that will never happen.

Tatt. How inhuman!

Val. Why, Tattle, you need not be much concerned at any thing, that he says: for to converse with Scandal, is to play at losing loadum; you must lose a good name to him, before you can win it for yourself.

Tatt. But how barbarous that is, and how unfortunate for him, that the world shall think the better of any person for his calumniation!——I thank Heaven, it has always been a part of my character to handle the reputations of others very tenderly indeed.

Scand. Ay, such rotten reputations as you have to deal with are to be handled tenderly indeed.

Tatt. Nay, why rotten? why should you say rotten, when you know not the persons of whom you speak? How cruel that is!

Scand. Not know them? Why, thou never hadst to do with any one, that did not stink to all the town.

Tatt. Ha, ha, ha! nay, now you make a jest of it, indeed. For there is nothing more known, than that nobody knows any thing of that nature of me. As I hope to be saved, Valentine, I never exposed a woman, since I knew what woman was.

Val. And yet you have conversed with several?

Tatt. To be free with you, I have——I don't care if I own that——nay, more (I'm going to say a bold word now), I never could meddle with a woman, that had to do with any body else.

Scand. How!

Val. Nay, faith, I'm apt to believe him—except her husband, Tattle.

Tatt. Oh that——

Scand. What think you of that noble commoner, Mrs Drab?

Tatt. Pooh, I know madam Drab has made her brags in three or four places, that I said this and that, and writ to her, and did I know not what—but, upon my reputation, she did me wrong—well, well, that was malice—but I know the bottom of it. She was bribed to that by one we all know—a man, too—only to bring me into disgrace with a certain woman of quality——

Scand. Whom we all knew.

Tatt. No matter for that—Yes, yes, every body knows—no doubt on't, every body knows my secrets! But I soon satisfied the lady of my innocence; for I told her—Madam, says I, there are some persons who make it their business to tell stories, and say this and that of one and the other, and every thing in the world; and, says I, if your grace—

Scand. Grace!

Tatt. O lord, what have I said? My unlucky tongue!

Val. Ha, ha, ha!

Scand. Why, Tattle, thou hast more impudence than one can in reason expect: I shall have an esteem for thee—well, and ha, ha, ha! well go on, and what did you say to her grace?

Val. I confess this is something extraordinary.

Tatt. Not a word, as I hope to be saved; an arrant *lapsus linguæ!* Come, let us talk of something else.

Val. Well, but how did you acquit yourself?

Tatt. Pooh, pooh, nothing at all; I only rallied with you. A woman of ordinary rank was a little jealous of me, and I told her something or other——faith, I know not what; come, let's talk of something else. [*Hums a song.*

Scand. Hang him, let him alone; he has a mind we should inquire.

Tatt. Valentine, I supped last night with your mistress, and her uncle old Foresight: I think your father lies at Foresight's.

Val. Yes.

Tatt. Upon my soul, Angelica's a fine woman. And so is Mrs Foresight, and her sister Mrs Frail.

Scand. Yes, Mrs Frail is a very fine woman; we all know her.

Tatt. Oh, that is not fair.

Scand. What?

Tatt. To tell.

Scand. To tell what? Why, what do you know of Mrs Frail?

Tatt. Who, I? Upon my honour, I don't know whether she be a man or woman; but by the smoothness of her chin, and roundness of her lips.

Scand. No!

Tatt. No.

Scand. She says otherwise.

Tatt. Impossible!

Scand. Yes, faith. Ask Valentine else.

Tatt. Why, then, as I hope to be saved, I believe a woman only obliges a man to secresy, that she may have the pleasure of telling herself.

Scand. No doubt of it. Well, but has she done you wrong, or no? You have had her? ha!

Tatt. Though I have more honour than to tell first, I have more manners than to contradict what a lady has declared.

Scand. Well, you own it?

Tatt. I am strangely surprised! Yes, yes, I cannot deny it, if she taxes me with it.

Scand. She'll be here by and by; she sees Valentine every morning.

Tatt. How!

Val. She does me the favour—I mean, of a visit sometimes. I did not think she had granted more to any body.

Scand. Nor I, faith. But Tattle does not use to belie a lady; it is contrary to his character.—How one may be deceived in a woman, Valentine!

Tatt. Nay, what do you mean, gentlemen?

Scand. I'm resolved I'll ask her.

Tatt. O barbarous! Why, did you not tell me?

Scand. No, you told us.

Tatt. And bid me ask Valentine?

Val. What did I say? I hope you won't bring me to confess an answer, when you never asked me the question?

Tatt. But, gentlemen, this is the most inhuman proceeding.——

Val. Nay, if you have known Scandal thus long, and cannot avoid such a palpable decoy as this was, the ladies have a fine time, whose reputations are in your keeping.

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, Mrs Frail has sent to know, if you are stirring.

Val. Shew her up when she comes.

[*Exit* JEREMY.

Tatt. I'll be gone.

Val. You'll meet her.

Tatt. Is there not a back way?

Val. If there were, you have more discretion than to give Scandal such an advantage; why, your running away will prove all that he can tell her.

Tatt. Scandal, you will not be so ungenerous? O, I shall lose my reputation of secrecy for ever. I shall never be received but upon public days; and my visits will never be admitted beyond a drawing-room: I shall never see a bed-chamber again; never be locked in a closet, nor run behind a screen, or under a table; never be distinguished among the waiting women by the name of trusty Mr Tattle, more. You will not be so cruel?

Val. Scandal, have pity on him; he'll yield to any conditions.

Tatt. Any, any terms.

Scand. Come, then, sacrifice half a dozen women of good reputation to me presently. Come, where are you familiar?———And see that they are women of quality, too, the first quality.

Tatt. 'Tis very hard. Won't a baronet's lady pass?

Scand. No, nothing under a right honourable.

Tatt. O inhuman! You don't expect their names?

Scand. No, their titles shall serve.

Tatt. Alas! that is the same thing. Pray, spare me their titles; I'll describe their persons.

Scand. Well, begin, then. But take notice, if you are so ill a painter, that I cannot know the person by your picture of her, you must be condemned, like other bad painters, to write the name at the bottom.

Tatt. Well, first, then——

Enter Mrs FRAIL.

O unfortunate! she's come already. Will you have patience till another time? I'll double the number.

Scand. Well, on that condition——take heed you don't fail me.

Mrs Frail. I shall get a fine reputation, by coming to see fellows in a morning! Scandal, you devil, are you here, too? Oh, Mr Tattle, every thing is safe with you, we know.

Scand. Tattle!

Tatt. Mum——O madam, you do me too much honour.

Val. Well, lady Galloper, how does Angelica?

Mrs Frail. Angelica? Manners!

Val. What, you will allow an absent lover—

Mrs Frail. No, I'll allow a lover present with his mistress to be particular——but otherwise, I think his passion ought to give place to his manners.

Val. But what if he has more passion than manners?

Mrs Frail. Then let him marry, and reform.

Val. Marriage, indeed, may qualify the fury of his passion; but it very rarely mends a man's manners.

Mrs Frail. You are the most mistaken in the world; there is no creature perfectly civil, but a husband: for in a little time he grows only rude to his wife; and that is the highest good-breeding, for it begets his civility to other people.——Well, I'll tell you news; but, I suppose, you heard your brother Benjamin is landed. And my brother Foresight's daughter is come out of the country—I assure you, there's a match talked of by the old people. Well, if he be but as great a sea-beast, as she is a land-monster, we shall have a most amphibious breed—the progeny will be all otters: he has been bred at sea, and she has never been out of the country.

Val. Pox take them! their conjunction bodes me no good, I'm sure.

Mrs Frail. Now you talk of conjunction, my brother Foresight has cast both their nativities, and prognosticates an admiral and an eminent justice of the peace to be the issue-male of their two bodies. 'Tis the most superstitious old fool! He would have persuaded me, that this was an unlucky day, and would not let me come abroad: but I invented a dream, and sent him to Artemidorus for interpretation, and so stole out to see you. Well, and what will you give me now? Come, I must have something.

Val. Step into the next room, and I'll give you something.

Scand. Aye, we'll all give you something.

Mrs Frail. Well, what will you give me?

Val. Mine's a secret.

Mrs Frail. I thought you would give me something that would be a trouble to you to keep.

Val. And Scandal shall give you a good name.

Mrs Frail. That's more than he has for himself. And what will you give me, Mr Tattle?

Tatt. I? my soul, madam.

Mrs Frail. Pooh! no, I thank you. I have enough to do to take care of my own. Well: but I'll come and see you one of these mornings: I hear you have a great many pictures.

Tatt. I have a pretty good collection, at your service; some originals.

Scand. Hang him, he has nothing but the Seasons and the Twelve Cæsars, paltry copies; and the Five Senses, as ill represented as they are in himself: and he himself is the only original you will see there.

Mrs Frail. Ay, but I hear he has a closet of beauties.

Scand. Yes, all that have done him favours, if you will believe him.

Mrs Frail. Ay, let me see those, Mr Tattle.

Tatt. Oh, madam, those are sacred to love and contemplation. No man but the painter and myself was ever blest with the sight.

Mrs Frail. Well, but a woman—

Tatt. Nor woman, till she consented to have her picture there, too—for then she is obliged to keep the secret.

Scand. No, no! come to me, if you'd see pictures.

Mrs Frail. You?

Scand. Yes, faith, I can shew you your own picture, and most of your acquaintance, to the life, and as like as Kneller's.

Mrs Frail. O lying creature!—Valentine, does not he lie?—I can't believe a word he says.

Val. No, indeed, he speaks truth now: for, as Tattle has pictures of all that have granted him favours, he has the pictures of all that have refused him—if satires, descriptions, characters, and lampoons, are pictures.

Scand. Yes, mine are most in black and white—and yet there are some set out in their true colours, both men and women. I can shew you pride, folly, affectation, wantonness, inconstancy, covetousness, dissimulation, malice, and ignorance, all in one piece. Then I can shew you lying, foppery, vanity, cowardice, bragging, and ugliness, in another piece: and yet one of these is a celebrated beauty, and t'other a professed beau. I have paintings too, some pleasant enough.

Mrs Frail. Come, let's hear them.

Scand. Why, I have a beau in bagnio, cupping for a complexion, and sweating for a shape.

Mrs Frail. So!

Scand. Then I have a lady burning brandy, in a cellar, with a hackney coachman.

Mrs Frail. O devil! Well, but that story is not true.

Scand. I have some hieroglyphics, too. I have a lawyer, with a hundred hands, two heads, and but one face; a divine, with two faces, and one head. And I have a soldier, with his brains in his belly, and his heart where his head should be.

Mrs Frail. And no head?

Scand. No head.

Mrs Frail. Pooh, this is all invention. Have you never a poet?

Scand. Yes, I have a poet, weighing words, and selling praise for praise: and a critic picking his pocket. I have another large piece, too, representing a school; where there are huge-proportioned critics, with long wigs, laced coats, Steinkirk-cravats, and terrible faces; with catcalls in their hands, and horn-books about their necks. I have many more of this kind, very well painted, as you shall see.

Mrs Frail. Well, I'll come, if it be but to disprove you.

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, here's the steward again from your father.

Val. I'll come to him. Will you give me leave? I'll wait on you again presently.

Mrs Frail. No, I'll be gone. Come, who squires me to the Exchange? I must call on my sister Foresight there.

Scand. I will: I have a mind to your sister.

Mrs Frail. Civil!

Tatt. I will; because I have a tender for your ladyship.

Mrs Frail. That's somewhat the better reason, to my opinion

Scand. Well, if Tattle entertains you, I have the better opportunity to engage your sister.

Val. Tell Angelica, I am about making hard conditions, to come abroad, and be at liberty to see her.

Scand. I'll give an account of you and your proceedings. If indiscretion be a sign of love, you are the most a lover of any body that I know. You fancy that parting with your estate will help you to your mistress—In my mind, he is a thoughtless adventurer—

Who hopes to purchase wealth by selling land,
Or win a mistress with a losing hand.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A room in* FORESIGHT'S *house.*

Enter FORESIGHT *and Servant.*

Fore. HEY-DAY! What! are all the women of my family abroad? Is not my wife come home? nor my sister? nor my daughter?

Ser. No, sir.

Fore. Mercy on us! what can be the meaning of it? Sure the moon is in all her fortitudes! Is my niece Angelica at home?

Ser. Yes, sir.

Fore. I believe you lie, sir.

Ser. Sir?

Fore. I say, you lie, sir. It is impossible that any thing should be as I would have it; for I was born, sir, when the crab was ascending; and all my affairs go backward.

Ser. I can't tell, indeed, sir.

Fore. No, I know you can't, sir. But I can tell, and foretell, sir.

Enter NURSE.

Nurse, where's your young mistress?

Nurse. Wee'st heart! I know not; they're none of them come home yet. Poor child, I warrant she's fond of seeing the town!——Marry, pray Heaven they have given her any dinner! Good lack-a-day, ha, ha, ha! O strange! I'll vow and swear now, ha, ha, ha! marry, and did you ever see the like?

Fore. Why, how now, what's the matter?

Nurse. Pray Heaven send your worship good luck! marry, and amen, with all my heart! for you have put on one stocking with the wrong side outward.

Fore. Ha, how? Faith and troth, I'm glad of it; and so I have; that may be good luck in troth; in troth it may, very good luck: nay, I have had some omens. I got out of bed backwards, too, this morning, without premeditation; pretty good that, too. But then, I stumbled coming down stairs, and met a weasel; bad omens those! Some bad, some good: our lives are chequered; mirth and sorrow, want and plenty, night and day, make up our time. But, in troth, I am pleased at my stocking—very well pleased at my stocking—Oh, here's my niece!—Sirrah, go, tell sir Sampson Legend I'll wait on him, if he's at leisure.—'Tis now three o'clock; a very good hour for business: Mercury governs this hour. [*Exit Servant.*

Enter ANGELICA.

Ang. Is it not a good hour for pleasure, too, uncle? Pray, lend me your coach; mine's out of order.

Fore. What! would you be gadding, too? Sure all females are mad to-day! It is of evil portent, and bodes mischief to the master of a family. I remember an old prophecy, written by Messahalah the Arabian, and thus translated by a reverend Buckinghamshire bard:

'When housewives all the house forsake,
'And leave good-men to brew and bake;
'Withouten guile, then be it said,
'That house doth stand upon its head;
'And when the head is set in ground,
'No mar'l, if it be fruitful found.'

Fruitful! the head fruitful! that bodes horns; the fruit of the head is horns. Dear niece, stay at home—for, by the head of the house, is meant the husband; the prophecy needs no explanation.

Ang. Well, but I can neither make you a cuckold, uncle, by going abroad; nor secure you from being one, by staying at home.

Fore. Yes, yes; while there's one woman left, the prophecy is not in full force.

Ang. But my inclinations are in force. I have a mind to go abroad: and, if you won't lend me your coach, I'll take a hackney, or a chair, and leave you to erect a scheme, and find who's in conjunction with your wife. Why don't you keep her at home, if you're jealous of her, when she's abroad? You know my aunt is a little retrograde (as you call it) in her nature. Uncle, I'm afraid you are not lord of the ascendant! ha, ha, ha!

Fore. Well, jill-flirt, you are very pert—and always ridiculing that celestial science.

Ang. Nay, uncle, don't be angry.—If you are, I'll reap up all your false prophecies, ridiculous dreams, and idle divinations. I'll swear, you are a nuisance to the neighbourhood.—What a bustle did you keep against the last invisible eclipse, laying in provision, as it were for a siege! What a world of fire and candle, matches and tinder-boxes, did you purchase! One would have thought we were ever after to live under ground; or at least make a voyage to Greenland, to inhabit there all the dark season.

Fore. Why, you malapert slut!

Ang. Will you lend me your coach? or I'll go on.—Nay, I'll declare how you prophesied popery was coming, only because the butler had mislaid some of the apostle spoons, and thought they were lost. Away went religion and spoon-meat together!—Indeed, uncle, I'll indite you for a wizard.

Fore. How, hussy! was there ever such a provoking minx?

Nurse. O merciful father, how she talks!

Ang. Yes, I can make oath of your unlawful midnight practices; you, and the old nurse there.

Nurse. Marry, Heaven defend!—I at midnight practices!—O Lord, what's here to do?—I in unlawful doings with my master's worship!—Why, did you ever hear the like now?—Sir, did ever I do any thing of your midnight concerns—

but warm your bed, and tuck you up, and set the candle and your tobacco-box, and now and then rub the soles of your feet?—O Lord, I!---

Ang. Yes, I saw you together, through the keyhole of the closet, one night, like Saul and the witch of Endor, turning the sieve and sheers, and pricking your thumbs, to write poor innocent servants' names in blood, about a little nutmeg-grater, which she had forgot in the candle-cup.—Nay, I know something worse, if I would speak of it!

Fore. I defy you, hussy; but I'll remember this. I'll be revenged on you, cockatrice; I'll hamper you—You have your fortune in your own hands—but I'll find a way to make your lover, your prodigal spendthrift gallant, Valentine, pay for all, I will.

Ang. Will you? I care not; but all shall out then.

Fore. I will have patience, since it is the will of the stars I should be thus tormented—this is the effect of the malicious conjunctions and oppositions in the third house of my nativity; there the curse of kindred was foretold.—But I will have my doors locked up—I'll punish you; not a man shall enter my house.

Ang. Do, uncle, lock them up quickly, before my aunt comes home—you'll have a letter for alimony to-morrow morning!---But let me be gone first; and then let no mankind come near the house: but converse with spirits and the celestial signs, the bull, and the ram, and the goat. Bless me, there are a great many horned beasts among the twelve signs, uncle! But cuckolds go to Heaven!

Fore. But there's but one virgin among the twelve signs, spit-fire!—but one virgin!

Ang. Nor there had not been that one, if she had had to do with any thing but astrologers, uncle! That makes my aunt go abroad.

Fore. How! how! is that the reason? Come, you know something; tell me, and I'll forgive you; do, good niece.—Come, you shall have my coach and horses—faith and troth, you shall.—Does my wife complain! Come, I know women tell one another—She is young and sanguine, has a wanton hazel eye, and was born under Gemini, which may incline her to society; she has a mole upon her lip, with a moist palm.

Ang. Ha, ha, ha!

Fore. Do you laugh?—Well, gentlewoman, I'll—But come, be a good girl, don't perplex your poor uncle! Tell me—won't you speak? Odd, I'll--

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir Sampson is coming down, to wait upon you, sir. [*Exit Servant.*

Ang. Good by'e, uncle. Call me a chair. I'll find out my aunt, and tell her she must not come home. [*Exit* ANGELICA.

Fore. I am so perplexed and vexed, I am not fit to receive him; I shall scarce recover myself before the hour be past. Go, nurse; tell sir Sampson, I'm ready to wait on him.

Nurse. Yes, sir. [*Exit* NURSE.

Fore. Well—why, if I was born to be a cuckold, there's no more to be said!—He is here already.

Enter SIR SAMPSON LEGEND *with a paper.*

Sir Sam. Nor no more to be done, old boy; that is plain—here it is, I have it in my hand, old Ptolemy; I'll make the ungracious prodigal know who begat him; I will, old Nostrodamus. What! I warrant, my son thought nothing belonged to a father, but forgiveness and affection; no authority, no correction, no arbitrary power—nothing to be done, but for him to offend, and me to pardon! I warrant you, if he danced till doomsday, he thought I was to pay the piper. Well, but here it is under black and white, *signatum, sigillatum,* and *deliberatum*—that, as soon as my son Benjamin is arrived, he is to make over to him his right of inheritance. Where's my daughter that is to be—ha! old Merlin? Body of me, I'm so glad I'm revenged on this undutiful rogue!

Fore. Odso, let me see; let me see the paper. Ay, faith and troth, here it is, if it will but hold—I wish things were done, and the conveyance made. When was this signed? what hour? Odso, you should have consulted me for the time. Well, but we'll make haste.

Sir Sam. Haste! ay, ay, haste enough; my son Ben will be in town to-night---I have ordered my lawyer to draw up writings of settlement and jointure—all shall be done to-night. No matter for the time; prithee, brother Foresight, leave superstition. Pox o' the time; there's no time but the time present; there's no more to be said of what's past; and all that is to come will happen. If the sun shine by day, and the stars by night—why, we shall know one another's faces without the help of a candle; and that's all the stars are good for.

Fore. How, how, sir Sampon? that all! Give me leave to contradict you, and tell you, you are ignorant.

Sir Sam. I tell you, I am wise: and *sapiens dominabitur astris;* there's Latin for you to prove it, and an argument to confound your ephemeris. Ignorant!—I tell you, I have travelled, old Fercu; and know the globe. I have seen the antipodes, where the sun rises at mid-night, and sets at noonday.

Fore. But I tell you, I have travelled, and travelled in the celestial spheres; know the signs and the planets, and their houses; can judge of motions direct and retrograde, of sextiles, quadrates, trines and oppositions, fiery trigons, and aquatical trigons; know whether life shall be long or short, happy or unhappy; whether diseases are curable or incurable; if journies shall

be prosperous, undertakings successful, or goods stolen recovered: I know—

Sir Sam. I know the length of the emperor of China's foot; have kissed the Great Mogul's slipper; and rid a hunting upon an elephant with the cham of Tartary. Body o' me, I have made a cuckold of a king; and the present majesty of Bantam is the issue of these loins.

Fore. I know when travellers lie or speak truth, when they don't know it themselves.

Sir Sam. I have known an astrologer made a cuckold in the twinkling of a star; and seen a conjuror, that could not keep the devil out of his wife's circle.

Fore. What, does he twit me with my wife, too? I must be better informed of this. [*Aside.*] Do you mean my wife, sir Sampson? Though you made a cuckold of the king of Bantam, yet, by the body of the sun—

Sir Sam. By the horns of the moon, you would say, brother Capricorn.

Fore. Capricorn in your teeth, thou modern Mandeville! Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude! Take back your paper of inheritance; send your son to sea again. I'll wed my daughter to an Egyptian mummy, ere she shall incorporate with a contemner of sciences, and a defamer of virtue.

Sir Sam. Body o' me, I have gone too far—I must not provoke honest Albumazar.—An Egyptian mummy is an illustrious creature, my trusty hieroglyphic; and may have significations of futurity about him. Odsbud, I would my son were an Egyptian mummy for thy sake. What, thou art not angry for a jest, my good Haly?—I reverence the sun, moon, and stars, with all my heart. What! I'll make thee a present of a mummy. Now, I think on't, body o' me, I have a shoulder of an Egyptian king, that I purloined from one of the pyramids, powdered with hieroglyphics; thou shalt have it brought home to thy house, and make an entertainment for all the Philomaths, and students in physic and astrology, in and about London.

Fore. But what do you know of my wife, sir Sampson?

Sir Sam. Thy wife is a constellation of virtues; she is the moon, and thou art the man in the moon; nay, she is more illustrious than the moon; for she has her chastity, without her incontinency: 'sbud, I was but in jest.

Enter JEREMY.

Sir Sam. How now? who sent for you, ha? what would you have?

Fore. Nay, if you were but in jest!—Who's that fellow? I don't like his physiognomy.

Sir Sam. [*To* JEREMY.] My son, sir? what son, sir? my son Benjamin, ha!

Jer. No, sir; Mr Valentine, my master;—it is the first time he has been abroad, since his confinement, and he comes to pay his duty to you.

Sir Sam. Well, sir.

Enter VALENTINE.

Jer. He is here, sir.

Val. Your blessing, sir!

Sir Sam. You've had it already, sir; I think I sent it you to-day in a bill of four thousand pounds. A great deal of money, brother Foresight!

Fore. Ay, indeed, sir Sampson, a great deal of money for a young man; I wonder what he can do with it!

Sir Sam. Body o' me, so do I. Hark ye, Valentine, if there be too much, refund the superfluity; dost hear, boy?

Val. Superfluity, sir! it will scarce pay my debts. I hope you will have more indulgence, than to oblige me to those hard conditions, which my necessity signed to.

Sir Sam. Sir! how! I beseech you, what were you pleased to intimate, concerning indulgence?

Val. Why, sir, that you would not go to the extremity of the conditions, but release me at least from some part.

Sir Sam. O, sir, I understand you—that's all, ha?

Val. Yes, sir, all that I presume to ask—But what you, out of fatherly fondness, will be pleased to add, will be doubly welcome.

Sir Sam. No doubt of it, sweet sir; but your filial piety and my fatherly fondness would fit like two tallies—Here's a rogue, brother Foresight, makes a bargain under hand and seal in the morning, and would be released from it in the afternoon: here's a rogue, dog; here's conscience and honesty! This is your wit now, this is the morality of your wit! You are a wit, and have been a beau, and may be a—Why, sirrah, is it not here under hand and seal?——Can you deny it?

Val. Sir, I don't deny it.

Sir Sam. Sirrah, you'll be hanged; I shall live to see you go up Holborn-hill—Has he not a rogue's face?——Speak, brother; you understand physiognomy; a hanging look to me—of all my boys the most unlike me. He has a damned Tyburn face, without the benefit of the clergy.

Fore. Hum!—truly, I don't care to discourage a young man—he has a violent death in his face; but I hope no danger of hanging.

Val. Sir, is this usage for your son?—For that old weather-headed fool, I know how to laugh at him; but you, sir———

Sir Sam. You, sir! and you, sir!—Why, who are you, sir?

Val. Your son, sir.

Sir Sam. That's more than I know, sir: and I believe not.

Val. Faith, I hope not.

Sir Sam. What! would you have your mother a whore? Did you ever hear the like? did you ever hear the like? body o'me—

Val. I would have an excuse for your barbarity and unnatural usage.

Sir Sam. Excuse?—Impudence! Why, sirrah, mayn't I do what I please? are not you my slave? did not I beget you? and might not I have chosen whether I would have begot you or no? Oons, who are you? whence came you? what brought you into the world? how came you here, sir? here, to stand here, upon those two legs, and look erect with that audacious face, hah? Answer me that. Did you come a volunteer into the world? or did I, with the lawful authority of a parent, press you to the service?

Val. I know no more why I came, than you do why you called me. But here I am; and if you don't mean to provide for me, I desire you would leave me as you found me.

Sir Sam. With all my heart. Come, uncase, strip, and go naked out of the world as you came into it.

Val. My clothes are soon put off—but you must also divest me of my reason, thought, passions, inclinations, affections, appetites, senses, and the huge train of attendants, that you begot along with me.

Sir Sam. Body o'me, what a many-headed monster have I propagated!

Val. I am, of myself, a plain, easy, simple creature, and to be kept at small expence: but the retinue, that you gave me, are craving and invincible; they are so many devils, that you have raised, and will have employment.

Sir Sam. Oons! what had I to do to get children?——can't a private man be born without all these followers?——Why, nothing under an emperor should be born with appetites—why, at this rate, a fellow, that has but a groat in his pocket, may have a stomach capable of a ten shilling ordinary.

Jer. Nay, that's as clear as the sun; I'll make oath of it before any justice in Middlesex.

Sir Sam. Here's a cormorant, too!——'Sheart, this fellow was not born with you?—I did not beget him, did I?

Jer. By the provision that's made for me, you might have begot me, too.—Nay, and to tell your worship another truth, I believe you did; for I find I was born with those same whoreson appetites, too, that my master speaks of.

Sir Sam. Why, look you there now!——I'll maintain it, that by the rule of right reason, this fellow ought to have been born without a palate.—'Sheart, what should he do with a distinguishing taste?—I warrant now, he'd rather eat a pheasant, than a piece of poor John—and smell, now; why I warrant he can smell, and loves perfumes above a stink—why there's it; and music—don't you love music, scoundrel?

Jer. Yes, I have a reasonable good ear, sir, as to jiggs, and country dances, and the like; I don't much matter your solos or sonatas; they give me the spleen.

Sir Sam. The spleen? ha, ha, ha! a pox confound you!—Solos or sonatas? Oons, whose son are you? how were you engendered, muckworm?

Jer. I am, by my father, the son of a chairman; my mother sold oysters in winter, and cucumbers in summer: and I came up stairs into the world; for I was born in a cellar.

Fore. By your looks you shall go up stairs out of the world too, friend.

Sir Sam. And if this rogue were anatomized now, and dissected, he has h s vessels of digestion and concoction, and so forth, large enough for the inside of a cardinal; this son of a cucumber!—These things are unaccountable and unreasonable.—Body o'me, why was I not a bear, that my cubs might have lived upon sucking their paws? Nature has been provident only to bears and spiders: the one has its nutriment in its own hands; and the other spins its habitation out of its own entrails.

Val. Fortune was provident enough to supply all the necessities of my nature, if I had my right inheritance.

Sir Sam. Again! Oons, han't you four thousand pounds?—If I had it again I would not give thee a groat.—What, wouldst thou have me turn pelican, and feed thee out of my own vitals——Odsheart, live by your wits——you were always fond of the wits.—Now let's see if you have wit enough to keep yourself.—Your brother will be in town to-night, or to-morrow morning; then look you perform covenants, and so your friend and servant.—Come, brother Foresight.

[*Exeunt* SIR SAMPSON *and* FORESIGHT.

Jer. I told you what your visit would come to.

Val. 'Tis as much as I expected—I did not come to see him: I came to see Angelica; but since she was gone abroad, it was easily turned another way, and at least looked well on my side. What's here? Mrs Foresight and Mrs Frail! They are earnest—I'll avoid them.—Come this way, and go and inquire when Angelica will return. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MRS FORESIGHT *and* MRS FRAIL.

Mrs Frail. What have you to do to watch me? 'Slife, I'll do what I please.

Mrs Fore. You will?

Mrs Frail. Yes, marry, will I. A great piece of business to go to Covent-garden, to take a turn in a hackney-coach with one's friend!

Mrs Fore. Nay, two or three turns, I'll take my oath.

Mrs Frail. Well, what if I took twenty! I warrant, if you had been there, it had only been innocent recreation! Lord, where's the comfort

of this life, if we can't have the happiness of conversing where we like?

Mrs Fore. But can't you converse at home? I own it, I think there's no happines like conversing with an agreeable man; I don't quarrel at that, nor I don't think but your conversation was very innocent. But the place is public; and to be seen with a man in a hackney-coach, is scandalous. What if any body else should have seen you alight, as I did? How can any body be happy, while they are in perpetual fear of being seen and censured? Besides, it would not only reflect upon you, sister, but on me.

Mrs Frail. Pooh, here's a clutter! Why should it reflect upon you? I don't doubt but you have thought yourself happy in a hackney-coach before now! If I had gone to Knightsbridge, or to Chelsea, or to Spring-garden, or to Barn-elms, with a man alone—something might have been said.

Mrs Fore. Why, was I ever in any of those places? What do you mean, sister?

Mrs Frail. Was I? What do you mean?

Mrs Fore. You have been at a worse place.

Mrs Frail. I at a worse place, and with a man?

Mrs Fore. I suppose you would not go alone to the World's-end.

Mrs Frail. The World's-end! What, do you mean to banter me?

Mrs Fore. Poor innocent! you don't know that there is a place called the World's-end? I'll swear, you can keep your countenance purely; you'd make an admirable player!

Mrs Frail. I'll swear you have a great deal of confidence, and, in my mind, too much for the stage.

Mrs Fore. Very well, that will appear who has most. You never were at the World's-end?

Mrs Frail. No.

Mrs Fore. You deny it positively to my face?

Mrs Frail. Your face! what's your face?

Mrs Fore. No matter for that; it's as good a face as yours.

Mrs Frail. Not by a dozen years wearing. But I do deny it positively to your face, then.

Mrs Fore. I'll allow you now to find fault with my face; for I'll swear your impudence has put me out of countenance. But look you here now,—where did you lose this gold bodkin? Oh, sister, sister!

Mrs Frail. My bodkin!

Mrs Fore. Nay, 'tis yours; look at it.

Mrs Frail. Well, if you go that, where did you find this bodkin?—Oh, sister, sister! sister every way!

Mrs Fore. O, devil on't! that I could not discover, without betraying myself! [*Aside.*

Mrs Frail. I have heard gentlemen say, sister, that one should take great care, when one makes a thrust in fencing, not to lay open one's self.

Mrs Fore. It is very true, sister. Well, since all's out, and, as you say, since we are both wounded, let us do, what is often done in duels, take care of one another, and grow better friends than before.

Mrs Frail. With all my heart. Well, give me your hand, in token of sisterly secrecy and affection.

Mrs Fore. Here it is, with all my heart.

Mrs Frail. Well, as an earnest of friendship and confidence, I'll acquaint you with a design that I have. I'm afraid the world have observed us more than we have observed one another. You have a rich husband, and are provided for: I am at a loss, and have no great stock either of fortune or reputation, and therefore must look sharply about me. Sir Sampson has a son, that is expected to-night; and, by the account I have heard of his education, can be no conjurer. The estate, you know, is to be made over to him. Now, if I could wheedle him, sister, ha? you understand me?

Mrs Fore. I do; and will help you, to the utmost of my power. And I can tell you one thing that falls out luckily enough; my awkward daughter-in-law, who, you know, is designed to be his wife, is grown fond of Mr Tattle; now, if we can improve that, and make her have an aversion for the booby, it may go a great way towards his liking you. Here they come together; and let us contrive some way or other to leave them together.

Enter TATTLE *and* MISS PRUE.

Miss Prue. Mother, mother, mother! look you here?

Mrs Fore. Fie, fie, miss, how you bawl! Besides, I have told you, you must not call me mother.

Miss Prue. What must I call you, then? are you not my father's wife?

Mrs Fore. Madam; you must say madam. By my soul, I shall fancy myself old indeed, to have this great girl call me mother. Well, but, miss, what are you so overjoyed at?

Miss Prue. Look you here, madam, then, what Mr Tattle has given me. Look you here, cousin; here's a snuff-box; nay, there's snuff in't—here, will you have any? Oh good! how sweet it is! Mr Tattle is all over sweet; his peruke is sweet, and his gloves are sweet, and his handkerchief is sweet, pure sweet, sweeter than roses—smell him, mother—madam, I mean. He gave me this ring, for a kiss.

Tatt. O fie, miss! you must not kiss, and tell.

Miss Prue. Yes; I may tell my mother—and he says he'll give me something to make me smell so. Oh, pray, lend me your handkerchief. Smell, cousin; he says, he'll give me something, that will make my smocks smell this way. Is not it pure? It's better than lavender, mun. I'm resolved I won't let nurse put any more lavender among my smocks—ha, cousin?

Mrs Frail. Fie, miss! amongst your linen you must say; you must never say smock.

Miss Prue. Why, it is not bawdy, is it, cousin?

Tatt. Oh, madam! you are too severe upon miss: you must not find fault with her pretty simplicity; it becomes her strangely. Pretty miss, don't let them persuade you out of your innocency!

Mrs Fore. Oh, demn you, toad! I wish you don't persuade her out of her innocency!

Tatt. Who I, madam? O Lord, how can your ladyship have such a thought? sure you don't know me!

Mrs Frail. Ah, devil, sly devil! He's as close, sister, as a confessor. He thinks we don't observe him.

Mrs Fore. A cunning cur! how soon he could find out a fresh harmless creature—and left us, sister, presently.

Tatt. Upon reputation——

Mrs Frail. They're all so, sister, these men; they are as fond of it, as of being first in the fashion, or of seeing a new play the first day. I warrant it would break Mr Tattle's heart, to think that any body else should be before-hand with him!

Tatt. Oh, Lord! I swear I would not for the world—

Mrs Frail. O, hang you; who'll believe you? You'll be hanged before you'd confess—we know you—she's very pretty! Lord, what pure red and white! she looks so wholesome; ne'er stir, I don't know, but I fancy if I were a man—

Miss Prue. How you love to jeer one, cousin.

Mrs Fore. Hark'ee, sister—by my soul, the girl is spoiled already—d'ye think she'll ever endure a great lubberly tarpawlin? Gad, I warrant you she won't let him come near her, after Mr Tattle.

Mrs Frail. On my soul, I'm afraid not—eh! filthy creature, that smells all of pitch and tar! Devil take you, you confounded toad—why did you see her before she was married?

Mrs Fore. Nay, why did we let him? My husband will hang us; he'll think we brought them acquainted.

Mrs Frail. Come, faith, let us be gone; if my brother Foresight should find us with them, he'd think so, sure enough.

Mrs Fore. So he would; but then the leaving them together is as bad; and he's such a sly devil, he'll never miss an opportunity.

Mrs Frail. I don't care; I won't be seen in it.

Mrs Fore. Well, if you should, Mr Tattle, you'll have a world to answer for: remember, I wash my hands of it; I'm thoroughly innocent.

[*Exeunt* MRS FRAIL *and* MRS FORESIGHT.

Miss Prue. What makes them go away, Mr Tattle?—What do they mean, do you know?

Tatt. Yes, my dear—I think I can guess—but hang me if I know the reason of it.

Miss Prue. Come, must not we go, too?

Tatt. No, no; they don't mean that.

Miss Prue. No! what then? What shall you and I do together?

Tatt. I must make love to you, pretty miss; will you let me make love to you?

Miss Prue. Yes, if you please.

Tatt. Frank, egad, at least. What a pox does Mrs Foresight mean by this civility? Is it to make a fool of me? or does she leave us together out of good morality, and do as she would be done by? Egad, I'll understand it so. [*Aside.*

Miss Prue. Well, and how will you make love to me?—Come, I long to have you begin. Must I make love, too? You must tell me how.

Tatt. You must let me speak, miss; you must not speak first. I must ask you questions, and you must answer.

Miss Prue. What, is it like the catechism?—Come, then, ask me.

Tatt. D'ye think you can love me?

Miss Prue. Yes.

Tatt. Pooh, pox, you must not say yes already. I shan't care a farthing for you, then, in a twinkling.

Miss Prue. What must I say then?

Tatt. Why, you must say, no; or, believe not; or, you can't tell.

Miss Prue. Why, must I tell a lie, then?

Tatt. Yes, if you'd be well-bred. All well-bred persons lie—Besides, you are a woman;—you must never speak what you think: your words must contradict your thoughts; but your actions may contradict your words. So, when I ask you, if you can love me, you must say, no; but you must love me, too. If I tell you you are handsome, you must deny it, and say, I flatter you. But you must think yourself more charming than I speak you—and like me for the beauty which I say you have, as much as if I had it myself. If I ask you to kiss me, you must be angry; but you must not refuse me. If I ask you for more, you must be more angry, but more complying; and as soon as ever I make you say, you'll cry out, you must be sure to hold your tongue.

Miss Prue. O Lord, I swear this is pure!—I like it better than our old-fashioned country way of speaking one's mind. And must not you lie, too?

Tatt. Hum!—Yes; but you must believe I speak truth.

Miss Prue. O Gemini! Well, I always had a great mind to tell lies—but they frighted me, and said it was a sin.

Tatt. Well, my pretty creature, will you make me happy by giving me a kiss?

Miss Prue. No, indeed; I'm angry at you! [*Runs and kisses him.*

Tatt. Hold, hold, that's pretty well—but you should not have given me, but have suffered me to have taken it.

Miss Prue. Well, we'll do't again.

Tatt. With all my heart—Now, then, my little angel! [*Kisses her.*

Miss Prue. Pish!

Tatt. That's right. Again, my charmer!

[*Kisses again.*

Miss Prue. O fie! nay, now I can't abide you.

Tatt. Admirable! That was as well as if you had been born and bred in Covent-garden—— And won't you shew me, pretty miss, where your bed-chamber is?

Miss Prue. No, indeed won't I; but I'll run there, and hide myself from you behind the curtains.

Tatt. I'll follow you.

Miss Prue. Ah, but I will hold the door with both hands, and be angry; and you shall push me down before you come in.

Tatt. No, I'll come in first, and push you down afterwards.

Miss Prue. Will you? then I'll be more angry, and more complying.

Tatt. Then I'll make you cry out.

Miss Prue. O but you shan't, for I'll hold my tongue.

Tatt. Oh, my dear apt scholar!

Miss Prue. Well, now I'll run, and make more haste than you.

Tatt. You shall not fly so fast as I'll pursue.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter Nurse.

Miss, miss, miss Prue!—Mercy on me, marry, and amen!—Why, what's become of the child?—Why, miss, miss Foresight!—Sure she has locked herself up in her chamber, and gone to sleep, or to prayers!—Miss, miss!—I hear her. Come to your father, child. Open the door—Open the door, miss. I hear you cry husht—O Lord, who's there? [*Peeps.*]—What's here to do?—O the Father! a man with her!—Why, miss, I say; God's my life! here's fine doings towards!—O Lord, we're all undone!—O you young harlotry!—[*Knocks.*]—Ods my life, won't you open the door? I'll come in the back way.

[*Exit.*

Enter TATTLE *and* MISS PRUE.

Miss Prue. O Lord, she's coming—and she'll tell my father. What shall I do now?

Tatt. Pox take her! if she had staid two minutes longer, I should have wished for her coming.

Miss Prue. O dear, what shall I say? tell me, Mr Tattle, tell me a lie.

Tatt. There's no occasion for a lie: I could never tell a lie to no purpose—But, since we have done nothing, we must say nothing, I think. I hear her—I'll leave you together, and come off as you can.

[*Thrusts her in, and shuts the door.*

Enter VALENTINE, SCANDAL, *and* ANGELICA.

Ang. You can't accuse me of inconstancy; I never told you that I loved you.

Val. But I can accuse you of uncertainty, for not telling me whether you did or not.

Ang. You mistake indifference for uncertainty; I never had concern enough to ask myself the question.

Scand. Nor good-nature enough to answer him that did ask you: I'll say that for you, madam.

Ang. What, are you setting up for good nature?

Scand. Only for the affectation of it, as the women do for ill-nature.

Ang. Persuade your friend that it is all affectation.

Scand. I shall receive no benefit from the opinion: for I know no effectual difference between continued affectation and reality.

Enter SIR SAMPSON, MRS FRAIL, MISS PRUE, *and Servant.*

Sir Sam. Is Ben come? Odso, my son Ben come? Odd, I'm glad on't. Where is he? I long to see him. Now, Mrs Frail, you shall see my son Ben. Body o'me, he's the hopes of my family—I ha'nt seen him these three years—I warrant he's grown!—Call him in; bid him make haste—[*Exit Servant.*]—I'm ready to cry for joy.

Mrs Frail. Now, miss, you shall see your husband.

Miss Prue. Pish, he shall be none of my husband. [*Aside to* FRAIL.

Mrs Frail. Hush! Well, he shant! leave that to me—I'll beckon Mr Tattle to us.

Ang. Won't you stay and see your brother?

Val. We are the twin stars, and cannot shine in one sphere; when he rises, I must set. Besides, if I should stay, I don't know but my father, in good-nature, may press me to the immediate signing the deed of conveyance of my estate; and I'll defer it as long as I can. Well, you'll come to a resolution?

Ang. I cannot. Resolution must come to me, or I shall never have one.

Scand. Come, Valentine, I'll go with you; I have something in my head to communicate to you.

[*Exeunt* SCANDAL *and* VALENTINE.

Sir Samp. What! is my son Valentine gone? What! is he sneaked off, and would not see his brother? There's an unnatural whelp! there's an ill-natured dog! What! were you here, too, madam, and could not keep him? could neither

love, nor duty, nor natural affection, oblige him? Odsbud, madam, have no more to say to him; he is not worth your consideration. The rogue has not a drachm of generous love about him—all interest, all interest! He's an undone scoundrel, and courts your estate. Body o'me, he does not care a doit for your person.

Ang. I am pretty even with him, sir Sampson; for, if ever I could have liked any thing in him, it should have been his estate, too. But, since that's gone, the bait's off, and the naked hook appears.

Sir Sam. Odsbud, well spoken; and you are a wiser woman than I thought you were: for most young women now-a-days are to be tempted with a naked hook.

Ang. If I marry, sir Sampson, I am for a good estate with any man, and for any man with a good estate: therefore, if I were obliged to make a choice, I declare I'd rather have you than your son.

Sir Sam. Faith and troth, you are a wise woman; and I'm glad to hear you say so. I was afraid you were in love with a reprobate. Odd, I was sorry for you with all my heart. Hang him, mongrel! cast him off. You shall see the rogue shew himself, and make love to some desponding Cadua of fourscore for sustenance.—Odd, I love to see a young spendthrift forced to cling to an old woman for support, like ivy round a dead oak—faith, I do. I love to see them hug and cotton together, like down upon a thistle.

Enter BEN *and Servant.*

Ben. Where's father?

Ser. There, sir; his back's toward you. [*Exit.*

Sir Sam. My son Ben! Bless thee, dear boy! Body o' me, thou art heartily welcome.

Ben. Thank you, father: and I'm glad to see you.

Sir Sam. Odsbud, and I'm glad to see thee.—Kiss me, boy; kiss me again and again, dear Ben. [*Kisses him.*

Ben. So, so, enough, father. Mess, I'd rather kiss these gentlewomen.

Sir Sam. And so thou shalt. Mrs Angelica, my son Ben.

Ben. Forsooth, if you please! [*Salutes her.*] Nay, mistress, I'm not for dropping anchor here; about ship, i' faith. [*Kisses* FRAIL.] Nay, and you, too, my little cock-boat! so. [*Kisses Miss. Tatt.* Sir, you're welcome ashore.

Ben. Thank you, thank you, friend.

Sir Sam. Thou hast been many a weary league, Ben, since I saw thee.

Ben. Ey, ey, been? been far enough, and that be all. Well, father, and how do all at home? how does brother Dick, and brother Val?

Sir Sam. Dick! body o'me, Dick has been dead these two years. I writ you word, when you were at Leghorn.

Ben. Mass, that's true: marry, I had forgot. Dick is dead, as you say. Well, and how—I have a many questions to ask you; well, you ben't married again, father, be you?

Sir Sam. No, I intend you shall marry, Ben; I would not marry, for thy sake.

Ben. Nay, what does that signify? An you marry again—why, then, I'll go to sea again; so there's one for t'other, and that be all. Pray, don't let me be your hindrance; e'en marry, a God's name, and the wind sit that way. As for my part, mayhap I have no mind to marry.

Mrs Frail. That would be pity, such a handsome young gentleman!

Ben. Handsome! he, he, he! Nay, forsooth, an you be for joking, I'll joke with you; for I love my jest, an the ship were sinking, as we said at sea. But I'll tell you why I don't much stand towards matrimony. I love to roam from port to port, and from land to land: I could never abide to be port-bound, as we call it. Now a man that is married has, as it were, d'ye see, his feet in the bilboes, and mayhap may'nt get them out again when he would.

Sir Sam. Ben is a wag!

Ben. A man that is married, d'ye see, is no more like another man, than a galley-slave is like one of us free sailors: he is chained to an oar all his life; and mayhap forced to tug a leaky vessel into the bargain.

Sir Sam. A very wag! Ben is a very wag! only a little rough; he wants a little polishing.

Mrs Frail. Not at all; I like his humour mightily: it is plain and honest; I should like such a humour in a husband extremely.

Ben. Say'n you so, forsooth? Marry, and I should like such a handsome gentlewoman for a bed-fellow hugely. How say you, mistress?—would you like a going to sea? Mess, you're a a tight vessel, and well-rigged, an you were but as well manned.

Mrs Frail. I should not doubt that, if you were master of me.

Ben. But I'll tell you one thing, an you come to sea in a high wind, or that lady—you may'nt carry so much sail o'your head—Top and top gallant, by the mess!

Mrs Frail. No? why so?

Ben. Why, an you do, you may run the risk to be overset: and then you'll carry your keels above water—he, he, he!

Ang. I swear, Mr Benjamin is the veriest wag in nature; an absolute sea wit.

Sir Sam. Nay, Ben has parts; but, as I told you before, they want a little polishing. You must not take any thing ill, madam.

Ben. No, I hope the gentlewoman is not angry; I mean all in good part: for, if I give a jest, I'll take a jest; and so, forsooth, you may be as free with me.

Ang. I thank you, sir; I am not at all offended. But, methinks, sir Sampson, you should leave him alone with his mistress. Mr Tattle, we must not hinder lovers.

Tatt. Well, miss, I have your promise.

[*Aside to Miss.*

Sir Sam. Body o'me, madam, you say true — Look you, Ben, this is your mistress. Come, miss, you must not be shame-faced; we'll leave you together.

Miss Prue. I can't abide to be left alone.— Mayn't my cousin stay with me?

Sir Sam. No, no. Come, let's away.

Ben. Look you, father, mayhap the young woman mayn't take a liking to me.

Sir Sam. I warrant thee, boy. Come, come, we'll be gone. I'll venture that.

[*Exeunt* SIR SAMPSON, TATTLE, *and Mrs* FRAIL.

Ben. Come, mistress, will you please to sit down? For, an you stand astern a that'n, we shall never grapple together. Come, I'll hawl a chair; there, an you please to sit, I'll sit by you.

Miss Prue. You need not sit so near one; if you have any thing to say, I can hear you farther off; I an't deaf.

Ben. Why that's true, as you say, nor I an't dumb; I can be heard as far as another. I'll heave off, to please you. [*Sits farther off.*]— An we were a league asunder, I'd undertake to hold discourse with you, an 'twere not a main high wind, indeed, and full in my teeth. Look you, forsooth; I am, as it were, bound for the land of matrimony: 'tis a voyage, d'ye see, that was none of my seeking; I was commanded by father, and if you like it, mayhap I may steer into your harbour. How say you, mistress? The short of the thing is, that if you like me, and I like you, we may chance to swing in a hammock together.

Miss Prue. I don't know what to say to you, nor I don't care to speak with you at all.

Ben. No! I am sorry for that. But, pray, why are you so scornful?

Miss Prue. As long as one must not speak one's mind, one had better not speak at all, I think; and truly I won't tell a lie for the matter.

Ben. Nay, you say true in that; it's but a folly to lie: for to speak one thing, and to think just the contrary way, is, as it were, to look one way, and to row another. Now, for my part, d'ye see, I'm for carrying things above board;— I'm not for keeping any thing under hatches— so that, if you ben't as willing as I, say so, a God's name; there's no harm done. Mayhap, you may be shame-faced; some maidens, though they love a man well enough, yet they don't care to tell'n so to's face. If that's the case, why silence gives consent.

Miss Prue. But I'm sure it is not so, for I'll speak sooner than you should believe that; and I'll speak truth, though one should always tell a lie to a man; and I don't care, let my father do what he will, I'm too big to be whipt; so I'll tell you plainly, I don't like you, nor love you at all; nor never will, that's more. So, there's your answer for you; and don't trouble me no more, you ugly thing.

Ben. Look you, young woman, you may learn to give good words, however. I spoke you fair, d'ye see, and civil. As for your love, or your liking, I don't value it of a rope's end—and mayhap I like you as little as you do me. What I said was in obedience to father. Gad, I fear a whipping no more than you do. But I tell you one thing—if you should give such language at sea, you'd have a cat o' nine tails laid across your shoulders. Flesh! who are you? You heard the other handsome young woman speak civilly to me, of her own accord. Whatever you think of yourself, Gad, I don't think you are any more to compare to her, than a can of small-beer to a bowl of punch.

Miss Prue. Well, and there's a handsome gentleman, and a fine gentleman, and a sweet gentleman, that was here, that loves me, and I love him; and, if he sees you speak to me any more, he'll thrash your jacket for you; he will, you great sea-calf.

Ben. What! do you mean that fair-weather spark that was here just now? Will he thrash my jacket? Let'n—let'n. But an' he comes near me, mayhap I may giv'n a salt eel for's supper, for all that. What does father mean, to leave me alone, as soon as I come home, with such a dirty dowdy? Sea calf! I an't calf enough to lick your chalked face, you cheese-curd, you. Marry thee! 'Oons, I'll marry a Lapland witch as soon, and live upon selling contrary winds, and wrecked vessels.

Miss Prue. I won't be called names, nor I won't be abused thus, so I won't. If I were a man—[*Cries.*]—you durst not talk at this rate—no, you durst not, you stinking tar-barrel.

Enter MRS FORESIGHT *and* MRS FRAIL.

Mrs Fore. They have quarrelled, just as we could wish.

Ben. Tar-barrel! Let your sweetheart there, call me so, if he'll take your part, your Tom Essence, and I'll say something to him—Gad, I'll lace his musk-doublet for him. I'll make him stink; he shall smell more like a weasel than a civet cat, afore I ha' done with 'en.

Mrs Fore. Bless me! what's the matter, miss? What, does she cry? Mr Benjamin, what have you done to her?

Ben. Let her cry: the more she cries, the less she'll—she has been gathering foul weather in her mouth, and now it rains out at her eyes.

Mrs Fore. Come, miss, come along with me; and tell me, poor child.

Mrs Frail. Lord, what shall we do? There's my brother Foresight and sir Sampson coming. Sister, do you take miss down into the parlour, and I'll carry Mr Benjamin into my chamber:

for they must not know that they are fallen out. Come, sir, will you venture yourself with me?

[*Looking kindly on him.*

Ben. Venture? Mess, and that I will, though it were to sea in a storm.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter SIR SAMPSON *and* FORESIGHT.

Sir Sam. I left them together here. What, are they gone? Ben is a brisk boy. he has got her into a corner—father's own son, faith! he'll touzle her, and mouzle her. The rogue's sharp set coming from sea. If he should not stay for saying grace, old Foresight, but fall to without the help of a parson, ha? Odd, if he should, I could not be angry with him; 'twould be but like me, a chip of the old block. Ha! thou art melancholic, old prognostication; as melancholic as if thou hadst spilt the salt, or paired thy nails on a Sunday. Come, cheer up, look about thee: look up, old star-gazer. Now is he poring upon the ground for a crooked pin, or an old horse-nail, with the head towards him.

Fore. Sir Sampson, we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Sir Sam. With all my heart.

Fore. At ten o'clock; punctually at ten.

Sir Sam. To a minute, to a second; thou shalt set thy watch, and the bridegroom shall observe its motions; they shall be married to a minute, go to bed to a minute; and, when the alarm strikes, they shall keep time like the figures of St Dunstan's clock, and *consummatum est* shall ring all over the parish!

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, Mr Scandal desires to speak with you upon earnest business.

Fore. I go to him; sir Sampson, your servant.

[*Exit* FORESIGHT.

Sir Sam. What's the matter, friend?

Ser. Sir, 'tis about your son Valentine; something has appeared to him in a dream, that makes him prophecy.

Enter SCANDAL.

Scand. Sir Sampson, sad news.

Fore. Bless us!

Sir Sam. Why, what's the matter?

Scand. Can't you guess at what ought to afflict you and him, and all of us, more than any thing else?

Sir Sam. Body o' me! I don't know any universal grievance, but a new tax, or the loss of the Canary fleet—unless popery should be landed in the west, or the French fleet were at anchor at Blackwall.

Scand. No! undoubtedly, Mr Foresight knew all this, and might have prevented it.

Fore. 'Tis no earthquake?

Scand. No, not yet; no whirlwind. But we don't know what it may come to—but it has had a consequence already, that touches us all.

Sir Sam. Why, body o' me, out with it.

Scand. Something has appeared to your son Valentine—he's gone to bed upon't, and very ill. He speaks little, yet he says he has a world to say. Asks for his father and the wise Foresight; talks of Raymond Lully, and the ghost of Lilly. He has secrets to impart, I suppose, to you, too. I can get nothing out of him but sighs. He desires he may see you in the morning; but would not be disturbed to-night, because he has some business to do in a dream.

Sir Sam. Hoity toity! what have I to do with his dreams or his divination? body o' me, this is a trick, to defer signing the conveyance. I warrant the devil will tell him in a dream, that he must not part with his estate. But I'll bring him a parson to tell him that the devil's a liar—or, if that won't do, I'll bring a lawyer, that shall outlie the devil; and so I'll try whether my blackguard, or his, shall get the better of the day.

[*Exit* SIR SAMPSON.

Scand. Alas! Mr Foresight, I am afraid all is not right. You are a wise man, and a conscientious man; a searcher into obscurity and futurity; and, if you commit an error, it is with a great deal of consideration, and discretion, and caution.

Fore. Ah, good Mr Scandal!

Scand. Nay, nay, 'tis manifest; I do not flatter you. But sir Sampson is hasty, very hasty—I'm afraid he is not scrupulous enough, Mr Foresight. He has been wicked; and Heaven grant he may mean well in this affair with you! but my mind gives me, these things cannot be wholly insignificant. You are wise, and should not be over-reached: methinks you should not.

Fore. Alas, Mr Scandal—*Humanum est errare!*

Scand. You say true, man will err; mere man will err: but you are something more. There have been wise men; but they were such as you—men who consulted the stars, and were observers of omens. Solomon was wise; but how? by his judgment in astrology. So says Pineda, in his third book, and eighth chapter.

Fore. You are learned, Mr Scandal.

Scand. A trifler—but a lover of art. And the wise men of the east owed their instructions to a star; which is rightly observed by Gregory the Great, in favour of astrology. And Albertus Magnus makes it the most valuable science—because, says he, it teaches us to consider the causation of causes, in the causes of things.

Fore. I protest, I honour you, Mr Scandal. I did not think you had been read in these matters. Few young men are inclined——

Scand. I thank my stars that have inclined me. But I fear this marriage, and making over the estate, this transferring of a rightful inheritance, will bring judgments upon us. I prophecy it; and I would not have the fate of Cassan-

dra, not to be believed. Valentine is disturbed; what can be the cause of that? and sir Sampson is hurried on by an unusual violence—I fear he does not act wholly from himself; and, methinks, he does not look as he used to do.

Fore. He was always of an impetuous nature. But, as to this marriage, I have consulted the stars; and all appearances are prosperous.

Scand. Come, come, Mr Foresight; let not the prospect of worldly lucre carry you beyond your judgment, nor against your conscience. You are not satisfied that you act justly.

Fore. How!

Scand. You are not satisfied, I say. I am loth to discourage you—but it is palpable that you are not satisfied.

Fore. How does it appear, Mr Scandal? I think I am very well satisfied.

Scand. Either you suffer yourself to deceive yourself, or you do not know yourself.

Fore. Pray explain yourself.

Scand. Do you sleep well o' nights?

Fore. Very well.

Scand. Are you certain? you do not look so.

Fore. I am in health, I think.

Scand. So was Valentine this morning; and looked just so.

Fore. How! Am I altered any way? I don't perceive it.

Scand. That may be; but your beard is longer than it was two hours ago.

Fore. Indeed? bless me!

Enter MRS FORESIGHT.

Mrs Fore. Husband, will you go to bed? it's ten o'clock. Mr Scandal, your servant.

Scand. Pox on her, she has interrupted my design—but I must work her into the project. You keep early hours, madam.

Mrs Fore. Mr Foresight is punctual; we sit up after him.

Fore. My dear, pray lend me your glass, your little looking-glass.

Scand. Pray lend it him, madam—I'll tell you the reason—[*She gives him the glass:* SCANDAL *and she whisper*]—my passion for you is grown so violent, that I am no longer master of myself; I was interrupted in the morning, when you had charity enough to give me your attention; and I had hopes of finding another opportunity of explaining myself to you—but was disappointed all this day; and the uneasiness that has attended me ever since, brings me now hither at this unseasonable hour.

Mrs Fore. Was there ever such impudence, to make love to me before my husband's face? I'll swear I'll tell him.

Scand. Do. I'll die a martyr rather than disclaim my passion. But come a little farther this way; and I'll tell you what project I had to get him out of the way, that I might have an opportunity of waiting upon you.

[*Whisper.* FORESIGHT *looking in the glass.*

Fore. I do not see any revolution here. Methinks I look with a serene and benign aspect—pale, a little pale—but the roses of these cheeks have been gathered many years—ha! I do not like that sudden flushing——gone already! hem, hem, hem! faintish. My heart is pretty good; yet it beats: and my pulses, ha! I have none—mercy on me!—hum!—Yes, here they are.—Gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop! hey, whither will they hurry me? now they're gone again—and now I'm faint again; and pale again, and, hem! and my, hem!—breath, and, hem!—grows short; hem! he, he, hem!

Scand. It takes! pursue it, in the name of love and pleasure.

Mrs Fore. How do you do, Mr Foresight?

Fore. Hum, not so well as I thought I was. Lend me your hand.

Scand. Look you there, now. Your lady says your sleep has been unquiet of late.

Fore. Very likely!

Mrs Fore. O, mighty restless! but I was afraid to tell him so. He has been subject to talking and starting.

Scand. And did not use to be so?

Mrs Fore. Never, never; till within these three nights, I cannot say that he has once broken my rest since we have been married.

Fore. I will go to bed.

Scand. Do so, Mr Foresight, and say your prayers—He looks better than he did.

Mrs Fore. Nurse, nurse!

Fore. Do you think so, Scandal?

Scand. Yes, yes; I hope this will be gone by morning: take it in time.

Fore. I hope so.

Enter NURSE.

Mrs Fore. Nurse, your master is not well; put him to bed.

Scand. I hope you will be able to see Valentine in the morning. You had best take a little diacodium and cowslip water, and lie upon your back; may be you may dream.

Fore. I thank you, Mr Scandal; I will. Nurse, let me have a watch-light, and lay the Crumbs of Comfort by me.

Nurse. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Fore. And—hem, hem! I am very faint.

Scand. No, no, you look much better.

Fore. Do I? And I hope, neither the lord of my ascendant, nor the moon, will be combust; and then, I may do well.

Scand. I hope so—Leave that to me; I will erect a scheme; and, I hope I shall find both Sol and Venus in the sixth house.

Fore. I thank you, Mr Scandal; indeed, that

would be a great comfort to me. Hem, Hem! good night. [*Exit* FORE.

Scand. Good night, good Mr Foresight. And I hope Mars and Venus will be in conjunction—while your wife and I are together.

Mrs Fore. Well: and what use do you hope to make of this project? You don't think that you are ever like to succeed in your design upon me?

Scand. Yes, faith, I do; I have a better opinion both of you and myself, than to despair.

Mrs Fore. Did you ever hear such a toad?—Hark'ye, devil: do you think any woman honest?

Scand. Yes, several, very honest—they'll cheat a little at cards, sometimes; but that's nothing.

Mrs Fore. Pshaw! but virtuous, I mean?

Scand. Yes, faith, I believe some women are virtuous, too; but 'tis, as I believe some men are valiant, through fear—For why should a man court danger, or a woman shun pleasure?

Mrs. Fore. I'll swear you're impudent.

Scand. I'll swear you're handsome.

Mrs Fore. Pish, you'd tell me so, though you did not think so.

Scand. And you'd think so, though I did not tell you so: and now I think we know one another pretty well.

Mrs Fore. O Lord! who's here?

Enter MRS FRAIL *and* BEN.

Ben. Mess, I love to speak my mind—Father has nothing to do with me. Nay, I can't say that neither; he has something to do with me; but what does that signify? If so be, that I ben't minded to be steered by him, 'tis as thof he should strive against wind and tide.

Mrs Frail. Ay, but, my dear, we must keep it secret, till the estate be settled; for, you know, marrying without an estate is like sailing in a ship without ballast.

Ben. He, he, he! why that's true; just so for all the world, it is as like as two cable ropes.

Mrs Frail. And though I have a good portion, you know one would not venture all in one bottom.

Ben. Why, that's true again: for, mayhap, one bottom may spring a leak. You have hit it, indeed; mess, you've nicked the channel.

Mrs Frail. Well, but if you should forsake me after all, you'd break my heart.

Ben. Break your heart? I'd rather the Marygold should break her cable in a storm, as well as I love her. Flesh, you don't think I'm false-hearted, like a landman? A sailor would be honest, thof, mayhap, he has never a penny of money in his pocket. Mayhap, I may not have so fair a face as a citizen or courtier; but, for all that, I've as good blood in my veins, and a heart as sound as a biscuit.

Mrs Frail. And will you love me always?

Ben. Nay, an I love once, I'll stick like pitch; I'll tell you that. Come, I'll sing you a song of a sailor.

Mrs Frail. Hold, there's my sister; I'll call her to hear it. If it won't interrupt you, Mr Ben will entertain you with a song.

Ben. The song was made upon one of our ship's-crew's wife; our boatswain made the song; mayhap you know her, sir. Before she married, she was called Buxom Joan of Deptford.

Scand. I have heard of her. [BEN *sings.*

BALLAD.

A soldier and a sailor,
A tinker and a tailor,
Had once a doubtful strife, sir,
To make a maid a wife, sir,
Whose name was Buxom Joan.
For now the time was ended,
When she no more intended
To lick her lips at men, sir,
And gnaw the sheets in vain, sir,
And lie o'nights alone.

The soldier swore like thunder,
He loved her more than plunder;
And shewed her many a scar, sir,
That he had brought from far, sir,
With fighting for her sake.
The tailor thought to please her,
With offering her his measure.
The tinker, too, with mettle,
Said he could mend her kettle,
And stop up every leak.

But while these three were prating,
The sailor slily waiting,
Thought if it came about, sir,
That they should all fall out, sir,
He then might play his part:
And just even as he meant, sir,
To loggerheads they went, sir,
And then he let fly at her,
A shot 'twixt wind and water,
That won the fair maid's heart.

Ben. Thus we live at sea; eat biscuit, and drink flip; put on a clean shirt once a quarter—come home, and lie with our landladies once a year; get rid of a little money, and then put off with the next fair wind. How d'ye like us?

Mrs Frail. Oh, you are the happiest, merriest men alive!

Mrs Fore. We're beholden to Mr Benjamin for this entertainment I believe it is late.

Ben. Why, forsooth, an you think so, you had best go to bed. For my part, I mean to toss a can, and remember my sweetheart, before I turn in; mayhap I may dream of her!

Mrs Fore. Mr Scandal, you had best go to bed, and dream, too.

Scand. Why, faith, I have a good lively imagination; and can dream as much to the purpose as another, if I set about it. But dreaming is the poor retreat of a lazy, hopeless, and imperfect lover. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—VALENTINE'S *Lodgings.*

Enter SCANDAL *and* JEREMY.

Scand. WELL, is your master ready! does he look madly, and talk madly?

Jer. Yes, sir; you need make no great doubt of that: he, that was so near turning poet yesterday morning, can't be much to seek in playing the madman to day.

Scand. Would he have Angelica acquainted with the design?

Jer. No, sir, not yet. He has a mind to try whether his playing the madman won't make her play the fool, and fall in love with him; or at least own that she has loved him all this while, and concealed it.

Scand. I saw her take her coach just now with her maid; and think I heard her bid the coachman drive hither.

Jer. Like enough, sir: for I told her maid this morning, my master was run stark mad, only for love of her mistress. I hear a coach stop: if it should be she, sir, I believe he would not see her, till he hears how she takes it.

Scand. Well, I'll try her—'tis she; here she comes.

Enter ANGELICA.

Ang. Mr Scandal, I suppose you don't think it a novelty, to see a woman visit a man at his own lodgings in a morning?

Scand. Not upon a kind occasion, madam. But, when a lady comes, tyrannically, to insult a ruined lover, and make manifest the cruel triumphs of her beauty, the barbarity of it something surprizes me.

Ang. I don't like raillery from a serious face. Pray, tell me what is the matter?

Jer. No strange matter, madam; my master's mad, that's all. I suppose your ladyship has thought him so a great while.

Ang. How d'ye mean! mad?

Jer. Why, faith, madam, he's mad for want of his wits, just as he was poor for want of money. His head is e'en as light as his pockets; and any body, that has a mind to a bad bargain, can't do better than to beg him for his estate.

Ang. If you speak truth, your endeavouring at wit is very unseasonable.

Scand. She's concerned, and loves him! [*Aside.*

Ang. Mr Scandal, you can't think me guilty of so much inhumanity, as not to be concerned for a man I must own myself obliged to. Pray, tell me the truth.

Scand. Faith, madam, I wish telling a lie would mend the matter. But this is no new effect of an unsuccessful passion.

Ang. [*Aside.*] I know not what to think! Yet I should be vext to have a trick put upon me!—May I not see him?

Scand. I'm afraid the physician is not willing you should see him yet. Jeremy go in and inquire. [*Exit* JEREMY.

Ang. Ha! I saw him wink and smile! I fancy a trick. I'll try. [*Aside.*] I would disguise to all the world, sir, a failing which I must own to you—I fear my happiness depends upon the recovery of Valantine. Therefore, I conjure you, as you are his friend, and as you have compassion on one fearful of affliction, to tell me what I am to hope for—I cannot speak—But you may tell me, for you know what I would ask.

Scand. So, this is pretty plain!—Be not too much concerned, madam; I hope his condition is not desperate. An acknowledgment of love from you, perhaps, may work a cure, as the fear of your aversion occasioned his distemper.

Ang. Say you so? nay, then I'm convinced: and if I don't play trick for trick, may I never taste the pleasure of revenge! [*Aside.*]—Acknowledgement of love! I find you have mistaken my compassion, and think me guilty of a weakness I am a stranger to. But I have too much sincerity to deceive you, and too much charity to suffer him to be deluded with vain hopes. Good nature and humanity oblige me to be concerned for him: but to love, is neither in my power nor inclination.

Scand. Hey, brave woman, i'faith!—Won't you see him then, if he desires it?

Ang. What signifies a madman's desires? besides, 'twould make me uneasy—If I don't see him, perhaps my concern for him may lessen—If I forget him, 'tis no more than he has done by himself; and now the surprise is over, methinks I'm not half so sorry as I was.

Scand. So, faith, good-nature works apace; you were confessing just now an obligation to his love.

Ang. But I have considered that passions are unreasonable and involuntary. If he loves, he can't help it; and if I don't love, I cannot help it: no more than he can help his being a man, or my being a woman; or no more than I can, help my want of inclination to stay longer here. [*Exit.*

Scand. Humph!—An admirable composition, faith, this same womankind!

Enter JEREMY.

Jer. What, is she gone, sir?

Scand. Gone? why she was never here, nor any where else; nor I don't know her, if I see her, nor you neither.

Jer. Good lack! what's the matter now? are any more of us to be mad? Why, sir, my master longs to see her; and is almost mad in good earnest with the joyful news of her being here.

Scand. We are all under a mistake. Ask no questions, for I can't resolve you: but I'll inform your master. In the mean time, if our project succeed no better with his father than it does with his mistress, he may descend from his exaltation of madness into the road of common sense, and be content only to be made a fool with other reasonable people. I hear sir Sampson. You know your cue? I'll to your master. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR SAMPSON *and* BUCKRAM.

Sir Sam. D'ye see, Mr Buckram, here's the paper signed with his own hand.

Buck. Good, sir. And the conveyance is ready drawn in this box, if he be ready to sign and seal.

Sir Sam. Ready! body o'me, he must be ready: his sham sickness sha'nt excuse him——O, here's his scoundrel. Sirrah, where's your master?

Jer. Ah, sir, he's quite gone!

Sir Sam. Gone! what, he's not dead?

Jer. No, sir, not dead.

Sir Sam. What, is he gone out of town? run away? ha! has he tricked me? Speak, varlet.

Jer. No, no, sir, he's safe enough, sir, an he were but as sound, poor gentleman! He is indeed here, sir, and not here, sir.

Sir Sam. Hey-day, rascal, do you banter me? sirrah, d'ye banter me?—Speak, sirrah; where is he? for I will find him.

Jer. Would you could, sir; for he has lost himself. Indeed, sir, I have almost broke my heart about him——I can't refrain tears when I think on him, sir: I'm as melancholy for him as a passing-bell, sir; or a horse in a pond.

Sir Sam. A pox confound your similitudes, sir:—Speak to be understood: and tell me in plain terms what is the matter with him, or I'll crack your fool's skull.

Jer. Ah, you've hit it, sir; that's the matter with him, sir; his skull's cracked, poor gentleman! he's stark mad, sir.

Sir Sam. Mad!

Buck. What, is he *non compos?*

Jer. Quite *non compos*, sir.

Buck. Why, then, all's obliterated, sir Sampson. If he be *non compos mentis*, his act and deed will be of no effect: it is not good in law.

Sir Sam. Oons, I won't believe it; let me see him, sir. Mad! I'll make him find his senses.

Jer. Mr Scandal is with him, sir; I'll knock at the door.

[*Goes to the scene, which opens and discovers* VALENTINE *and* SCANDAL. VALENTINE *upon a couch, disorderly dressed.*]

Sir Sam. How now? what's here to do?

Val. Ha! who's that? [*Starting.*

Scand. For Heaven's sake, softly, sir, and gently: don't provoke him.

Val. Answer me, who's that? and that?

Sir Sam. Gads bobs, does he not know? Is he mischievous? I'll speak gently. Val, Val, dost thou not know me, boy? not know thy own father, Val? I am thy own father; and this, honest Brief Buckram, the lawyer.

Val. It may be so—I did not know you——the world is full. There are people that we do know, and people that we do not know, and yet the sun shines upon all alike. There are fathers that have many children; and there are children that have many fathers——'tis strange! But I am Honesty, and come to give the world the lie.

Sir Sam. Body o'me, I know not what to say to him!

Val. Why does that lawyer wear black?——does he carry his conscience without-side? Lawyer, what art thou? dost thou know me?

Buck. O Lord! what must I say?——Yes, sir.

Val. Thou liest; for I am Honesty. 'Tis hard I cannot get a livelihood amongst you. I have been sworn out of Westminster-Hall the first day of every term—Let me see---no matter how long---But I'll tell you one thing; it is a question that would puzzle an arithmetician, if I should ask him, whether the bible saves more souls in Westminster-Abbey, or damns more in Westster-Hall?—For my part, I am Honesty, and can't tell; I have very few acquaintance.

Sir Sam. Body o'me, he talks sensibly in his madness----Has he no intervals?

Jer. Very short, sir.

Buck. Sir, I can do you no service while he's in this condition. Here's your paper, sir——He may do me a mischief if I stay——The conveyance is ready, sir, if he recover his senses. [*Exit.*

Sir Sam. Hold, hold; don't you go yet.

Scand. You'd better let him go, sir; and send for him if there be occasion: for I fancy his presence provokes him more.

Val. Is the lawyer gone? 'Tis well; then we may drink about, without going together by the ears. Heigh ho! what o'clock is it? My father here! your blessing, sir.

Sir Sam. He recovers!---Bless thee, Val!——How dost thou do, boy?

Val. Thank you, sir, pretty well. I have been a little out of order. Won't you please to sit, sir?

Sir Sam. Ay, boy. Come, thou shalt sit down by me.

Val. Sir, 'tis my duty to wait.

Sir Sam. No, no: come, come, sit thee down, honest Val. How dost thou do? let me feel thy pulse—Oh, pretty well now, Val. Body o' me, I was sorry to see thee indisposed: but I am glad thou art better, honest Val.

Val. I thank you, sir.

Scand. Miracle! The monster grows loving. [*Aside.*

Sir Sam. Let me feel thy hand again, Val. It does not shake. I believe thou canst write, Val? Ha, boy? thou canst write thy name, Val?——

Jeremy, step and overtake Mr Buckram; bid him make haste back with the conveyance—quick!

[*Exit* JEREMY.

Scand. That ever I should suspect such a heathen of any remorse! [*Aside.*

Sir Sam. Dost thou know this paper, Val? I know thou'rt honest, and wilt perform articles.

[*Shews him the paper, but holds it out of his reach.*]

Val. Pray let me see it, sir; you hold it so far off, that I can't tell whether I know it or no.

Sir Sam. See it, boy? Ay, ay, why thou dost see it—'tis thy own hand, Vally. Why, let me see. I can read it as plain as can be: look you here—[*Reads.*] 'The condition of this obligation'—Look you, as plain as can be, so it begins ——And then at the bottom—'As witness my hand, VALENTINE LEGEND,' in great letters—Why, 'tis as plain as the nose on one's face. What, are my eyes better than thine? I believe I can read it farther off yet—let me see—

[*Stretches his arm as far as he can.*

Val. Will you please to let me hold it, sir?

Sir Sam. Let thee hold it, say'st thou?—Ay, with all my heart—What matter is it who holds it? What need any body hold it?—I'll put it in my pocket, Val, and then nobody need hold it—[*Puts the paper in his pocket.*] There, Val: its safe enough, boy. But thou shalt have it as soon as thou hast set thy hand to another paper, little Val.

Enter JEREMY *and* BUCKRAM.

Val. What, is my bad genius here again? Oh no, 'tis the lawyer, with an itching palm; and he's come to be scratched. My nails are not long enough. Let me have a pair of red hot tongs quickly, quickly; and you shall see me act St Dunstan, and lead the devil by the nose.

Buck. O Lord, let me be gone! I'll not venture myself with a madman. [*Runs out.*

Val. Ha, ha, ha! you need not run so fast. Honesty will not overtake you. Ha, ha, ha! the rogue found me out to be *in forma pauperis* presently.

Sir Sam. Oons! what a vexation is here! I know not what to do or say, or which way to go.

Val. Who's that, that's out of his way? I am Honesty, and can set him right. Hark'ee, friend, the strait road is the worst way you can go. He that follows his nose always, will very often be led into a stink. *Probatum est.* But what are you for? religion or politics? There's a couple of topics for you, no more like one another than oil and vinegar; and yet these two, beaten together by a state cook, make sauce for the whole nation.

Sir Sam. What the devil had I to do, ever to beget sons? why did I ever marry?

Val. Because thou wert a monster, old boy. The two greatest monsters in the world, are a man and a woman. What's thy opinion?

Sir Sam. Why, my opinion is, that these two monsters, joined together, make yet a greater; that's a man and his wife.

Val. Aha, old Truepenny! sayest thou so? Thou hast nicked it. But it is wonderful strange, Jeremy.

Jer. What is it, sir?

Val. That grey hairs should cover a green head—and I make a fool of my father. What's here? *Erra Pater*, or a bearded sibyl? If prophecy comes, Honesty must give place.

[*Exeunt* VALENTINE *and* JEREMY.

Enter FORESIGHT, MRS FORESIGHT, *and* MRS FRAIL.

Fore. What says he? What did he prophesy? Ha, Sir Sampson! Bless us! how are we?

Sir Sam. Are we? A pox on your prognostications! Why, we are fools as we used to be. Oons, that you could not foresee that the moon would predominate, and my son be mad! Where's your oppositions, your trines, and your quadrates? Ah! pox on't, that I, who know the world, and men and manners, who don't believe a syllable in the sky and stars, and sun and almanacks, and trash, should be directed by a dreamer, an omen-hunter, and defer business in expectation of a lucky hour! when, body o'me! there never was a lucky hour after the first opportunity. [*Exit.*

Fore. Ah, sir Sampson, Heaven help your head! This is none of your lucky hours—— *Nemo omnibus horis sapit!*——What, is he gone, and in contempt of science? Ill stars, and unconvertible ignorance attend him!

Scand. You must excuse his passion, Mr Foresight; for he has been heartily vexed. His son is *non compos mentis*, and thereby incapable of making any conveyance in law; so that all his measures are disappointed.

Fore. Ha! say you so?

Mrs Frail. What, has my sea-lover lost his anchor of hope, then?

[*Aside to* MRS FORESIGHT.

Mrs Fore. O sister, what will you do with him?

Mrs Frail. Do with him? Send him to sea again in the next foul weather. He's used to an inconstant element, and won't be surprised to see the tide turned.

Fore. Wherein was I mistaken, not to foresee this? [*Considers.*

Scand. Madam, you and I can tell him something else, that he did not foresee, and more particularly relating to his own fortune. [*Aside to* MRS FORESIGHT.] You look pretty well, Mr Foresight. How did you rest last night?

Fore. Truly, Mr Scandal, I was so taken up with broken dreams, and distracted visions, that I remember little.

Scand. But would you not talk with Valentine? Perhaps you may understand him: I am apt to

believe, there is something mysterious in his discourse, and sometimes rather think him inspired than mad.

Fore. You speak with singular good judgment, Mr Scandal, truly. I am inclining to your Turkish opinion in this matter, and do reverence a man, whom the vulgar think mad. Let us go to him.

Mrs Frail. Sister, do you go with them; I'll find out my lover, and give him his discharge, and come to you. [*Exeunt* SCANDAL, MR *and* MRS FORESIGHT.] On my conscience, here he comes!

Enter BEN.

Ben. All mad, I think. Flesh, I believe all the calentures of the sea are come ashore, for my part.

Mrs Frail. Mr Benjamin in choler!

Ben. No, I'm pleased well enough, now I have found you. Mess, I have had such a hurricane on your account yonder!

Mrs Frail. My account? Pray, what's the matter?

Ben. Why, father came, and found me squabbling with yon chitty-faced thing, as he would have me marry—so he asked, what was the matter. He asked in a surly sort of a way. It seems brother Val is gone mad, and so that put'n into a passion; but what did I know that? what's that to me? So he asked in a surly sort of manner—and, Gad, I answered 'en as surlily. What, thof he be my father, I an't bound prentice to 'en: so, faith, I told'n, in plain terms, if I were minded to marry, I'd marry to please myself, not him; and, for the young woman that he provided for me, I thought it more fitting for her to learn her sampler, and make dirt-pies, than to look after a husband; for my part, I was none of her man—I had another voyage to make, let him take it as he will.

Mrs Frail. So, then, you intend to go to sea again?

Ben. Nay, nay, my mind ran upon you—but I would not tell him so much. So he said, he'd make my heart ache; and if so be, that he could get a woman to his mind, he'd marry himself. Gad, says I, an you play the fool, and marry at these years, there's more danger of your head's aching than my heart! He was woundy angry, when I giv'n that wipe—he hadn't a word to say; and so I left'n, and the green girl together; mayhap the bee may bite, and he'll marry her himself—with all my heart!

Mrs Frail. And were you this undutiful and graceless wretch to your father?

Ben. Then, why was he graceless first? If I am undutiful and graceless, why did he beget me so? I did not beget myself.

Mrs Frail. O impiety! how have I been mistaken! What an inhuman merciless creature have I set my heart upon! O, I am happy to have discovered the shelves and quicksands, that lurk beneath that smiling faithless face?

Ben. Hey-toss! what's the matter now? why, you be'nt angry, be you?

Mrs Frail. O see me no more—for thou wert born among rocks, suckled by whales, cradled in a tempest, and whistled to by winds; and thou art come forth with fins and scales, and three rows of teeth, a most outrageous fish of prey.

Ben. O Lord! O Lord! she's mad, poor young woman! Love has turned her senses; her brain is quite overset. Well-a-day! how shall I do to set her to rights?

Mrs Frail. No, no, I am not mad, monster! I am wise enough to find you out. Hadst thou the impudence to aspire at being a husband, with that stubborn and disobedient temper? You, that know not how to submit to a father, presume to have a sufficient stock of duty to undergo a wife? I should have been finely fobbed, indeed! very finely fobbed!

Ben. Harkee, forsooth; if so be, that you are in your right senses, d'ye see, for aught as I perceive, I'm like to be finely fobbed—if I have got anger here upon your account, and you are tacked about already! What d'ye mean, after all your fair speeches, and stroking my cheeks, and kissing and hugging, what, would you sheer off so? would you, and leave me aground?

Mrs Frail. No, I'll leave you adrift, and go which way you will.

Ben. What, are you false-hearted, then?

Mrs Frail. Only the wind's changed.

Ben. More shame for you!——The wind's changed? It is an ill wind blows nobody good. Mayhap I have a good riddance on you, if these be your tricks. What, did you mean all this while to make a fool of me?

Mrs Frail. Any fool, but a husband.

Ben. Husband! Gad, I would not be your husband, if you would have me, now I know your mind; thof you had your weight in gold and jewels, and thof I loved you never so well.

Mrs Frail. Why, canst thou love, porpus?

Ben. No matter what I can do; don't call names. I don't love you so well as to bear that, whatever I did. I'm glad you shew yourself, mistress: let them marry you as don't know you. Gad, I know you too well, by sad experience; I believe he that marries you will go to sea in a hen-pecked frigate. I believe that, young woman! and mayhap may come to an anchor at Cuckold's Point; so there's a dash for you, take it as you will; mayhap you may hollow after me, when I won't come to. [*Exit.*

Mrs Frail. Ha, ha, ha! no doubt on't. [*Sings.*] '*My true love is gone to sea!*' [*Enter* MRS FORESIGHT.] O sister, had you come a minute sooner, you would have seen the resolution of a lover. Honest Tar and I are parted, and with the same indifference that we met.

Mrs Fore. What, then, he bore it most heroically?

Mrs Frail. Most tyrannically. But I'll tell you a hint that he has given me. Sir Sampson is enraged, and talks desperately of committing matrimony himself. If he has a mind to throw himself away, he can't do it more effectually than upon me, if we could bring it about.

Mrs Fore. O hang him, old fox! he's too cunning; besides, he hates both you and me. But I have a project in my head for you, and I have gone a good way towards it. I have almost made a bargain with Jeremy, Valentine's man, to sell his master to us.

Mrs Frail. Sell him? how?

Mrs Fore. Valentine raves upon Angelica, and took me for her, and Jeremy says, will take any body for her that he imposes on him. Now, I have promised him mountains, if, in one of his mad fits, he will bring you to him in her stead, and get you married together, and put to bed together—and after consummation, girl, there's no revoking. And if he should recover his senses, he'll be glad at least to make you a good settlement. Here they come; stand aside a little, and tell me how you like the design.

Enter VALENTINE, SCANDAL, FORESIGHT, *and* JEREMY.

Scand. And have you given your master a hint of their plot upon him? [*To* JEREMY.

Jer. Yes, sir; he says he'll favour it, and mistake her for Angelica.

Scand. It may make us sport.

Fore. Mercy on us!

Val. Husht—interrupt me not—I'll whisper prediction to thee, and thou shalt prophesy. I am Honesty, and can teach thy tongue a new trick. I have told thee what's past—Now, I'll tell what's to come! Dost thou know what will happen to-morrow? Answer me not; for I will tell thee. To-morrow, knaves will thrive through craft, and fools through fortune; and Honesty will go, as it did, frost-nipt in a summer-suit. Ask me questions concerning to-morrow.

Scand. Ask him, Mr Foresight.

Fore. Pray, what will be done at court?

Val. Scandal will tell you—I am Honesty; I never come there.

Fore. In the city?

Val. Oh, prayers will be said in empty churches, at the usual hours. Yet you will see such zealous faces behind counters, as if religion were to be sold in every shop. Oh! things will go methodically in the city. The clocks will strike twelve at noon, and the horned herd buz in the Exchange at two. Husbands and wives will drive distinct trades; and care and pleasure separately occupy the family. Coffee-houses will be full of smoke and stratagem. And the cropt 'prentice that sweeps his master's shop in the morning, may, ten to one, dirty his sheets before night. But there are two things that you will see very strange; which are, wanton wives with their legs at liberty, and tame cuckolds with chains about their necks. But hold, I must examine you before I go further; you look suspiciously. Are you a husband?

Fore. I am married.

Val. Poor creature! Is your wife of Covent-garden parish?

Fore. No: St Martin in the Fields.

Val. Alas, poor man! his eyes are sunk, and his hands shrivelled; his legs dwindled, and his back bowed. Pray, pray for a metamorphosis—Change thy shape, and shake off age; get thee Medea's kettle, and be boiled anew; come forth, with labouring, callous hands, a chine of steel, and Atlas' shoulders. Let Taliacotius trim the calves of twenty chairmen, and make thee pedestals to stand erect upon; and look matrimony in the face. Ha, ha, ha! that a man should have a stomach to a wedding supper, when the pigeons ought rather to be laid to his feet! ha, ha, ha!

Fore. His frenzy is very high, now, Mr Scandal.

Scand. I believe it is a spring tide.

Fore. Very likely truly; you understand these matters. Mr Scandal, I shall be very glad to confer with you, about these things, which he has uttered. His sayings are very mysterious and hieroglyphical.

Val. Oh, why would Angelica be absent from my eyes so long?

Jer. She's here, sir.

Mrs Fore. Now, sister.

Mrs Frail. O Lord, what must I say?

Scand. Humour him, madam, by all means.

Val. Where is she? Oh, I see her! She comes like riches, health, and liberty, at once, to a despairing, starving, and abandoned wretch. O welcome, welcome!

Mrs Frail. How d'ye, sir? can I serve you?

Val. Harkee———I have a secret to tell you——Endymion and the moon shall meet us upon Mount Patmos, and we'll be married in the dead of night. But say not a word. Hymen shall put his torch into a dark lantern, that it may be secret; and Juno shall give her peacock poppy water, that he may fold his ogling tail, and Argus's hundred eyes be shut, ha? Nobody shall know but Jeremy.

Mrs Frail. No, no, we'll keep it secret; it shall be done presently.

Val. The sooner the better—Jeremy, come hither——closer—that none may overhear us.—Jeremy, I can tell you news. Angelica is turned nun, and I am turned friar: and yet we'll marry one another in spite of the pope. Get me a cowl and beads, that I may play my part—for she'll meet me two hours hence in black and white, and a long veil to cover the project; and we won't see one another's faces, till we have

done something to be ashamed of—and then we'll blush once for all.

Enter TATTLE *and* ANGELICA.

Jer. I'll take care, and——

Val. Whisper.

Ang. Nay, Mr Tattle, if you make love to me, you spoil my design; for I intend to make you my confident.

Scand. How's this! Tattle making love to Angelica!

Tatt. But, madam, to throw away your person—such a person! and such a fortune, on a madman!

Ang. I never loved him till he was mad; but, don't tell any body so.

Tatt. Tell, madam? alas, you don't know me. I have much ado to tell your ladyship how long I have been in love with you—but, encouraged by the impossibility of Valentine's making any more addresses to you, I have ventured to declare the very inmost passion of my heart. Oh, madam, look upon us both. There, you see the ruins of a poor decayed creature! Here, a complete lively figure, with youth and health, and all his five senses in perfection, madam; and to all this, the most passionate lover——

Ang. O, fie for shame! hold your tongue. A passionate lover, and five senses in perfection! When you are as mad as Valentine, I'll believe you love me; and the maddest shall take me.

Val. It is enough. Ha! who's there;

Mrs Frail. O Lord, her coming will spoil all. [*To* JEREMY.

Jer. No, no, madam; he won't know her; if he should, I can persuade him.

Val. Scandal, who are these? Foreigners? If they are, I'll tell you what I think. Get away all the company but Angelica, that I may discover my design to her. [*Whispers.*

Scand. I will. I have discovered something of Tattle, that is of a piece with Mrs Frail. He courts Angelica; if we could contrive to couple them together—— Harkee—— [*Whispers.*

Mrs Fore. He won't know you, cousin; he knows nobody.

Fore. But he knows more than any body.—Oh, niece, he knows things past, and things to come, and all the profound secrets of time.

Tatt. Look you, Mr Foresight; it is not my way to make many words of matters, and so I shan't say much. But, in short, d'ye see, I will hold you a hundred pounds now, that I know more secrets than he.

Fore. How? I cannot read that knowledge in your face, Mr Tattle. Pray, what do you know?

Tatt. Why, d'ye think I'll tell you, sir? Read it in my face! No, sir, it is written in my heart; and safer there, sir, than letters written in juice of lemon, for no fire can fetch it out. I am no blab, sir.

Val. Acquaint Jeremy with it; he may easily bring it about. They are welcome, and I'll tell them so myself. [*To* SCANDAL.] What, do you look strange upon me! Then I must be plain.—[*Coming up to them.*] I am Honesty, and hate an old acquaintance with a new face.

[SCANDAL *goes aside with* JEREMY.

Tatt. Do you know me, Valentine?

Val. You! who are you? I hope not.

Tatt. I am Jack Tattle, your friend.

Val. My friend! What to do? I'm no married man, and thou canst not lie with my wife. I am very poor, and thou canst not borrow money of me. Then what employment have I for a friend?

Tatt. Ha! a good open speaker, and not to be trusted with a secret.

Ang. Do you know me, Valentine?

Val. Oh, very well.

Ang. Who am I?

Val. You're a woman—one, to whom Heaven gave beauty, when it grafted roses on a briar.—You are the reflection of heaven in a pond; and he, that leaps at you, is sunk. You are all white, a sheet of lovely spotless paper, when you were first born; but you are to be scrawled and blotted by every goose's quill. I know you; for I loved a woman, and loved her so long, that I found out a strange thing; I found out what a woman was good for.

Tatt. Ay, prithee, what's that?

Val. Why, to keep a secret.

Tatt. O Lord!

Val. O, exceeding good to keep a secret; for, though she should tell, yet she is not believed.

Tatt. Ha! good again, faith.

Jer. [JEREMY *and* SCANDAL *whisper.*] I'll do it, sir.

Scand. Mr Foresight, we had best leave him. He may grow outrageous, and do mischief.

Fore. I will be directed by you.

Jer. [*To Mrs* FRAIL.] You'll meet, madam.—I'll take care every thing shall be ready.

Mrs Frail. Thou shalt do what thou wilt; in short, I will deny thee nothing.

Tatt. Madam, shall I wait upon you?

[*To* ANGELICA.

Ang. No, I'll stay with him. Mr Scandal will protect me. Aunt, Mr Tattle desires you would give him leave to wait upon you.

Tatt. Pox on't, there's no coming off, now she has said that—Madam, will you do me the honour?

Mrs Fore. Mr Tattle might have used less ceremony.

[*Exeunt* MRS FRAIL, MR *and* MRS FORESIGHT *and* TATTLE.]

Scand. Jeremy, follow Tattle. [*Exit* JEREMY.

Ang. Mr Scandal, I only stay till my maid comes, and because I have a mind to be rid of Mr Tattle.

Scand. Madam, I am very glad that I overheard

a better reason which you gave to Mr Tattle; for his impertinence forced you to acknowledge a kindness for Valentine, which you denied to all his sufferings and my solicitations. So I'll leave him to make use of the discovery, and your ladyship to the free confession of your inclinations.

Ang. Oh Heavens! you won't leave me alone with a madman?

Scand. No, madam; I only leave a madman to his remedy. [*Exit.*

Val. Madam, you need not be very much afraid, for I fancy I begin to come to myself.

Ang. Ay, but if I don't fit you, I'll be hanged. [*Aside.*

Val. You see what disguises love makes us put on. Gods have been in counterfeited shapes for the same reason; and the divine part of me, my mind, has worn this masque of madness, and this motly livery, only as the slave of love, and menial creature of your beauty.

Ang. Mercy on me, how he talks!—Poor Valentine!

Val. Nay, faith, now let us understand one another, hypocrisy apart. The comedy draws towards an end; and let us think of leaving acting, and be ourselves; and, since you have loved me, you must own, I have at length deserved you should confess it.

Ang. [*Sighs.*] I would I had loved you!—for, Heaven knows, I pity you; and, could I have foreseen the bad effects, I would have striven; but that's too late!

Val. What bad effects? what's too late? My seeming madness has deceived my father, and procured me time to think of means to reconcile me to him, and preserve the right of my inheritance to his estate; which otherwise, by articles, I must this morning have resigned. And this I had informed you of to-day, but you were gone before I knew you had been here.

Ang. How! I thought your love of me had caused this transport in your soul, which, it seems, you only counterfeited for mercenary ends and sordid interest.

Val. Nay, now you do me wrong; for, if any interest was considered, it was yours; since I thought I wanted more than love to make me worthy of you.

Ang. Then you thought me mercenary—But how am I deluded, by this interval of sense, to reason with a madman?

Val. Oh, 'tis barbarous to misunderstand me longer.

Enter JEREMY.

Ang. Oh, here's a reasonable creature!—sure he will not have the impudence to persevere!——Come, Jeremy, acknowledge your trick, and confess your master's madness counterfeit.

Jer. Counterfeit, madam! I'll maintain him to be as absolutely and substantially mad, as any freeholder in Bedlam. Nay, he's as mad as any projector, fanatic, chemist, lover, or poet, in Europe.

Val. Sirrah, you lie; I'm not mad.

Ang. Ha, ha, ha! you see he denies it.

Jer. O Lord, madam! did you ever know any madman mad enough to own it?

Val. Sot, can't you apprehend?

Ang. Why, he talked very sensibly just now.

Jer. Yes, madam; he has intervals: but you see he begins to look wild again now.

Val. Why, you thick-skulled rascal, I tell you the farce is done, and I'll be mad no longer. [*Beats him.*

Ang. Ha, ha, ha! is he mad or no, Jeremy?

Jer. Partly, I think—for he does not know his own mind two hours. I'm sure I left him just now in the humour to be mad: and I think I have not found him very quiet at the present. [*One knocks.*] Who's there?

Val. Go see, you sot. I'm very glad that I can move your mirth, though not your compassion.

Ang. I did not think you had apprehension enough to be exceptious: but madmen shew themselves most by over-pretending to a sound understanding, as drunken men do by over-acting sobriety. I was half inclining to believe you, till I accidentally touched upon your tender part. But now you have restored me to my former opinion and compassion.

Jer. Sir, your father has sent to know if you are any better yet.—Will you please to be mad, sir, or how?

Val. Stupidity! you know the penalty of all I'm worth must pay for the confession of my senses.—I'm mad, and will be mad, to every body but this lady.

Jer. So;—just the very back-side of truth. But lying is a figure in speech, that interlards the greatest part of my conversation.—Madam, your ladyship's woman.

Enter JENNY.

Ang. Well, have you been there?——Come hither.

Jenny. Yes, madam! sir Sampson will wait upon you presently. [*Aside to* ANGELICA.

Val. You are not leaving me in this uncertainty?

Ang. Would any thing but a madman complain of uncertainty? Uncertainty and expectation are the joys of life. Security is an insipid thing; and the overtaking and possessing of a wish discovers the folly of the chase. Never let us know one another better; for the pleasure of a masquerade is done, when we come to shew our faces. But I'll tell you two things before I leave you; I am not the fool you take me for; and you are mad, and don't know it.

[*Exeunt* ANGELICA *and* JENNY.

Val. From a riddle you can expect nothing but a riddle. There's my instruction, and the moral of my lesson.

Jer. What, is the lady gone again, sir? I hope you understood one another before she went?

Val. Understood! she is harder to be understood than a piece of Egyptian antiquity, or an Irish manuscript; you may pore till you spoil your eyes, and not improve your knowledge.

Jer. I have heard them say, sir, they read hard Hebrew books backwards. May be you begin to read at the wrong end.

Val. They say so of a witch's prayer; and dreams and Dutch almanacks are to be understood by contraries. Yet, while she does not seem to hate me, I will pursue her, and know her, if it be possible, in spite of the opinion of my satirical friend, who says—

That women are like tricks by slight of hand;
Which, to admire, we should not understand.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A room in* FORESIGHT'S *house.*

Enter ANGELICA *and* JENNY.

Ang. WHERE is sir Sampson? did you not tell me he would be here before me?

Jenny. He's at the great glass in the dining-room, madam, setting his cravat and wig.

Ang. How! I'm glad on't. If he has a mind I should like him, it's a sign he likes me; and that's more than half my design.

Jenny. I hear him, madam.

Ang. Leave me; and, d'ye hear, if Valentine should come, or send, I'm not to be spoken with.

[*Exit* JENNY.

Enter SIR SAMPSON.

Sir Sam. I have not been honoured with the commands of a fair lady a great while. Odd, madam, you have revived me—not since I was five and thirty.

Ang. Why, you have no great reason to complain, sir Sampson; that's not long ago.

Sir Sam. Zooks, but it is, madam, a very great while; to a man that admires a fine woman as much as I do.

Ang. You're an absolute courtier, sir Sampson.

Sir Sam. Not at all, madam. Od's-bud, you wrong me: I am not so old, neither, to be a bare courtier, only a man of words. Odd, I have warm blood about me yet, and can serve a lady any way. Come, come, let me tell you, you women think a man old too soon; faith and troth you do. Come, don't despise fifty; Odd, fifty, in a hale constitution, is no such contemptible age!

Ang. Fifty a contemptible age! not at all: a very fashionable age, I think—I assure you, I know very considerable beaux, that set a good face upon fifty. Fifty! I have seen fifty in a side-box, by candle-light, out-blossom five-and-twenty.

Sir Sam. Outsides, outsides! a pize take them, mere outsides. Hang your side-box beaux; no, I'm none of those, none of your forced trees, that pretend to blossom in the fall, and bud when they should bring forth fruit. I am of a long-lived race, and inherit vigour. None of my ancestors married till fifty; yet they begot sons and daughters till fourscore. I am of your patriarchs, I, a branch of one of your antediluvian families, fellows that the flood could not wash away. Well, madam, what are your commands? Has any young rogue affronted you, and shall I cut his throat? or——

Ang. No, sir Sampson, I have no quarrel upon my hands—— I have more occasion for your conduct, than your courage, at this time. To tell you the truth, I'm weary of living single, and want a husband.

Sir Sam. Od's-bud, and it is pity you should! Odd, would she would like me! then I should hamper my young rogues: odd, would she would! faith and troth, she's devilish handsome! —[*Aside.*]—Madam, you deserve a good husband; and 'twere pity you should be thrown away upon any of these young idle rogues about the town. Odd, there's ne'er a young fellow worth hanging—that is, a very young fellow—— Pize on them, they never think beforehand of any thing—and if they commit matrimony, 'tis as they commit murder; out of a frolic; and are ready to hang themselves, or to be hanged by the law, the next morning. Odso, have a care, madam.

Ang. Therefore, I ask your advice, sir Sampson. I have fortune enough to make any man easy that I can like; if there were such a thing as a young agreeable man, with a reasonable stock of good-nature and sense—for I would neither have an absolute wit, nor a fool.

Sir Sam. Odd, you are hard to please, madam: to find a young fellow that is neither a wit in his own eye, nor a fool in the eye of the world, is a very hard task. But, faith and troth, you speak very discreetly. I hate a wit; I had a son that was spoilt among them; a good, hopeful lad, till he learnt to be a wit—and might have risen in the state. But, a pox on't, his wit ran him out of his money, and now his poverty has run him out of his wits.

Ang. Sir Sampson, as your friend, I must tell

you, you are very much abused in that matter—he's no more mad than you are.

Sir Sam. How, madam! would I could prove it!

Ang. I can tell you how that may be done—but it is a thing that would make me appear to be too much concerned in your affairs.

Sir Sam. Odsbud, I believe she likes me—— [*Aside.*]—Ah, madam, all my affairs are scarce worthy to be laid at your feet; and I wish, madam, they were in a better posture, that I might make a more becoming offer to a lady of your incomparable beauty and merit. If I had Peru in one hand, and Mexico in t'other, and the eastern empire under my feet, it would make me only a more glorious victim, to be offered at the shrine of your beauty.

Ang. Bless me, sir Sampson, what's the matter?

Sir Sam. Odd, madam, I love you—and if you would take my advice in a husband——

Ang. Hold, hold, sir Sampson! I asked your advice for a husband, and you are giving me your consent. I was, indeed, thinking to propose something like it in jest, to satisfy you about Valentine: for if a match were seemingly carried on between you and me, it would oblige him to throw off his disguise of madness, in apprehension of losing me; for, you know, he has long pretended a passion for me.

Sir Sam. Gadzooks, a most ingenious contrivance—if we were to go through with it! but why must the match only be seemingly carried on? Odd, let it be a real contract.

Ang. O fie, sir Sampson, what would the world say?

Sir Sam. Say? They would say you were a wise woman, and I a happy man. Odd, madam, I'll love you as long as I live; and leave you a good jointure when I die.

Ang. Aye, but that is not in your power, sir Sampson; for when Valentine confesses himself in his senses, he must make over his inheritance to his younger brother.

Sir Sam. Odd, you're cunning, a wary baggage! Faith and troth, I like you the better. But, I warrant you, I have a proviso in the obligation in favour of myself. Body o' me, I have a trick to turn the settlement upon the issue-male of our two bodies begotten. Odsbud, let us find children, and I'll find an estate!

Ang. Will you? well, do you find the estate, and leave the other to me.

Sir Sam. O rogue! but I'll trust you. And will you consent? Is it a match, then?

Ang. Let me consult my lawyer concerning this obligation; and, if I find what you propose practicable, I'll give you my answer.

Sir Sam. With all my heart. Come in with me, and I'll lend you the bond. You shall consult your lawyer, and I'll consult a parson. Odzooks, I'm a young man; Odzooks, I'm a young man, and I'll make it appear—Odd, you're devilish handsome. Faith and troth, you're very handsome; and I'm very young, and very lusty. Odsbud, hussy, you know how to choose! and so do I. Odd, I think we are very well met. Give me your hand; odd, let me kiss it; 'tis as warm and as soft—as what?—odd, as t'other hand!—give me t'other hand; and I'll mumble them, and kiss them, till they melt in my mouth.

Ang. Hold, sir Sampson—you're profuse of your vigour before your time. You'll spend your estate before you come to it.

Sir Sam. No, no; only give you a rent-roll of my possessions—ah, baggage! I warrant you for a little Sampson. Odd, Sampson is a very good name for an able fellow. Your Sampsons were strong dogs from the beginning.

Ang. Have a care, and don't overact your part. If you remember, Sampson, the strongest of the name, pulled an old house over his head at last.

Sir Sam. Say you so, hussy? Come, let's go, then; odd, I long to be pulling, too. Come away.—Odso, here's somebody coming.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter TATTLE *and* JEREMY.

Tatt. Is not that she, gone out just now?

Jer. Aye, sir, she's just going to the place of appointment. Ah, sir, if you are not very faithful and close in this business, you'll certainly be the death of a person, that has a most extraordinary passion for your honour's service.

Tatt. Aye, who's that?

Jer. Even my unworthy self, sir. Sir, I have had an appetite to be fed with your commands a great while—and now, sir, my former master having much troubled the fountain of his understanding, it is a very plausible occasion for me to quench my thirst at the spring of your bounty. I thought I could not recommend myself better to you, sir, than by the delivery of a great beauty and fortune into your arms, whom I have heard you sigh for.

Tatt. I'll make thy fortune; say no more.—Thou art a pretty fellow, and canst carry a message to a lady, in a pretty soft kind of phrase, and with a good persuading accent.

Jer. Sir, I have the seeds of rhetoric and oratory in my head—I have been at Cambridge.

Tatt. Aye; 'tis well enough for a servant to be bred at an university; but the education is a little too pedantic for a gentleman. I hope you are secret in your nature, private, close, ha?

Jer. O sir, for that, sir, 'tis my chief talent; I'm as secret as the head of Nilus.

Tatt. Aye? who's he, though? a privy counsellor?

Jer. O ignorance!——[*Aside.*]——A cunning Egyptian, sir, that with his arms could over-run the country, yet nobody could ever find out his head-quarters.

Tatt. Close dog! a good whoremaster, I warrant him! The time draws nigh, Jeremy. Angelica will be veiled like a nun; and I must be hooded like a friar; ha, Jeremy?

Jer. Aye, sir, hooded like a hawk, to seize at first sight upon the quarry. It is the whim of my master's madness to be so dressed; and she is so in love with him, she'll comply with any thing to please him. Poor lady! I'm sure she'll have reason to pray for me, when she finds what a happy change she has made, between a madman and so accomplished a gentleman.

Tatt. Aye, faith, so she will, Jeremy: you're a good friend to her, poor creature! I swear I do it hardly so much in consideration of myself, as compassion to her.

Jer. 'Tis an act of charity, sir, to save a fine woman with thirty thousand pounds from throwing herself away.

Tatt. So 'tis, faith! I might have saved several others in my time; but, egad, I could never find in my heart to marry any body before.

Jer. Well, sir, I'll go and tell her my master's coming; and meet you in half a quarter of an hour, with your disguise, at your own lodgings. You must talk a little madly;—she won't distinguish the tone of your voice.

Tatt. No, no, let me alone for a counterfeit. I'll be ready for you. [*Exit* JEREMY.

Enter MISS PRUE.

Miss Prue. O, Mr Tattle, are you here? I'm glad I have found you. I have been looking up and down for you like any thing, till I'm as tired as any thing in the world.

Tatt. O pox! how shall I get rid of this foolish girl? [*Aside.*

Miss Prue. O, I have pure news, I can tell you; pure news!—I must not marry the seaman now—My father says so. Why, won't you be my husband? You say you love me! and you won't be my husband. And I know you may be my husband now, if you please.

Tatt. O fie, miss! who told you so, child?

Miss Prue. Why, my father—I told him that you loved me.

Tatt. O fie, miss! why did you do so! and who told you so, child?

Miss Prue. Who? Why, you did; did not you?

Tatt. O pox! that was yesterday, miss; that was a great while ago, child. I have been asleep since; slept a whole night, and did not so much as dream of the matter.

Miss Prue. Pshaw! O, but I dreamt that it was so though.

Tatt. Ay, but your father will tell you that dreams come by contraries, child. O fie! what, we must not love one another now. Pshaw, that would be a foolish thing, indeed! Fie, fie! you're a woman now, and must think of a new man every morning, and forget him every night. No, no; to marry is to be a child again, and play with the same rattle always: O fie, marrying is a paw thing!

Miss Prue. Well, but don't you love me as well as you did last night, then?

Tatt. No, no, child; you would not have me?

Miss Prue. No? Yes, but I would though.

Tatt. Pshaw, but I tell you, you would not. You forget you are a woman, and don't know your own mind.

Miss Prue. But here's my father, and he knows my mind.

Enter FORESIGHT.

Fore. O, Mr Tattle, your servant; you are a close man; but, methinks, your love to my daughter was a secret I might have been trusted with!—or had you a mind to try if I could discover it by my art?—Hum, ha! I think there is something in your physiognomy, that has a resemblance of her; and the girl is like me.

Tatt. And so you would infer, that you and I are alike?—What does the old prig mean? I'll banter him, and laugh at him, and leave him. [*Aside.*] I fancy you have a wrong notion of faces.

Fore. How? what? a wrong notion! how so?

Tatt. In the way of art, I have some taking features, not obvious to vulgar eyes, that are indication of a sudden turn of good fortune, in the lottery of wives; and promise a great beauty and great fortune reserved alone for me, by a private intrigue of destiny, kept secret from the piercing eye of perspicuity, from all astrologers, and the stars themselves.

Fore. How? I will make it appear, that what you say is impossible.

Tatt. Sir, I beg your pardon, I am in haste—

Fore. For what?

Tatt. To be married, sir—married.

Fore. Ay, but pray, take me along with you, sir.

Tatt. No, sir; it is to be done privately—I never make confidents.

Fore. Well; but my consent, I mean—You won't marry my daughter without my consent?

Tatt. Who, I, sir? I am an absolute stranger to you and your daughter, sir.

Fore. Hey-day! What time of the moon is this?

Tatt. Very true, sir; and desire to continue so. I have no more love for your daughter, than I have likeness of you: and I have a secret in my heart, which you would be glad to know, and shan't know: and yet you shall know it too, and be sorry for it afterwards. I'd have you know, sir, that I am as knowing as the stars, and as secret as the night. And I'm going to be married just now, yet, did not know of it half an hour ago; and the lady stays for me, and does not know of it yet. There's a mystery for you! I know you love to untie difficulties. Or, if you

can't solve this; stay here a quarter of an hour, and I'll come and explain it to you. [*Exit.*

Miss Prue. O, father! why will you let him go? Won't you make him to be my husband?

Fore. Mercy on us! what do these lunacies portend? Alas! he's mad, child, stark wild.

Miss Prue. What, and must not I have e'er a husband, then? What, must I go to bed to nurse again, and be a child as long as she's an old woman? Indeed, but I won't. For, now my mind is set upon a man, I will have a man some way or other.

Fore. O fearful! I think the girl's influenced, too. Hussy, you shall have a rod.

Miss Prue. A fiddle of a rod! I'll have a husband; and, if you won't get me one, I'll get one for myself. I'll marry our Robin the butler; he says he loves me: and he's a handsome man, and shall be my husband: I warrant he'll be my husband, and thank me, too; for he told me so.

Enter SCANDAL, MRS FORESIGHT, *and* NURSE.

Fore. Did he so? I'll dispatch him for it presently. Rogue! Oh, nurse, come hither.

Nurse. What is your worship's pleasure?

Fore. Here, take your young mistress, and lock her up presently, till farther orders from me. Not a word, hussy—Do what I bid you. No reply: away. And bid Robin make ready to give an account of his plate and linen, dy'e hear? Begone, when I bid you.

[*Exeunt* NURSE *and* MISS PRUE.

Mrs Fore. What's the matter, husband?

Fore. 'Tis not convenient to tell you now—— Mr Scandal, Heaven keep us all in our senses! I fear there is a contagious frenzy abroad. How does Valentine?

Scand. O, I hope he will do well again. I have a message from him to your niece Angelica.

Fore. I think she has not returned since she went abroad with sir Sampson. Nurse, why are you not gone?

Enter BEN.

Here's Mr Benjamin; he can tell us if his father be come home.

Ben. Who? Father? Ay, he's come home with a vengeance.

Mrs Fore. Why, what's the matter?

Ben. Matter! Why, he's mad.

Fore. Mercy on us! I was afraid of this.

Ben. And there's a handsome young woman; she, as they say, brother Val went mad for, she's mad, too, I think.

Fore. O, my poor niece! my poor niece! is she gone, too? Well, I shall run mad next.

Mrs Fore. Well, but how mad? how d'ye mean?

Ben. Nay, I'll give you leave to guess—I'll undertake to make a voyage to Antigua——No, I mayn't say so, neither——but I'll sail as far as Leghorn, and back again, before you shall guess at the matter, and do nothing else. Mess, you may take in all the points of the compass, and not hit the right.

Mrs Fore. Your experiment will take up a little too much time.

Ben. Why, then, I'll tell you: there's a new wedding upon the stocks, and they two are going to be married to rights.

Scand. Who?

Ben. Why, father, and—the young woman. I can't hit her name.

Scand. Angelica?

Ben. Ay, the same.

Mrs Fore. Sir Sampson and Angelica? Impossible!

Ben. That may be—but I'm sure it is as I tell you.

Scand. 'Sdeath, it is a jest. I can't believe it.

Ben. Look you, friend; it is nothing to me, whether you believe it or no. What I say is true, d'ye see; they are married, or just going to be married, I know not which.

Fore. Well, but they are not mad, that is, not lunatic?

Ben. I don't know what you may call madness—but she's mad for a husband, and he's horn-mad, I think, or they'd never make a match together. Here they come.

Enter SIR SAMPSON, ANGELICA, *and* BUCKRAM.

Sir Sam. Where is this old soothsayer? this uncle of mine elect?—Aha! old Foresight! uncle Foresight! wish me joy, uncle Foresight, double joy, both as uncle and astrologer: here's a conjunction that was not foretold in all your Ephemeres! The brightest star in the blue firmament—is *shot from above, in a jelly of love,* and so forth; and I'm lord of the ascendant. Odd, you're an old fellow, Foresight—uncle, I mean; a very old fellow, uncle Foresight, and yet you shall live to dance at my wedding; faith and troth you shall. Odd, we'll have the music of the spheres for thee, old Lilly, that we will; and thou shalt lead up a dance in *via lactea.*

Fore. I'm thunder-struck! You are not married to my niece?

Sir Sam. Not absolutely married, uncle; but very near it; within a kiss of the matter, as you see. [*Kisses* ANGELICA.

Ang. 'Tis very true, indeed, uncle; I hope you'll be my father, and give me.

Sir Sam. That he shall, or I'll burn his globes. Body o'me, he shall be thy father: I'll make him thy father, and thou shalt make me a father, and I'll make thee a mother; and we'll beget sons and daughters enough to put the weekly bills out of countenance.

Scand. Death and hell! Where's Valentine? [*Exit.*

Mrs Fore. This is so surprising—

Sir Sam. How! What does my aunt say? sur-

prising, aunt? not at all, for a young couple to make a match in winter! Not at all—It's a plot to undermine cold weather, and destroy that usurper of a bed called a warming-pan.

Mrs Fore. I'm glad to hear you have so much fire in you, sir Sampson.

Ben. Mess, I fear his fire's little better than tinder; mayhap it will only serve to light a match for somebody else. The young woman's a handsome young woman, I can't deny it: but, father, if I might be your pilot in this case, you should not marry her. It is just the same thing as if so you should sail as far as the Streights without provision.

Sir Sam. Who gave you authority to speak, sirrah? To your element, fish; be mute, fish, and to sea. Rule your helm, sirrah; don't direct me.

Ben. Well, well, take you care of your own helm; or you mayn't keep your new vessel steady.

Sir Sam. Why, you impudent tarpawlin! sirrah, do you bring your forecastle jests upon your father? But I shall be even with you; I won't give you a groat. Mr Buckram, is the conveyance so worded, that nothing can possibly descend to this scoundrel? I would not so much as have him have the prospect of an estate, though there were no way to come to it, but by the north-east passage.

Buck. Sir, it is drawn according to your directions; there is not the least cranny of the law unstopt.

Ben. Lawyer, I believe there's many a cranny and leak unstopt in your conscience! If so be that one had a pump to your bosom, I believe we should discover a foul hold. They say, a witch will sail in a sieve—but, I believe the devil would not venture aboard your conscience. And that's for you.

Sir Sam. Hold your tongue, sirrah. How now? who's here?

Enter TATTLE, *and* MRS FRAIL.

Mrs Frail. O, sister, the most unlucky accident!

Mrs Fore. What's the matter?

Tatt. O, the two most unfortunate poor creatures in the world we are!

Fore. Bless us! how so?

Mrs Frail. Ah! Mr Tattle and I, poor Mr Tattle and I are—I can't speak it out.

Tatt. Nor I——But poor Mrs Frail and I are——

Mrs Frail. Married.

Fore. Married! How?

Tatt. Suddenly——before we knew where we were—that villain Jeremy, by the help of disguises, tricked us into one another.

Fore. Why, you told me just now, you went hence in haste to be married!

Ang. But I believe Mr Tattle meant the favour to me; I thank him.

Tatt. I did, as I hope to be saved, madam; my intentions were good. But this is the most cruel thing, to marry, one does not know how, nor why, nor wherefore. The devil take me, if ever I was so much concerned at any thing in my life!

Ang. 'Tis very unhappy, if you don't care for one another.

Tatt. The least in the world——that is, for my part, I speak for myself. Gad, I never had the least thought of serious kindness——I never liked any body less in my life. Poor woman! Gad, I'm sorry for her, too; for I have no reason to hate her neither; but, I believe I shall lead her a damned sort of a life.

Mrs Fore. He's better than no husband at all——though he's a coxcomb. [*To* FRAIL.

Mrs Frail. [*To her.*] Ay, ay, it's well it's no worse. Nay, for my part, I always despised Mr Tattle of all things; nothing but his being my husband could have made me like him less.

Tatt. Look you there, I thought as much! Pox on't, I wish we could keep it secret! why, I don't believe any of this company would speak of it.

Ben. If you suspect me, friend, I'll go out of the room.

Mrs Frail. But, my dear, that's impossible; the parson and that rogue Jeremy will publish it.

Tatt. Ay, my dear, so they will, as you say.

Ang. O, you'll agree very well in a little time; custom will make it easy for you.

Tatt. Easy! Pox on't, I don't believe I shall sleep to-night.

Sir Sam. Sleep, quotha! No; why, you would not sleep on your wedding-night? I'm an older fellow than you, and don't mean to sleep.

Ben. Why, there's another match, now, as thof a couple of privateers were looking for a prize, and should fall foul of one another. I'm sorry for the young man with all my heart. Look you, friend, if I may advise you, when she's going—for that you must expect, I have experience of her—when she's going, let her go. For no matrimony is tough enough to hold her; and if she can't drag her anchor along with her, she'll break her cable, I can tell you that. Who's here? the madman?

Enter VALENTINE, SCANDAL, *and* JEREMY.

Val. No; here's the fool; and, if occasion be, I'll give it under my hand.

Sir Sam. How now?

Val. Sir, I'm come to acknowledge my errors, and ask your pardon.

Sir Sam. What! have you found your senses at last, then? In good time, sir.

Val. You were abused, sir; I never was distracted.

Fore. How? not mad! Mr Scandal?

Scand. No, really, sir; I'm his witness, it was all counterfeit.

Val. I thought I had reasons——but it was a poor contrivance: the effect has shewn it such.

Sir Sam. Contrivance! what, to cheat me? to cheat your father! Sirrah, could you hope to prosper?

Val. Indeed, I thought, sir, when the father endeavoured to undo the son, it was a reasonable return of nature.

Sir Sam. Very good, sir. Mr Buckram, are you ready? Come, sir, will you sign and seal?

Val. If you please, sir; but, first, I would ask this lady one question.

Sir Sam. Sir, you must ask me leave first—— That lady! No, sir; you shall ask that lady no questions, till you have asked her blessing, sir; that lady is to be my wife.

Val. I have heard as much, sir; but I would have it from her own mouth.

Sir Sam. That's as much as to say I lie, sir, and you don't believe what I say?

Val. Pardon me, sir. But I reflect that I very lately counterfeited madness: I don't know but the frolic may go round.

Sir Sam. Come, chuck, satisfy him, answer him.——Come, Mr Buckram, the pen and ink.

Buck. Here it is, sir, with the deed; all is ready. [VAL. *goes to* ANG.

Ang. 'Tis true, you have a great while pretended love to me; nay, what if you were sincere? Still you must pardon me, if I think my own inclinations have a better right to dispose of my person, than yours.

Sir Sam. Are you answered now, sir?

Val. Yes, sir.

Sir Sam. Where's your plot, sir? and your contrivance now, sir? Will you sign, sir? Come, will you sign and seal?

Val. With all my heart, sir.

Scand. 'Sdeath, you are not mad, indeed? to ruin yourself?

Val. I have been disappointed of my only hope; and he that loses hope may part with any thing. I never valued fortune, but as it was subservient to my pleasure; and my only pleasure was to please this lady: I have made many vain attempts; and find, at last, that nothing but my ruin can effect it; which, for that reason, I will sign to. Give me the paper.

Ang. Generous Valentine! [*Aside.*

Buck. Here is the deed, sir.

Val. But where is the bond, by which I am obliged to sign this?

Buck. Sir Sampson, you have it.

Ang. No, I have it; and I'll use it, as I would every thing that is an enemy to Valentine. [*Tears the paper.*

Sir Sam. How now?

Val. Ha!

Ang. Had I the world to give you, it could not make me worthy of so generous and faithful a passion. Here's my hand; my heart was always yours, and struggled very hard to make this utmost trial of your virtue. [*To* VALENTINE.

Val. Between pleasure and amazement, I am lost—but, on my knees, I take the blessing.

Sir Sam. Oons, what is the meaning of this?

Ben. Mass, here's the wind changed again—Father, you and I may make a voyage together, now!

Ang. Well, sir Samson, since I have played you a trick, I'll advise you how you may avoid such another. Learn to be a good father, or you'll never get a second wife. I always loved your son, and hated your unforgiving nature. I was resolved to try him to the utmost; I have tried you, too, and know you both. You have not more faults than he has virtues; and it is hardly more pleasure to me, that I can make him and myself happy, than that I can punish you.

Sir Sam. Oons, you are a crocodile.

Fore. Really, sir Sampson, this is a sudden eclipse.

Sir Sam. You're an illiterate old fool; and I'm another.

Tatt. If the gentleman is in disorder for want of a wife, I can spare him mine. Oh, are you there, sir? I am indebted to you for my happiness. [*To* JEREMY.

Jer. Sir, I ask you ten thousand pardons: it was an arrant mistake. You see, sir, my master was never mad, nor any thing like it. Then, how can it be otherwise?

Val. Tattle, I thank you; you would have interposed between me and Heaven; but Providence laid purgatory in your way. You have but justice.

Scand. I hear the fiddles that sir Sampson provided for his own wedding; methinks it is pity they should not be employed when the match is so much mended. Valentine, though it be morning, we may have a dance.

Val. Any thing, my friend; every thing that looks like joy and transport.

Scand. Call them, Jeremy.

Ang. I have done dissembling now, Valentine; and if that coldness, which I have always worn before you, should turn to an extreme fondness, you must not suspect it.

Val. I'll prevent that suspicion—for I intend to doat to that immoderate degree, that your fondness shall never distinguish itself enough to be taken notice of. If ever you seem to love too much, it must be only when I cannot love enough.

Ang. Have a care of promises: you know you are apt to run more in debt than you are able to pay.

Val. Therefore, I yield my body as your prisoner, and make your best on't.

Scand. [*To* ANGELICA.] Well, madam, you

have done exemplary justice, in punishing an inhuman father, and rewarding a faithful lover:—but there is a third good work, which I, in particular, must thank you for: I was an infidel to your sex, and you have converted me—for now I am convinced, that all women are not, like fortune, blind in bestowing favours, either on those who do not merit, or who do not want them.

Ang. It is an unreasonable accusation, that you lay upon our sex. You tax us with injustice, only to cover your own want of merit. You would all have the reward of love; but few have the constancy to stay till it becomes your due.—Men are generally hypocrites and infidels; they pretend to worship, but have neither zeal nor faith. How few, like Valentine, would persevere even to martyrdom, and sacrifice their interest to their inconstancy! In admiring me, you misplace the novelty.

The miracle to-day is, that we find
A lover true; not that a woman's kind.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

CONSTANT COUPLE;

OR,

A TRIP TO THE JUBILEE.

BY

FARQUHAR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR HARRY WILDAIR, *a gay man of fashion.*
BEAU CLINCHER, *an ignorant coxcomb.*
COLONEL STANDARD, *attached to Lady Lurewell.*
ALDERMAN SMUGGLER, *a city dotard.*
CLINCHER Junior, *a raw blockhead.*
VIZARD, *a hypocrite, pretending to Lady Lurewell.*
DICKY, *a pimp.*
TOM ERRAND, *a porter.*

WOMEN.

ANGELICA, *attached to Sir Harry Wildair.*
LADY DARLING, *mother to Angelica.*
PARLY, *servant to Lady Lurewell.*
LADY LUREWELL, *an artful coquette.*

Scene—London.

ACT. I.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

Enter VIZARD *with a letter, his servant following.*

Viz. ANGELICA send it back unopened! say you?

Ser. As you see, sir.

Viz. The pride of these virtuous women is more insufferable than the immodesty of prostitutes—After all my encouragement, to slight me thus!

Ser. She said, sir, that imagining your morals sincere, she gave you access to her conversation; but that your late behaviour in her company has convinced her that your love and your religion are both hypocrisy, and that she believes your letter, like yourself, fair on the outside, and foul within; so sent it back unopened.

Viz. May obstinacy guard her beauty till wrinkles bury it! then, may desire prevail to make her curse that untimely pride her disappointed age repents! I'll be revenged the very first opportunity——Saw you the old lady Darling, her mother?

Ser. Yes, sir, and she was pleased to say much in your commendation.

Viz. That's my cue——An esteem grafted in old age is hardly rooted out; years stiffen their opinions with their bodies, and old zeal is only to be cozened by young hypocrisy. [*Aside.*] Run to the lady Lurewell's, and know of her maid whether her ladyship will be at home this even-

ing. Her beauty is sufficient cure for Angelica's scorn.

[*Exit servant.* VIZARD *pulls out a book, reads, and walks about.*]

Enter SMUGGLER.

Smug. Ay, there's a pattern for the young men o' the times! at his meditation so early! some book of pious ejaculations, I'm sure.

Viz. This Hobbes is an excellent fellow!—[*Aside.*] Oh, uncle Smuggler! To find you at this end o' the town is a miracle

Smug. I have seen a miracle this morning, indeed, cousin Vizard.

Viz. What is it, pray, sir?

Smug. A man at his devotion so near the court——I'm very glad, boy, that you keep your sanctity untainted in this infectious place; the very air of this park is heathenish, and every man's breath I meet scents of atheism.

Viz. Surely, sir, some great concern must bring you to this unsanctified end of the town.

Smug. A very unsanctified concern truly, cousin.

Viz. What is it?

Smug. A law-suit, boy——Shall I tell you?—My ship, the Swan, is newly arrived from St Sebastian, laden with Portugal wines: now, the impudent rogue of a tide-waiter has the face to affirm it is French wines in Spanish casks, and has indicted me upon the statute——Oh, conscience! conscience! these tide-waiters and surveyors plague us more with their French wines, than the war did with French privateers——Ay, there's another plague of the nation—

Enter COLONEL STANDARD.

A red coat and feather.

Viz. Colonel Standard, I'm your humble servant.

Stand. May be not, sir.

Viz. Why so?

Stand. Because——I'm disbanded.

Viz. How! Broke?

Stand. This very morning, in Hyde-Park, my brave regiment, a thousand men, that looked like lions yesterday, were scattered, and looked as poor and simple as the herd of deer that grazed beside them.

Smug. Tal, al, deral. [*Singing.*]I'll have a bonfire this night as high as the monument.

Stand. A bonfire! Thou dry, withered, illnature! had not those brave fellows' swords defended you, your house had been a bonfire ere this about your ears.—Did we not venture our lives, sir?

Smug. And did we not pay for your lives, sir? Venture your lives! I'm sure we ventured our money, and that's life and soul to me.——Sir, we'll maintain you no longer.

Stand. Then your wives shall, old Actæon. There are five and thirty strapping officers gone this morning to live upon free quarters in the city.

Smug. Oh, lord! Oh, lord! I shall have a son within these nine months born with a leading staff in his hand.——Sir, you are——

Stand. What, sir?

Smug. Sir, I say that you are——

Stand. What, sir?

Smug. Disbanded, sir, that's all——I see the lawyer yonder. [*Exit.*

Viz. Sir, I'm very sorry for your misfortune.

Stand. Why so? I don't come to borrow money of you. If you're my friend, meet me this evening at the Rummer: I'll pay my club, dring a health to my king, prosperity to my country, and away for Hungary to-morrow morning.

Viz. What! you won't leave us?

Stand. What! a soldier stay here, to look like an old pair of colours in Westminster Hall, ragged and rusty! No, no——I met yesterday a broken lieutenant; he was ashamed to own that he wanted a dinner, but begged eighteenpence of me to buy a new scabbard for his sword.

Viz. Oh, but you have good friends, colonel!

Stand. Oh, very good friends! My father's a lord, and my elder brother a beau; mighty good friends, indeed!

Viz. But your country may perhaps want your sword again.

Stand. Nay, for that matter, let but a single drum beat up for volunteers between Ludgate and Charing-Cross, and I shall undoubtedly hear it at the walls of Buda.

Viz. Come, come, colonel, there are ways of making your fortune at home——Make your addresses to the fair; you're a man of honour and courage.

Stand. Ay, my courage is like to do me wondrous service with the fair. This pretty cross cut over my eye will attract a duchess—I warrant 'twill be a mighty grace to my ogling——Had I used the stratagem of a certain brother colonel of mine, I might succeed.

Viz. What was it, pray?

Stand. Why, to save his pretty face for the women, he always turned his back upon the enemy.——He was a man of honour for the ladies.

Viz. Come, come, the loves of Mars and Venus will never fail; you must get a mistress.

Stand. Prithee, no more on't—You have awakened a thought, from which, and the kingdom, I would have stolen away at once.—To be plain, I have a mistress.

Viz. And she's cruel?

Stand. No.

Viz. Her parents prevent your happiness?

Stand. Not that.

Viz. Then she has no fortune?

Stand. A large one. Beauty to tempt all man-

kind, and virtue to beat off their assaults. Oh, Vizard! such a creature!

Enter SIR HARRY WILDAIR, *crosses the stage singing, with Footmen after him.*

Hey-day! Who the devil have we here?

Viz. The joy of the play-house, and life of the park; Sir Harry Wildair, newly come from Paris.

Stand. Sir Harry Wildair! Did not he make a campaign in Flanders some three or four years ago?

Viz. The same.

Stand. Why, he behaved himself very bravely.

Viz. Why not? Dost think bravery and gaiety are inconsistent? He's a gentleman of most happy circumstances, born to a plentiful estate; has had a genteel and easy education, free from the rigidness of teachers, and pedantry of schools. His florid constitution, being never ruffled by misfortune, nor stinted in its pleasures, has rendered him entertaining to others, and easy to himself: turning all passion into gaiety of humour, by which he chooses rather to rejoice with his friends, than be hated by any, as you shall see.

Re-enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Ha, Vizard!

Viz. Sir Harry!

Wild. Who thought to find you out of the Rubric so long; I thought thy hypocrisy had been wedded to a pulpit-cushion long ago.—Sir, if I mistake not your face, your name is Standard?

Stand. Sir Harry, I'm your humble servant.

Wild. Come, gentlemen, the news, the news o' the town, for I'm just arrived.

Viz. Why, in the city-end o' the town, we're playing the knave, to get estates.

Stand. And in the court-end playing the fool, in spending them.

Wild. Just so in Paris. I'm glad we're grown so modish.

Viz. And hypocrisy for religion.

Wild. A-la-mode de Paris again.

Viz. Not one whore between Ludgate and Aldgate.

Stand. But ten times more cuckolds than ever.

Viz. Nothing like an oath in the city.

Stand. That's a mistake; for my major swore a hundred and fifty last night to a merchant's wife in her bed-chamber,

Wild. Pshaw! this is trifling; tell me news, gentlemen. What lord has lately broke his fortune at the Groom-Porter's? or his heart at Newmarket, for the loss of a race? What wife has been lately suing in Doctor's-Commons for alimony; or what daughter run away with her father's valet? What beau gave the noblest ball at the Bath, or had the finest coach in the ring? I want news, gentlemen.

Stand. Faith, sir, these are no news at all.

Viz. But pray, sir Harry, tell us some news of your travels.

Wild. With all my heart.—You must know, then, I went over to Amsterdam in a Dutch ship: I there had a Dutch whore for five stivers. I went from thence to Landen, where I was heartily drubbed in the battle with the butt-end of a Swiss musket. I thence went to Paris, where I had half a dozen intrigues, bought half a dozen new suits, fought a couple of duels, and here I am again *in statu quo.*

Viz. But we heard that you designed to make the tour of Italy; what brought you back so soon?

Wild. That which brought you into the world, and may perhaps carry you out of it; a woman.

Stand. What! quit the pleasures of travel for a woman?

Wild. Ay, colonel, for such a woman! I had rather see her ruelle than the palace of Lewis le Grand. There's more glory in her smile, than in the Jubilee at Rome; and I would rather kiss her hand, than the Pope's toe.

Viz. You, colonel, have been very lavish in the beauty and virtue of your mistress; and sir Harry, here, has been no less eloquent in the praise of his. Now, will I lay you both ten guineas a piece, that neither of them is so pretty, so witty, or so virtuous, as mine.

Stand. 'Tis done.

Wild. I'll double the stakes—But, gentlemen, now I think on it, how shall we be resolved?—For I know not where my mistress may be found; she left Paris about a month before me, and I had an account——

Stand. How, sir! left Paris about a month before you?

Wild. Yes, sir, and I had an account that she lodged somewhere in St James's.

Viz. How! somewhere in St James, say you?

Wild. Aye, sir, but I know not where, and perhaps mayn't find her this fortnight.

Stand. Her name, pray, sir Harry.

Viz. Aye, aye, her name; perhaps, we know her.

Wild. Her name! Ay; she has the softest, whitest hand that e'er was made of flesh and blood; her lips so balmy sweet——

Stand. But her name, sir.

Wild. Then her neck and breast; her breasts do so heave, so heave. [*Singing.*

Viz. But her name, sir; her quality.

Wild. Then her shape, colonel!

Stand. But her name I want, sir.

Wild. Then her eyes, Vizard!

Viz. Pshaw, sir Harry, her name, or nothing.

Wild. Then if you must have it, she's called the lady ——But then her foot, gentlemen; she dances to a miracle. Vizard, you have certainly lost your wager.

Viz. Why, you have certainly lost your senses; we shall never discover the picture, unless you subscribe the name.

Wild. Then, her name is Lurewell.

Stand. S'death my mistress! [*Aside.*

Viz. My mistress, by Jupiter! [*Aside.*

Wild. Do you know her, gentlemen?

Stand. I have seen her, sir.

Wild. Can'st tell where she lodges? Tell me, dear colonel.

Stand. Your humble servant, sir. [*Exit.*

Wild. Nay, hold, colonel; I'll follow you, and will know. [*Runs out.*

Viz. The lady Lurewell his mistress! he loves her: but she loves me. But he's a baronet, and I plain Vizard; he has a coach and six, and I walk on foot; I was bred in London, and he in Paris. That very circumstance has murdered me ——Then, some stratagem must be laid to divert his pretensions.

Re-enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Prithee, Dick, what makes the colonel so out of humour?

Viz. Because he's out of pay, I suppose.

Wild. 'Slife, that's true; I was beginning to mistrust some rivalship in the case.

Viz. And suppose there were; you know the colonel can fight, sir Harry.

Wild. Fight! Pshaw—but he cannot dance, ha! We contend for a woman, Vizard. 'Slife, man, if ladies were to be gained by sword and pistol only, what the devil should all we beaus do?

Viz. I'll try him farther. [*Aside.*] But would not you, sir Harry, fight for this woman you so much admire?

Wild. Fight! Let me consider. I love her—that's true; but, then, I love honest sir Harry Wildair better. The lady Lurewell is divinely charming—right—but, then, a thrust i' the guts, or a Middlesex jury, is as ugly as the devil.

Viz. Aye, sir Harry, 'twere a dangerous cast for a beau-baronet to be tried by a parcel of greasy, grumbling, bartering boobies, who would hang you, purely because you're a gentleman.

Wild. Aye, but, on t'other hand, I have money enough to bribe the rogues with: so, upon mature deliberation, I would fight for her. But no more of her. Prithee, Vizard, cannot you recommend a friend to a pretty mistress by the bye, till I can find my own? You have store, I am sure; you cunning poaching dogs make surer game, than we that hunt open and fair. Prithee now, good Vizard.

Viz. Let me consider a little. Now, love and fortune inspire my politics. [*Aside.*

[*Pauses, whilst* SIR HARRY *walks singing.*

Wild. Pshaw! thou'rt as long studying for a new mistress, as a drawer is piercing a new pipe.

Viz. I design a new pipe for you, and wholesome wine; you'll therefore bear a little expectation.

Wild. Ha! sayst thou, dear Vizard?

Viz. A girl of sixteen, sir Harry.

Wild. Now sixteen thousand blessings rest on thee!

Viz. Pretty and witty.

Wild. Aye, aye, but her name, Vizard.

Viz. Her name! yes——she has the softest, whitest hand, that e'er was made of flesh and blood; her lips so balmy sweet—

Wild. Well, well, but where shall I find her, man?

Viz. Find her! but then her foot, sir Harry; she dances to a miracle.

Wild. Prithee, don't distract me.

Viz. Well, then, you must know, that this lady is the greatest beauty in town; her name's Angelica: she that passes for her mother is a private bawd, and called the lady Darling; she goes for a baronet's lady, (no disparagement to your honour, sir Harry) I assure you.

Wild. Pshaw, hang my honour; but what street, what house?

Viz. Not so fast, sir Harry; you must have my passport for your admittance, and you'll find my recommendation in a line or two will procure you very civil entertainment; I suppose twenty or thirty pieces, handsomely placed, will gain the point: I'll ensure her sound.

Wild. Thou dearest friend to a man in necessity! Here, sirrah, order my coach about to St James's; I'll walk across the park.

[*To his servant.*

Enter CLINCHER, *senior.*

Clin. Here, sirrah, order my coach about to St James's; I'll walk across the Park, too—Mr Vizard, your most devoted—Sir, [*To* WILDAIR.]—I admire the mode of your shoulder-knot; methinks it hangs very emphatically, and carries an air of travel in it; your sword-knot, too, is most ornamentally modish, and bears a foreign mien. Gentlemen, my brother is just arrived in town; so that, being upon the wing to kiss his hands, I hope you will pardon this abrupt departure of, gentlemen, your most devoted, and most faithful humble servant. [*Exit* CLINCHER.

Wild. Prithee, dost know him?

Viz. Know him! why, it is Clincher, who was apprentice to my uncle Smuggler, the merchant in the city.

Wild. What makes him so gay?

Viz. Why, he's in mourning.

Wild. In mourning?

Viz. Yes, for his father. The kind old man in Hertfordshire t'other day broke his neck a fox-hunting; the son upon the news has broke his indentures; whipped from behind the corner

into the side-box, forswears merchandise, where he must live by cheating, and usurps gentility, where he may die by raking. He keeps his coach and liveries, brace of geldings, leash of mistresses, talks of nothing but wines, intrigues, plays, fashions, and going to the jubilee.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha! how many pounds of pulvil must the fellow use in sweetening himself from the smell of hops and tobacco? Faugh—In my conscience, methought, like Olivia's lover, he stunk of Thames-street. But now for Angelica, that's her name: we'll to the prince's chocolate-house, where you shall write my passport. *Allons!*

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—LADY LUREWELL'S *lodgings.*

Enter LUREWELL, *and her maid* PARLY.

Lure. Parly, my pocket book—let me see—Madrid, Paris, Venice, London! Aye, London! They may talk what they will of the hot countries, but I find love most fruitful under this climate—In a month's space have I gained—let me see—*imprimis,* colonel Standard.

Par. And how will your ladyship manage him?

Lure. As all soldiers should be managed; he shall serve me till I gain my ends; then I'll disband him.

Par. But he loves you, madam.

Lure. Therefore, I scorn him; I hate all that don't love me, and slight all that do; would his whole deluding sex admired me! Thus would I slight them all. My virgin and unwary innocence was wronged by faithless man; but now, glance eyes, plot brain, dissemble face, lie tongue, and be a second Eve to tempt, seduce, and plague the treacherous kind! Let me survey my captives: The colonel leads the van; next Mr Vizard; he courts me out of the practice of piety, therefore is a hypocrite; then Cimcher; he adores me with orangerie, and is consequently a fool; then my old merchant, Alderman Smuggler; he's a compound of both; out of which medley of lovers, if I don't make good diversion—What dy'e think, Parly?

Par. I think, madam, I'm like to be very virtuous in your service, if you teach me all those tricks that you use to your lovers.

Lure. You're a fool, child; observe this, that though a woman swear, forswear, lie, dissemble, back-bite, be proud, vain, malicious, any thing, if she secures the main chance, she's still virtuous; that's a maxim.

Par. I cannot be persuaded though, madam, but that you really loved sir Harry Wildair in Paris.

Lure. Of all the lovers I ever had, he was my greatest plague, for I could never make him uneasy: I left him involved in a duel upon my account: I long to know whether the fop be killed or not.

Enter STANDARD.

Oh lord! no sooner talk of killing, but the soldier is conjured up. You're upon hard duty, colonel, to serve your king, your country, and a mistress, too.

Stand. The latter, I must confess, is the hardest; for, in war, madam, we can be relieved in our duty; but, in love, he who would take our post, is our enemy; emulation in glory is transporting, but rivals here intolerable.

Lure. Those, that bear away the prize in the field, should boast the same success in the bed-chamber; and, I think, considering the weakness of our sex, we should make those our companions who can be our champions.

Stand. I once, madam, hoped the honour of defending you from all injuries, through a title to your lovely person; but now my love must attend my fortune. My commission, madam, was my passport to the fair; adding a nobleness to my passion, it stampt a value on my love: 'twas once the life of honour, but now its winding-sheet, and with it must my love be buried.

Par. What! disbanded, colonel?

Stand. Yes, Mrs Parly.

Par. Faugh, the nauseous fellow! he smells of poverty already. [*Aside.*

Lure. His misfortune troubles me, because it may prevent my designs. [*Aside.*

Stand. I'll choose, madam, rather to destroy my passion by absence abroad, than have it starved at home.

Lure. I'm sorry, sir, you have so mean an opinion of my affection, as to imagine it founded upon your fortune. And, to convince you of your mistake, here I vow, by all that's sacred, I own the same affection now as before. Let it suffice; my fortune is considerable.

Stand. No, madam, no; I'll never be a charge to her I love! The man, that sells himself for gold, is the worst of prostitutes!

Lure. Now, were he any other creature but a man, I could love him. [*Aside.*

Stand. This only last request I make, that no title recommend a fool, no office introduce a knave, nor coat a coward, to my place in your affections; so, farewell my country, and adieu my love! [*Exit.*

Lure. Now the devil take thee for being so honourable! here, Parly, call him back; I shall lose half my diversion else. Now for a trial of skill!

Re-enter STANDARD.

Sir, I hope you'll pardon my curiosity. When do you take your journey?

Stand. To-morrow morning, early, madam.

Lure. So suddenly! which way are you designed to travel?

Stand. That I can't yet resolve on.

Lure. Pray, sir, tell me; pray, sir, I entreat you; why are you so obstinate?

Stand. Why are you so curious, madam?

Lure. Because——

Stand. What?

Lure. Because I, I——

Stand Because! What, madam?—Pray tell me.

Lure. Because I design to follow you [*Crying.*

Stand. Follow me! By all that's great, I ne'er was proud before. But such love, from such a creature, might swell the vanity of the proudest prince. Follow me! By Heavens thou shalt not! What! expose thee to the hazards of a camp—Rather I'll stay, and here bear the contempt of fools, and worst of fortune.

Lure. You need not, shall not; my estate for both is sufficient.

Stand. Thy estate! No, I'll turn a knave, and purchase one myself; I'll cringe to the proud man I undermine, and fawn on him that I would bite to death; I'll tip my tongue with flattery, and smooth my face with smiles; I'll turn pimp, informer, office-broker, nay, coward, to be great; and sacrifice it all to thee, my generous fair!

Lure. And I'll dissemble, lie, swear, jilt, any thing, but I'll reward thy love, and recompense thy noble passion.

Stand. Sir Harry, ha, ha, ha! poor sir Harry, ha, ha, ha! Rather kiss her hand, than the Pope's toe, ha, ha, ha!

Lure. What sir Harry, colonel? What sir Harry?

Stand. Sir Harry Wildair, madam.

Lure. What! is he come over?

Stand. Ay, and he told me—but I don't believe a syllable on't.

Lure. What did he tell you?

Stand. Only called you his mistress, and, pretending to be extravagant in your commendation, would vainly insinuate the praise of his own judgment and good fortune in a choice.

Lure. How easily is the vanity of fops tickled by our sex!

Stand. Why, your sex is the vanity of fops.

Lure. On my conscience, I believe so. This gentleman, because he danced well, I pitched on for a partner at a ball in Paris, and, ever since, he has so persecuted me with letters, songs, dances, serenading, flattery, foppery, and noise, that I was forced to fly the kingdom——And I warrant you he made you jealous.

Stand. Faith, madam, I was a little uneasy.

Lure You shall have a plentiful revenge. I'll send him back all his foolish letters, songs, and verses, and you yourself shall carry them: 'twill afford you opportunity of triumphing, and free me from his further impertinence; for, of all men, he's my aversion. I'll run and fetch them instantly. [*Exit.*

Stand. Dear madam, a rare project! Now shall I bait him, like Actæon, with his own dogs ——Well, Mrs Parly, it is ordered, by act of parliament, that you receive no more pieces, Mrs Parly.

Par. 'Tis provided by the same act, that you send no more messages by me, good colonel; you must not presume to send any more letters, unless you can pay the postage.

Stand. Come, come, don't be mercenary; take example by your lady; be honourable.

Par. A-lack-a-day, sir, it shews as ridiculous and haughty for us to imitate our betters in their honour, as in their finery; leave honour to nobility, that can support it: we poor folks, colonel, have no pretence to't; and truly, I think, sir, that your honour should be cashiered with your leading-staff.

Stand. 'Tis one of the greatest curses of poverty, to be the jest of chambermaids.

Enter LUREWELL.

Lure. Here's the packet, colonel; the whole magazine of love's artillery.

[*Giving him the packet.*

Stand. Which, since I have gained, I will turn upon the enemy. Madam, I'll bring you the news of my victory this evening. Poor sir Harrry! ha, ha, ha! [*Exit.*

Lure. To the right about as you were; march, colonel. Ha, ha, ha!

Vain man, who boasts of studied parts and wiles!
Nature in us your deepest art beguiles,
Stamping deep cunning in our frowns and smiles.
You toil for art, your intellects you trace;
Woman, without a thought, bears policy in her face. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—CLINCHER *junior's lodgings.*

Enter CLINCHER, *opening a letter; servant following.*

Clin. [*Reads.*] 'DEAR brother, I will see 'you presently: I have sent this lad to wait on 'you; he can instruct you in the fashions of the 'town. I am your affectionate brother, CLINCHER.' Very well; and what's your name, sir?

Dick. My name is Dicky, sir.

Clin. Dicky!

Dick. Ay, Dicky, sir.

Clin. Very well; a pretty name! And what can you do, Mr Dicky?

Dick. Why, sir, I can powder a wig, and pick up a whore.

Clin. Oh, lord! Oh, lord! a whore! Why, are there many whores in this town?

Dick. Ha, ha, ha! many whores! there's a question, indeed! Why, sir, there are above five hundred surgeons in town——Hark'e, sir: do you see that woman there, in the velvet scarf, and red knots?

Clin. Ay, sir; what then?

Dick. Why, she shall be at your service in three minutes, as I'm a pimp.

Clin. Oh, Jupiter Ammon! Why, she's a gentlewoman.

Dick. A gentlewoman! Why, so are all the whores in town, sir.

Enter CLINCHER *senior.*

Clin. sen. Brother, you're welcome to London.

Clin. jun. I thought, brother, you owed so much to the memory of my father, as to wear mourning for his death.

Clin. sen. Why, so I do, fool; I wear this, because I have the estate, and you wear that, because you have not the estate. You have cause to mourn indeed, brother. Well, brother, I'm glad to see you; fare you well. [*Going.*

Clin. jun. Stay, stay, brother—Where are you going?

Clin. sen. How natural 'tis for a country booby to ask impertinent questions!—Hark'e, sir; is not my father dead?

Clin. jun. Ay, ay, to my sorrow.

Clin. sen. No matter for that, he's dead; and am not I a young, powdered, extravagant English heir?

Clin. jun. Very right, sir.

Clin. sen. Why, then, sir, you may be sure that I am going to the Jubilee, sir.

Clin. jun. Jubilee! What's that?

Clin. sen. Jubilee! Why, the Jubilee is——Faith, I don't know what it is.

Dick. Why, the Jubilee is the same thing as our lord Mayor's day in the city; there will be pageants, and squibs, and raree-shows, and all that, sir.

Clin. jun. And must you go so soon, brother?

Clin. sen. Yes, sir, for I must stay a month at Amsterdam, to study poetry.

Clin. jun. Then I suppose, brother, you travel through Muscovy, to learn fashions; don't you, brother?

Clin. sen. Brother! Prithee, Robin, don't call me brother; sir will do every jot as well.

Clin. jun. Oh, Jupiter Ammon! why so?

Clin. sen. Because people will imagine you have a spite at me—But have you seen your cousin Angelica yet, and her mother, the lady Darling?

Clin. jun. No; my dancing-master has not been with me yet. How shall I salute them, brother?

Clin. sen. Pshaw! that's easy; 'tis only two scrapes, a kiss, and your humble servant. I'll tell you more when I come from the Jubilee. Come along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—LADY DARLING'S *house.*

Enter WILDAIR *with a letter.*

Wild. Like light and heat, incorporate we lay;
We blessed the night, and cursed the coming day.

Well, if this paper-kite flies sure, I'm secure of my game——Humph!—the prettiest bourdel I have seen; a very stately genteel one——

Footmen cross the stage.

Hey-day! equipage, too! Now for a bawd by the curtesy, and a whore with a coat of arms——'Sdeath, I'm afraid I've mistaken the house!

Enter LADY DARLING.

No, this must be the bawd, by her bulk.

Lady Dar. Your business, pray, sir?

Wild. Pleasure, madam.

Lady Dar. Then, sir, you have no business here.

Wild. This letter, madam, will inform you farther. Mr Vizard sent it, with his humble service to your ladyship.

Lady Dar. How does my cousin, sir?

Wild. Aye, her cousin, too! that's right procuress again. [*Aside.*

Lady Dar. [*Reads.*]—'Madam—earnest in-'clination to serve—sir Harry—madam—court 'my cousin—gentleman—fortune——

'Your ladyship's most humble servant, VIZARD.'

Sir, your fortune and quality are sufficient to recommend you any where; but what goes farther with me, is the recommendation of so sober and pious a young gentleman as my cousin Vizard.

Wild. A right sanctified bawd, o' my word!
[*Aside.*

Lady Dar. Sir Harry, your conversation with Mr Vizard argues you a gentleman, free from the loose and vicious carriage of the town. I shall, therefore, call my daughter.
[*Exit* LADY DARLING.

Wild. Now, go thy way, for an illustrious bawd of Babylon—she dresses up a sin so religiously, that the devil would hardly know it of his making.

Re-enter LADY DARLING *with* ANGELICA.

Lady Dar. Pray, daughter, use him civilly; such matches don't offer every day.
[*Exit* LADY DARLING.

Wild. Oh, all ye powers of love! an angel! 'Sdeath, what money have I got in my pocket? I cannot offer her less than twenty guineas—and, by Jupiter, she's worth a hundred.

Ang. 'Tis he! the very same! and his person as agreeable as his character of good humour—Pray Heaven his silence proceed from respect!

Wild. How innocent she looks! How would that modesty adorn virtue, when it makes even vice look so charming! by Heaven, there's such a commanding innocence in her looks, that I dare not ask the question!

Ang. Now, all the charms of real love, and feigned indifference, assist me to engage his heart; for mine is lost already!

Wild. Madam—I, I—Zoons, I cannot speak to her! but she's a whore, and I will—madam, in short, I, I—oh, hypocrisy, hypocrisy, what a charming sin art thou!

Ang. He is caught; now to secure my conquest——I thought, sir, you had business to communicate.

Wild. Business to communicate! how nicely she words it! Yes, madam, I have a little business to communicate. Don't you love singing-birds, madam?

Ang. That's an odd question for a lover——yes, sir.

Wild. Why, then, madam, here is a nest of the prettiest goldfinches that ever chirped in a cage; twenty young ones, I assure you, madam.

Ang. Twenty young ones! what then, sir?

Wild. Why, then, madam, there are——twenty young ones——'Slife, I think twenty is pretty fair.

Ang. He's mad, sure! sir Harry, when you have learned more wit and manners, you shall be welcome here again.
[*Exit* ANGELICA.

Wild. Wit and manners! 'Egad, now, I conceive there is a great deal of wit and manners in twenty guineas——I'm sure 'tis all the wit and manners I have about me at present. What shall I do?

Enter CLINCHER *Jun. and* DICKY.

What the devil's here? another cousin, I warrant ye! Harkee, sir, can you lend me ten or a dozen guineas instantly? I'll pay you fifteen for them in three hours, upon my honour.

Clin. jun. These London sparks are plaguy impudent! This fellow, by his wig and assurance, can be no less than a courtier.

Dick. He's rather a courtier by his borrowing.

Clin. jun. Faith, sir, I han't above five guineas about me.

Wild. What business have you here, then, sir? For, to my knowledge, twenty won't be sufficient.

Clin. jun. Sufficient! for what, sir?

Wild. What, sir! why, for that, sir; what the devil should it be, sir? I know your business, notwithstanding all your gravity, sir.

Clin. jun. My business! why, my cousin lives here.

Wild. I know your cousin does live here, and Vizard's cousin, and every body's cousin—harkee, sir, I shall return immediately; and if you offer to touch her, till I come back, I shall cut your throat, rascal.
[*Exit* WILDAIR.

Clin. jun. Why, the man's mad, sure!

Dick. Mad, sir! aye—why, he's a beau.

Clin. jun. A beau! what's that? are all madmen beaux?

Dick. No, sir; but most beaux are madmen. But now for your cousin. Remember, your three scrapes, a kiss, and your humble servant.
[*Exeunt, as into the house.*

Enter WILDAIR, STANDARD *following.*

Stand. Sir Harry, sir Harry!

Wild. I am in haste, colonel; besides, if you're in no better humour than when I parted with you in the park this morning, your company won't be very agreeable.

Stand. You're a happy man, sir Harry, who are never out of humour. Can nothing move your gall, sir Harry?

Wild. Nothing but impossibilities, which are the same as nothing.

Stand. What impossibilities?

Wild. The resurrection of my father to disinherit me, or an act of parliament against wenching. A man of eight thousand pounds per annum to be vexed! No, no; anger and spleen are companions for younger brothers.

Stand. Suppose one called you a son of a whore behind your back.

Wild. Why, then would I call him rascal behind his back; so we're even.

Stand. But suppose you had lost a mistress.

Wild. Why, then I would get another.

Stand. But suppose you were discarded by the woman you love? that would surely trouble you.

Wild. You're mistaken, colonel; my love is neither romantically honourable, nor meanly mercenary; 'tis only a pitch of gratitude; while she loves me, I love her; when she desists, the obligation's void.

Stand. But to be mistaken in your opinion, sir; if the lady Lurewell (only suppose it) had discarded you—I say, only suppose it—and had sent your discharge by me.

Wild. Pshaw! that's another impossibility.

Stand. Are you sure of that?

Wild. Why, 'twere a solecism in nature. Why she's a rib of me, sir. She dances with me, sings with me, plays with me, swears with me, lies with me.

Stand. How, sir?

Wild. I mean in an honourable way; that is, she lies for me. In short, we are as like one another as a couple of guineas.

Stand. Now that I have raised you to the highest pinnacle of vanity, will I give you so mortifying a fall, as shall dash your hopes to pieces. I pray your honour to peruse these papers.

[*Gives him the packet.*

Wild. What is't, the muster-roll of your regiment, colonel?

Stand. No, no; 'tis a list of your forces in your last love compaign; and, for your comfort, all disbanded.

Wild. Prithee, good metaphorical colonel, what d'ye mean?

Stand. Read, sir, read; these are the Sibyl's leaves that will unfold your destiny.

Wild. So it be not a false deed to cheat me of my estate, what care I—[*Opening the packet.*]—Humph! my hand! To the lady Lurewell—To the lady Lurewell—To the lady Lurewell—what the devil hast thou been tampering with, to conjure up these spirits?

Stand. A certain familiar of your acquaintance, sir. Read, read.

Wild. [*Reading.*]—'Madam, my passion—so 'natural——your beauty contending——force of 'charms—mankind—eternal admirer, Wildair.'—I ne'er was ashamed of my name before.

Stand. What, sir Harry Wildair out of humour! ha, ha, ha! poor sir Harry! more glory in her smile, than in the jubilee at Rome; ha, ha, ha! but then her foot, sir Harry; she dances to a miracle! ha, ha, ha! fie, sir Harry, a man of your parts write letters not worth keeping! what say'st thou, my dear knight-errant? ha, ha, ha! you may seek adventures now, indeed.

Wild. [*Sings.*]—No, no, let her wander, &c.

Stand. You are jilted to some tune, sir; blown up with false music, that's all.

Wild. Now, why should I be angry that a woman is a woman? Since inconstancy and falsehood are grounded in their natures, how can they help it?

Stand. Then they must be grounded in your nature: for she's a rib of you, sir Harry.

Wild. Here's a copy of verses, too: I must turn poet, in the devil's name—stay—'sdeath, what's here? This is her hand—oh, the charming characters!—[*Reading.*]—'My dear Wildair,'—that's I, 'egad!—'this huff-bluff colonel'—that's he—'is the rarest fool in nature,'—the devil he is!—'and as such have I used him.'—With all my heart, faith—'I had no better way of letting you know, that I lodge in St James's, near the Holy Lamb. Lurewell.'—Colonel, I am your most humble servant.

Stand. Hold, sir, you sha'nt go yet; I ha'nt delivered half my message.

Wild. Upon my faith but you have, colonel.

Stand. Well, well, own your spleen; out with it; I know you're like to burst.

Wild. I am so, 'egad; ha, ha, ha!

[*Laugh and point at one another.*

Stand. Aye, with all my heart, ha, ha, ha! well, well, that's forced, sir Harry.

Wild. I was never better pleased in all my life, by Jupiter!

Stand. Well, sir Harry, 'tis prudence to hide your concern, when there's no help for it. But, to be serious, now; the lady has sent you back all your papers there——I was so just as not to look upon them.

Wild. I'm glad on't, sir; for there were some things that I would not have you see.

Stand. All this she has done for my sake, and I desire you would decline any further pretensions for your own sake. So, honest, good-natured sir Harry, I'm your humble servant.

[*Exit* STANDARD.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha! poor colonel? oh, the delight of an ingenious mistress! what a life and briskness it adds to an amour, like the loves of mighty Jove, still suing in different shapes. A legerdemain mistress, who, presto! pass! and she's vanished; then hey! in an instant in your arms again! [*Going.*

Enter VIZARD.

Viz. Well met, sir Harry—what news from the island of love?

Wild. Faith, we made but a broken voyage by your chart; but now I'm bound for another port: I told you the colonel was my rival.

Viz. The colonel——cursed misfortune! another. [*Aside.*

Wild. But the civilest in the world; he brought me word where my mistress lodges. The story's too long to tell you now, for I must fly.

Viz. What, have you given over all thoughts of Angelica?

Wild. No, no; I'll think of her some other time. But now for the lady Lurewell. Wit and beauty call.

That mistress ne'er can pall her lover's joys,
Whose wit can whet, whene'er her beauty cloys.

Her little am'rous frauds all truths excel,
And make us happy, being deceived so well.
[*Exit.*

Viz. The colonel my rival, too!——How shall I manage? There is but one way———him and the knight will I set a tilting, where one cuts t'other's throat, and the survivor's hanged: so there will be two rivals pretty decently disposed of. Since honour may oblige them to play the fool, why should not necessity engage me to play the knave? [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—LADY LUREWELL'S *Lodgings.*

Enter LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lure. Has my servant brought me the money from my merchant?

Par. No, madam: he met alderman Smuggler at Charing-Cross, who has promised to wait on you himself immediately.

Lure. 'Tis odd that this old rogue should pretend to love me, and at the same time cheat me of my money.

Par. 'Tis well, madam, if he don't cheat you of your estate; for you say the writings are in his hands.

Lure. But what satisfaction can I get of him?——Oh, here he comes!

Enter SMUGGLER.

Mr Alderman, your servant; have you brought me any money, sir?

Smug. Faith, madam, trading is very dead; what with paying the taxes, raising the customs, losses at sea abroad, and maintaining our wives at home, the bank is reduced very low.

Lure. Come, come, sir, these evasions won't serve your turn; I must have money, sir—I hope you don't design to cheat me?

Smug. Cheat you, madam!—have a care what you say: I'm an alderman, madam——Cheat you, madam! I have been an honest citizen these five-and-thirty years.

Lure. An honest citizen! Bear witness, Parly—I shall trap him in more lies presently. Come, sir, though I am a woman, I can take a course.

Smug. What course, madam? You'll go to law, will ye? I can maintain a suit of law, be it right or wrong, these forty years, I am sure of that, thanks to the honest practice of the courts.

Lure. Sir, I'll blast your reputation, and so ruin your credit.

Smug. Blast my reputation! he, he, he! Why, I'm a religious man, madam; I have been very instrumental in the reformation of manners. Ruin my credit! Ah, poor woman! There is but one way, madam——you have a sweet leering eye.

Lure. You instrumental in the reformation! How?

Smug. I whipped all the whores, cut and long-tail, out of the parish—Ah, that leering eye!—Then, I voted for pulling down the playhouse—Ah, that ogle, that ogle!—Then, my own pious example—Ah, that lip, that lip!

Lure. Here's a religious rogue for you, now!—As I hope to be saved, I have a good mind to beat the old monster.

Smug. Madam, I have brought you about a hundred and fifty guineas (a great deal of money, as times go) and———

Lure. Come, give them me.

Smug. Ah, that hand, that hand! that pretty, soft, white——I have brought it, you see; but the condition of the obligation is such, that whereas that leering eye, that pouting lip, that pretty soft hand, that—you understand me; you understand; I'm sure you do, you little rogue——

Lure. Here's a villain, now, so covetous, that he won't wench upon his own cost, but would bribe me with my own money. I'll be revenged. [*Aside.*] Upon my word, Mr Alderman, you make me blush,—what d'ye mean, pray?

Smug. See here, madam. [*Puts a piece of money in his mouth.*] Buss and guinea, buss and guinea, buss and guinea.

Lure. Well, Mr Alderman, you have such pretty winning ways, that I will, ha, ha, ha!

Smug. Will you, indeed, he, he, he! my little cocket? And when, and where, and how?

Lure. 'Twill be a difficult point, sir, to secure both our honours; you must therefore be disguised, Mr Alderman.

Smug. Pshaw! no matter; I am an old fornicator; I'm not half so religious as I seem to be. You little rogue, why, I'm disguised as I am; our sanctity is all outside, all hypocrisy.

Lure. No man is seen to come into this house after night-fall; you must therefore sneak in, when 'tis dark, in woman's clothes.

Smug. With all my heart——I have a suit on purpose, my little cocket; I love to be disguised; 'ecod, I make a very handsome woman; 'ecod, I do.

Enter Servant, who whispers LUREWELL.

Lure. Oh, Mr Alderman, shall I beg you to walk into the next room? Here are some strangers coming up.

Smug. Buss and guinea first—Ah, my little cocket! [*Exit* SMUGGLER.

Enter WILDAIR.

Wild. My life, my soul, my all that Heaven can give!

Lure. Death's life with thee, without thee, death to live.
Welcome, my dear sir Harry———I see you got my directions.

Wild. Directions! in the most charming manner, thou dear Machiavel of intrigue.

Lure. Still brisk and airy, I find, sir Harry.

Wild. The sight of you, madam, exalts my air, and makes joy lighten in my face.

Lure. I have a thousand questions to ask you, sir Harry. How d'ye like France?

Wild. Ah! c'est le plus beau païs du monde.

Lure. Then, what made you leave it so soon?

Wild. Madam, vous voyez que je vous suive par-tout.

Lure. Oh, monsieur, je vous suis fort obligée. But, where's the court now?

Wild. At Marli, madam.

Lure. And where my count La Valier?

Wild. His body's in the church of Nôtre Dame; I don't know where his soul is.

Lure. What disease did he die of?

Wild. A duel, madam; I was his doctor.

Lure. How d'ye mean?

Wild. As most doctors do; I killed him.

Lure. En cavalier, my dear knight-errant—Well, and how, and how: what intrigues, what gallantries are carrying on in the beau monde?

Wild. I should ask you that question, madam, since your ladyship makes the beau-monde where-ever you come.

Lure. Ah, sir Harry, I've been almost ruined, pestered to death here, by the incessant attacks of a mighty colonel; he has besieged me as close as our army did Namur.

Wild. I hope your ladyship did not surrender, though.

Lure. No, no; but was forced to capitulate. But since you are come to raise the siege, we'll dance, and sing, and laugh——

Wild. And love, and kiss———Montrez moi votre chambre?

Lure. Attendez, attendez, un peu——I remember, sir Harry, you promised me, in Paris, never to ask that impertinent question again.

Wild. Pshaw, madam! that was above two months ago: besides, madam, treaties made in France are never kept.

Lure. Would you marry me, sir Harry?

Wild. Oh! la marriage est un grand mal—But I will marry you.

Lure. Your word, sir, is not to be relied on: if a gentleman will forfeit his honour in dealings of business, we may reasonably suspect his fidelity in an amour.

Wild. My honour in dealings of business! Why, madam, I never had any business in all my life.

Lure. Yes, sir Harry, I have heard a very odd story, and am sorry that a gentleman of your figure should undergo the scandal.

Wild. Out with it, madam.

Lure. Why, the merchant, sir, that transmitted your bills of exchange to you in France, complains of some indirect and dishonourable dealings.

Wild. Who, old Smuggler?

Lure. Ay, ay, you know him, I find.

Wild. I have some reason, I think; why, the rogue has cheated me of above five hundred pounds within these three years.

Lure. 'Tis your business, then, to acquit yourself publickly; for he spreads the scandal everywhere.

Wild. Acquit myself publicly!—Here, sirrah, my coach; I'll drive instantly into the city, and cane the old villain round the Royal Exchange; he shall run the gauntlet through a thousand brushed beavers, and formal cravats,

Lure. Why, he's in the house now, sir.

Wild. What, in this house?

Lure. Ay, in the next room.

Wild. Then, sirrah, lend me your cudgel.

Lure. Sir Harry, you won't raise a disturbance in my house?

Wild. Disturbance, madam! no, no, I'll beat him with the temper of a philosopher. Here, Mrs Parly, shew me the gentleman.

[*Exit with* PARLY.

Lure. Now shall I get the old monster well beaten, and sir Harry pestered next term with bloodsheds, batteries, costs and damages, solicitors and attornies; and if they don't tease him out of his good humour, I'll never plot again.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to another room in the same house.*

Enter SMUGGLER.

Smug. Oh, this damned tide-waiter! A ship and cargo worth five thousand pounds! Why, 'tis richly worth five hundred perjuries.

Enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Dear Mr Alderman, I'm your most devoted and humble servant.

Smug. My best friend, sir Harry, you're welcome to England.

Wild. I'll assure you, sir, there's not a man in the king's dominions I am gladder to meet, dear, dear Mr Alderman! [*Bowing very low.*

Smug. Oh, lord, sir, you travellers have the most obliging ways with you!

Wild. There is a business, Mr Alderman, fallen out, which you may oblige me infinitely by ——I am very sorry that I am forced to be troublesome; but necessity, Mr Alderman——

Smug. Ay, sir, as you say, necessity——But, upon my word, sir, I am very short of money at present; but——

Wild. That's not the matter, sir; I'm above an obligation that way: but the business is, I'm reduced to an indispensable necessity of being obliged to you for a beating———Here, take this cudgel.

Smug. A beating, sir Harry! ha, ha, ha! I beat a knight-baronet! an alderman turn cudgel-player!—Ha, ha, ha!

Wild. Upon my word, sir, you must beat me, or I cudgel you; take your choice.

Smug. Pshaw, pshaw! you jest.

Wild. Nay, 'tis sure as fate—So, alderman, I hope you'll pardon my curiosity. [*Strikes him.*

Smug. Curiosity! Deuce take your curiosity, sir!—What d'ye mean?

Wild. Nothing at all; I'm but in jest, sir.

Smug. Oh, I can take any thing in jest! but a man might imagine, by the smartness of the stroke, that you were in downright earnest.

Wild. Not in the least, sir; [*Strikes him.*] not in the least, indeed, sir.

Smug. Pray, good sir, no more of your jests: for they are the lewdest set that ever I knew.

Wild. [*Strikes.*] I heartily beg your pardon with all my heart, sir.

Smug. Pardon, sir! Well, sir, that is satisfaction enough from a gentleman. But, seriously now, if you pass any more of your jests upon me I shall grow angry.

Wild. I humbly beg your permission to break one or two more. [*Strikes him.*

Smug. Oh, lord, sir, you'll break my bones! Are you mad, sir? murder, felony, manslaughter! [WILDAIR *knocks him down.*

Wild. Sir, I beg your ten thousand pardons; but I am absolutely compelled to it, upon my honour, sir: nothing can be more averse to my inclinations, than to jest with my honest, dear, loving, obliging friend, the Alderman.

[*Striking him all this while:* SMUGGLER *tumbles over and over, and shakes out his pocket-book on the floor;* LUREWELL *enters, and takes it up.*]

Lure. The old rogue's pocket-book; this may be of use. [*Aside.*] Oh, lord, Sir Harry's murdering the poor old man.

Smug. Oh, dear madam, I was beaten in jest, till I am murdered in good earnest.

Lure. Well, well, I'll bring you off, Senior—Frappez, frappez!

Smug. Oh, for charity's sake, madam, rescue a poor citizen!

Lure. Oh, you barbarous man!—Hold, hold! Frappez, plus rudement! Frappez——I wonder you are not ashamed. [*Holding* WILD.] A poor, reverend, honest elder—[*Helps* SMUG. *up.*] It makes me weep to see him in this condition, poor man!—Now, the devil take you, sir Harry—For not beating him harder—Well, my dear, you shall come at night, and I'll make you amends. [*Here* SIR HARRY *takes snuff.*

Smug. Madam, I will have amends before I leave the place——Sir, how durst you use me thus?

Wild. Sir?

Smug. Sir, I say that I will have satisfaction.

Wild. With all my heart.

[*Throws snuff into his eyes.*

Smug. Oh, murder, blindness, fire! Oh, madam, madam, get me some water. Water, fire, fire, water! [*Exit with* LUREWELL.

Wild. How pleasant is resenting an injury without passion! 'Tis the beauty of revenge.
Let statesmen plot, and under business groan,
And, settling public quiet, lose their own;
Let soldiers drudge and fight for pay or fame,
For when they're shot, I think 'tis much the same;
Let scholars vex their brains with mood and tense,
And, mad with strength of reason, fools commence,
Losing their wits in searching after sense;
Their *summum bonum* they must toil to gain,
And, seeking pleasure, spend their life in pain.
I make the most of life, no hour mispend;
Pleasure's the mean, and pleasure is my end.
No spleen, no trouble shall my time destroy;
Life's but a span; I'll ev'ry inch enjoy. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Street.*

Enter STANDARD *and* VIZARD.

Stand. I BRING him word where she lodged; I the civilest rival in the world? 'Tis impossible.

Viz. I shall urge it no farther, sir. I only thought, sir, that my character in the world might add authority to my words, without so many repetitions.

Stand. Pardon me, dear Vizard. Our belief struggles hard, before it can be brought to yield to the disadvantage of what we love; 'tis so great an abuse to our judgment, that it makes the faults of our choice our own failing. But what said sir Harry?

Viz. He pitied the poor credulous colonel, laughed heartily, flew away with all the raptures of a bride-groom, repeating these lines:
A mistress ne'er can pall her lover's joys,
Whose wit can whet, whene'er her beauty cloys.

Stand. A mistress ne'er can pall! By all my wrongs he whores her, and I am made their property!—Vengeance—Vizard, you must carry a note for me to Sir Harry.

Viz. What, a challenge? I hope you don't design to fight.

Stand. What, wear the livery of my king, and pocket an affront? 'Twere an abuse to his sacred Majesty: a soldier's sword, Vizard, should start of itself to redress its master's wrong.

Viz. However, sir, I think it not proper for me to carry any such message between friends.

Stand. I have ne'er a servant here; what shall I do?

Viz. There's Tom Errand, the porter, that

plies at the Blue Posts, one who knows Sir Harry and his haunts very well; you may send a note by him.

Stand. Here, you, friend! [*Calling.*

Viz. I have now some business, and must take my leave; I would advise you, nevertheless, against this affair.

Stand. No whispering now, nor telling of friends, to prevent us. He that disappoints a man of an honourable revenge, may love him foolishly like a wife, but never value him as a friend.

Viz. Nay, the devil take him that parts you, say I. [*Exit.*

Enter Porter, running.

Err. Did your honour call porter?

Stand. Is your name Tom Errand?

Err. People call me so, an't like your worship.

Stand. D'ye know sir Harry Wildair?

Err. Ay, very well, sir; he's one of my best masters; many a round half-crown have I had of his worship; he's newly come home from France, sir.

Stand. Go to the next coffee-house, and wait for me.——Oh, woman, woman, how blessed is man when favoured by your smiles, and how accursed when all those smiles are found but wanton baits to sooth us to destruction!

Thus, our chief joys with base allays are cursed,
And our best things, when once corrupted, worst.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter WILDAIR, *and* CLINCHER *senior following.*

Clin. sen. Sir, sir, sir! having some business of importance to communicate to you, I would beg your attention to a trifling affair that I would impart to your understanding.

Wild. What is your trifling business of importance, pray, sweet sir?

Clin. sen. Pray, sir, are the roads deep between this and Paris?

Wild. Why that question, sir?

Clin. sen. Because I design to go to the Jubilee, sir; I understand that you are a traveller, sir; there is an air of travel in the tie of your cravat, sir; there is indeed, sir———I suppose, sir, you bought this lace in Flanders?

Wild. No, sir, this lace was made in Norway.

Clin. sen. Norway, sir?

Wild. Yes, sir, of the shavings of deal-boards.

Clin. sen. That's very strange now, faith——Lace made of the shavings of deal boards! 'Egad, sir, you travellers see very strange things abroad, very incredible things abroad, indeed. Well, I'll have a cravat of the very same lace before I come home.

Wild. But, sir, what preparations have you made for your journey?

Clin. sen. A case of pocket-pistols for the bravoes, and a swimming-girdle.

Wild. Why these, sir?

Clin. sen. Oh, lord, sir, I'll tell you——Suppose us in Rome, now; away goes I to some ball—for I'll be a mighty beau. Then, as I said, I go to some ball, or some bear-baiting—'tis all one, you know——then, comes a fine Italian *bona roba*, and plucks me by the sleeve: Signior Angle, Signior Angle—She's a very fine lady, observe that—Signior Angle, says she—Signora, says I, and trips after her to the corner of a street, suppose it Russel-street, here, or any other street; then, you know, I must invite her to the tavern; I can do no less——There up comes her bravo; the Italian grows saucy, and I give him an English dowse o' the face: I can box, sir, box tightly; I was a 'prentice, sir——But, then, sir, he whips out his stiletto, and I whips out my bull-dog—slaps him through, trips down stairs, turns the corner of Russel-street again, and whips me into the ambassador's train, and there I'm safe as a beau behind the scenes.

Wild. Is your pistol charged, sir!

Clin. sen. Only a brace of bullets, that's all, sir.

Wild. 'Tis a very fine pistol, truly; pray, let me see it.

Clin. sen. With all my heart, sir.

Wild. Hark'e, Mr Jubilee, can you digest a brace of bullets?

Clin. sen. Oh, by no means in the world, sir.

Wild. I'll try the strength of your stomach, however. Sir, you're a dead man.

[*Presenting the pistol to his breast.*

Clin. sen. Consider, dear sir, I am going to the Jubilee: when I come home again, I am a dead man at your service.

Wild. Oh, very well, sir; but take heed you are not choleric for the future.

Clin. sen. Choleric, sir! Oons, I design to shoot seven Italians in a week, sir.

Wild. Sir, you won't have provocation.

Clin. sen. Provocation, sir? Zauns, sir, I'll kill any man for treading upon my corns; and there will be a devilish throng of people there; they say that all the princes of Italy will be there.

Wild. And all the fops and fiddlers in Europe——But the use of your swimming-girdle, pray, sir?

Clin. sen. Oh, lord, sir, that's easy. Suppose the ship's cast away; now, whilst other foolish people are busy at their prayers, I whip on my swimming-girdle, clap a month's provision in my pocket, and sails me away, like an egg in a duck's belly—And harkee, sir, I have a new project in my head: where d'ye think my swimming-girdle shall carry me upon this occasion? 'Tis a new project.

Wild. Where, sir?

Clin. sen. To Civita Vecchia, faith and troth, and so save the charges of my passage. Well, sir, you must pardon me now; I'm going to see my mistress. [*Exit.*

Wild. This fellow's an accomplished ass before he goes abroad. Well, this Angelica has got into my heart, and I can't get her out of my head.—I must pay her t'other visit. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—LADY DARLING'S *house.*

Enter ANGELICA.

Ang. Unhappy state of woman! whose chief virtue is but ceremony, and our much boasted modesty but a slavish restraint. The strict confinement on our words makes our thoughts ramble more; and what preserves our outward fame, destroys our inward quiet. 'Tis hard that love should be denied the privilege of hatred; that scandal and detraction should be so much indulged, yet sacred love and truth debarred our conversation.

Enter DARLING, CLINCHER *junior, and* DICKY.

Lady Dar. This is my daughter, cousin.

Dick. Now, sir, remember your three scrapes.

Clin. jun. [*saluting* ANGELICA.] One, two, three, your humble servant. Was not that right, Dicky?

Dick. Aye 'faith, sir; but why don't you speak to her?

Clin. jun. I beg your pardon, Dicky; I know my distance. Would you have me speak to a lady at the first sight?

Dick. Aye, sir, by all means; the first aim is the surest.

Clin. jun. Now, for a good jest, to make her laugh heartily——By Jupiter Ammon, I'll go give her a kiss. [*Goes towards her.*

Enter WILDAIR, *interposing.*

Wild. 'Tis all to no purpose; I told you so before; your pitiful five guineas will never do.—You may go; I'll outbid you.

Clin. jun. What, the devil! the madman's here again.

Lady Dar. Bless me, cousin, what d'ye mean? Affront a gentleman of his quality in my house?

Clin. jun. Quality!—Why, madam, I don't know what you mean by your madmen, and your beaux, and your quality—they're all alike, I believe.

Lady Dar. Pray, sir, walk with me into the next room.

[*Exit* LADY DARLING, *leading* CLINCHER.—DICKY *following.*]

Ang. Sir, if your conversation be no more agreeable than 'twas the last time, I would advise you to make your visit as short as you can.

Wild. The offences of my last visit, madam, bore their punishment in the commission: and have made me as uneasy till I receive pardon, as your ladyship can be till I sue for it.

Ang. Sir Harry, I did not well understand the offence, and must therefore proportion it to the greatness of your apology: if you would, therefore, have me think it light, take no great pains in an excuse.

Wild. How sweet must the lips be that guard that tongue! Then, madam, no more of past offences; let us prepare for joys to come. Let this seal my pardon; [*Kisses her hand.*] and this [*Again.*] initiate me to farther happiness.

Ang. Hold, sir—one question, sir Harry, and pray, answer plainly—D'ye love me?

Wild. Love you! Does fire ascend? Do hypocrites dissemble? Usurers love gold, or great men flattery? Doubt these, then question that I love.

Ang. This shews your gallantry, sir, but not your love.

Wild. View your own charms, madam, then judge my passion; your beauty ravishes my eye, your voice my ear, and your touch has thrilled my melting soul.

Ang. If your words be real, 'tis in your power to raise an equal flame in me.

Wild. Nay, then, I seize——

Ang. Hold, sir! 'tis also possible to make me detest and scorn you worse than the most profligate of your deceiving sex.

Wild. Ha! A very odd turn this! I hope, madam, you only affect anger, because you know your frowns are becoming.

Ang. Sir Harry, you being the best judge of your own designs, can best understand whether my anger should be real or dissembled; think what strict modesty should bear, then judge of my resentment.

Wild. Strict modesty should bear! Why, faith, madam, I believe, the strictest modesty may bear fifty guineas, and I don't believe 'twill bear one farthing more.

Ang. What d'ye mean, sir?

Wild. Nay, madam, what do you mean, if you go to that? I think, now, fifty guineas is a fine offer for your strict modesty, as you call it.

Ang. 'Tis more charitable, sir Harry, to charge the impertinence of a man of your figure on his defect in understanding, than on his want of manners—I am afraid you're mad, sir.

Wild. Why, madam, you're enough to make any man mad. 'Sdeath, are you not a———

Ang. What, sir?

Wild. Why, a lady of—strict modesty, if you will have it so.

Ang. I shall never hereafter trust common report, which represented you, sir, a man of honour, wit, and breeding; for I find you very deficient in them all three. [*Exit* ANGELICA.

Wild. Now I find that the strict pretences which the ladies of pleasure make to strict modesty, is the reason why those of quality are ashamed to wear it.

Enter VIZARD.

Viz. Ah, sir Harry! have I caught you?—Well, and what success?

Wild. Success! 'Tis a shame for you young fellows in town here to let the wenches grow so saucy. I offered her fifty guineas, and she was in her airs presently, and flew away in a huff.—I could have had a brace of countesses in Paris

for half the money, and *je vous remercie* into the bargain.

Viz. Gone in her airs, say you! And did not you follow her?

Wild. Whither should I follow her?

Viz. Into her bed-chamber, man; she went on purpose. You a man of gallantry, and not understand that a lady's best pleased when she puts on her airs, as you call it!

Wild. She talked to me of strict modesty, and stuff.

Viz. Certainly. Most women magnify their modesty, for the same reason that cowards boast their courage—because they have least on't.—Come, come, sir Harry, when you make your next assault, encourage your spirits with brisk Burgundy: if you succeed, 'tis well; if not, you have a fair excuse for your rudeness. I'll go in, and make your peace for what's past. Oh, I had almost forgot—Colonel Standard wants to speak with you about some business.

Wild. I'll wait upon him presently; d'ye know where he may be found?

Viz. In the piazza of Covent-Garden, about an hour hence, I promised to see him; and there you may meet him—to have your throat cut. [*Aside.*] I'll go in and intercede for you.

Wild. But no foul play with the lady, Vizard.

[*Exit.*

Viz. No fair play, I can assure you. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Street before* LUREWELL'S *Lodgings.*

CLINCHER *senior, and* LUREWELL, *coquetting in the balcony. Enter* STANDARD.

Stand. How weak is reason in disputes of love! That daring reason, which so oft pretends to question works of high omnipotence, yet poorly truckles to our weakest passions, and yields implicit faith to foolish love, paying blind zeal to faithless women's eyes. I've heard her falsehood with such pressing proofs, that I no longer should distrust it. Yet still my love would baffle demonstration, and make impossibilities seem probable. [*Looks up.*] Ha! That fool, too! What, stoop so low as that animal?—'Tis true, women once fallen, like cowards in despair, will stick at nothing; there's no medium in their actions. They must be bright as angels, or black as fiends. But now for my revenge; I'll kick her cully before her face, call her whore, curse the whole sex, and leave her. [*Goes in.*

LUREWELL *comes down with* CLINCHER *senior. The Scene changes to a Dining-Room.*

Lure. Oh, lord, sir, it is my husband! What will become of you?

Clin. sen. Ah, your husband! Oh, I shall be murdered! What shall I do? Where shall I run? I'll creep into an oven; I'll climb up the chimney; I'll fly; I'll swim;——I wish to the Lord I were at the Jubilee now!

Lure. Can't you think of any thing, sir?

Clin. sen. Think! not I; I never could think to any purpose in my life.

Lure. What do you want, sir?

Enter TOM ERRAND.

Err. Madam, I am looking for sir Harry Wildair; I saw him come in here this morning; and did imagine he might be here still, if he is not gone.

Lure. A lucky hit! Here, friend, change clothes with this gentleman; quickly, strip.

Clin. sen. Ay, ay, quickly, strip; I'll give you half a crown to boot. Come here; so.

[*They change clothes.*

Lure. Now, slip you [*To* CLIN. *sen.*] down stairs, and wait at the door till my husband be gone; and get you in there [*To the Porter.*] till I call you. [*Puts* ERRAND *in the next room.*

Enter STANDARD.

Oh, sir, are you come? I wonder, sir, how you have the confidence to approach me after so base a trick?

Stand. Oh, madam, all your artifices won't avail.

Lure. Nay, sir, your artifices won't avail. I thought, sir, that I gave you caution enough against troubling me with sir Harry Wildair's company, when I sent his letters back by you? yet you, forsooth, must tell him where I lodged, and expose me again to his impertinent courtship!

Stand. I expose you to his courtship!

Lure. I'll lay my life you'll deny it now. Come, come, sir; a pitiful lie is as scandalous to a red coat, as an oath to a black. Did not sir Harry himself tell me, that he found out, by you, where I lodged?

Stand. You're all lies; first, your heart is false; your eyes are double; one look belies another; and then, your tongue does contradict them all—Madam, I see a little devil just now hammering out a lie in your pericranium.

Lure. As I hope for mercy, he's in the right on't. [*Aside.*] Hold, sir, you have got the playhouse cant upon your tongue, and think, that wit may privilege your railing: but, I must tell you, sir, that what is satire upon the stage, is ill manners here.

Stand. What is feigned upon the stage, is here, in reality, real falsehood. Yes, yes, madam—I exposed you to the courtship of your fool Clincher, too; I hope your female wiles will impose that upon me——also——

Lure. Clincher! Nay, now, you're stark mad. I know no such person.

Stand. Oh, woman in perfection! not know him? 'Slife, madam, can my eyes, my piercing jealous eyes, be so deluded? Nay, madam, my nose could not mistake him; for I smelt the fop by his *pulvilio* from the balcony down to the street.

Lure. The balcony! Ha, ha, ha! the balcony! I'll be hanged but he has mistaken sir Harry Wildair's footman with a new French livery for a beau!

Stand. 'Sdeath, madam, what is there in me that looks like a cully? Did not I see him?

Lure. No, no, you could not see him; you're dreaming, colonel. Will you believe your eyes, now that I have rubbed them open?—Here, you friend.

Enter ERRAND *in* CLINCHER *senior's clothes.*

Stand. This is illusion all; my eyes conspire against themselves. 'Tis legerdemain!

Lure. Legerdemain! Is that all your acknowledgment for your rude behaviour?—Oh, what a curse is it to love as I do!—But don't presume too far, sir, on my affection: for such ungenerous usage will soon return my tired heart.—Begone, sir, [*To the Porter.*] to your impertinent master, and tell him I shall never be at leisure to receive any of his troublesome visits. Send to me to know when I should be at home!—Begone, sir! I am sure he has made me an unfortunate woman. [*Weeps.*

Stand. Nay, then, there is no certainty in nature; and truth is only falsehood well disguised.

Lure. Sir, had not I owned my fond, foolish passion, I should not have been subject to such unjust suspicions: but it is an ungrateful return. [*Weeping.*

Stand. Now, where are all my firm resolves? I will believe her just. My passion raised my jealousy; then, why may'nt love be as blind in finding faults, as in excusing them?—I hope, madam, you'll pardon me, since jealousy, that magnified my suspicion, is as much the effect of love, as my easiness in being satisfied.

Lure. Easiness in being satisfied! You men have got an insolent way of extorting pardon, by persisting in your faults. No, no, sir; cherish your suspicions, and feed upon your jealousy: 'tis fit meat for your squeamish stomach.

With me all women should this rule pursue:
Who think us false, should never find us true.
[*Exit in a rage.*

Enter CLINCHER *senior in the porter's clothes.*

Clin. sen. Well, intriguing is the prettiest, pleasantest thing for a man of my parts. How shall we laugh at the husband when he is gone?—How sillily he looks! He's in labour of horns already. To make a colonel a cuckold! 'Twill be rare news for the alderman. [*Apart.*

Stand. All this sir Harry has occasioned; but he's brave, and will afford me a just revenge. Oh, this is the porter I sent the challenge by—Well, sir, have you found him?

Clin. sen. What the devil does he mean now?

Stand. Have you given sir Harry the note, fellow?

Clin. sen. The note! What note?

Stand. The letter, blockhead, which I sent by you to sir Harry Wildair. Have you seen him?

Clin. sen. Oh, lord, what shall I say now? Seen him? Yes, sir—No, sir. I have, sir—I have not, sir.

Stand. The fellow's mad! Answer me directly, sirrah, or I'll break your head.

Clin. sen. I know sir Harry very well, sir; but, as to the note, sir, I can't remember a word on't: truth is, I have a very bad memory.

Stand. Oh, sir, I'll quicken your memory. [*Strikes him.*

Clin. sen. Zauns, sir, hold!—I did give him the note.

Stand. And what answer?

Clin. sen. I mean, I did not give him the note.

Stand. What, d'ye banter, rascal? [*Strikes him again.*

Clin. sen. Hold, sir, hold! He did send an answer.

Stand. What was't, villain?

Clin. sen. Why, truly, sir, I have forgot it: I told you that I had a very treacherous memory.

Stand. I'll engage you shall remember me this month, rascal. [*Beats him off; and exit.*

Enter LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lure. Fort-bon, fort-bon, fort-bon! This is better than I expected; but fortune still helps the industrious.

Enter CLINCHER *senior.*

Clin. sen. Ah! the devil take all intriguing, say I, and him who first invented canes——That cursed colonel has got such a knack of beating his men, that he has left the mark of a collar of bandiliers about my shoulders.

Lure. Oh, my poor gentleman! and was it beaten?

Clin. sen. Yes, I have been beaten. But where's my clothes? my clothes?

Lure. What, you won't leave me so soon, my dear, will ye?

Clin. sen. Will ye!—If ever I peep into a colonel's tent again, may I be forced to run the gauntlet! But my clothes, madam.

Lure. I sent the porter down stairs with them: did not you meet him?

Clin. sen. Meet him! No; not I.

Par. No!—He went out at the back-door, and is run clear away, I'm afraid.

Clin. sen. Gone, say you, and with my clothes, my fine Jubilee clothes?—Oh, the rogue, the thief!—I'll have him hanged for murder——But how shall I get home in this pickle?

Par. I'm afraid, sir, the colonel will be back presently, for he dines at home.

Clin. sen. Oh, then, I must sneak off.
Was ever such an unfortunate beau,
To have his back well thrashed, and lost his coat also? [*Exit* CLINCHER *sen.*

Lure. Thus, the noble poet spoke truth:
Nothing suits worse with vice than want of sense:
Fools are still wicked at their own expence.

Par. Methinks, madam, the injuries you have

suffered by men must be very great, to raise such heavy resentments against the whole sex.

Lure. The greatest injury that woman could sustain: they robbed me of that jewel, which, preserved, exalts our sex almost to angels: but, destroyed, debases us below the worst of brutes, mankind.

Par. But, I think, madam, your anger should be only confined to the author of your wrongs.

Lure. The author! Alas, I know him not, which makes my wrongs the greater.

Par. Not know him? 'Tis odd, madam, that a man should rob you of that same jewel you mentioned, and you not know him.

Lure. Leave trifling: 'tis a subject that always sours my temper: but since, by thy faithful service, I have some reason to confide in your secrecy, hear the strange relation.—Some twelve years ago, I lived at my father's house in Oxfordshire, blest with innocence, the ornamental, but weak guard of blooming beauty: I was then just fifteen, an age fatal to the female sex. Our youth is tempting, our innocence credulous, romances moving, love powerful, and men are—villains. Then it happened, that three young gentlemen from the university, coming into the country, and being benighted, and strangers, called at my father's: he was very glad of their company, and offered them the entertainment of his house.

Par. Which they accepted, no doubt. Oh, these strolling collegians are never abroad, but upon some mischief.

Lure. They had some private frolic or design in their heads, as appeared by their not naming one another, which my father perceiving, out of civility made no inquiry into their affairs; two of them had a heavy, pedantic, university air; a sort of disagreeable scholastic boorishness in their behaviour; but the third———

Par. Ah, the third, madam—the third of all things, they say, is very critical.

Lure. He was—but in short, nature cut him out for my undoing; he seemed to be about eighteen.

Par. A fit match for your fifteen as could be.

Lure. He had a genteel sweetness in his face, a graceful comeliness in his person, and his tongue was fit to sooth soft innocence into ruin. His very looks were witty, and his expressive eyes spoke softer, prettier things, than words could frame.

Par. There will be mischief by and by; I never heard a woman talk so much of eyes, but there were tears presently after.

Lure. His discourse was directed to my father, but his looks to me. After supper, I went to my chamber, and read Cassandra, then went to bed, and dreamed of him all night, rose in the morning, and made verses, so fell desperately in love. My father was so well pleased with their conversation, that he begged their company next day; they consented, and next night, Parly——

Par. Ah! next night, madam——next night (I'm afraid) was a night, indeed.

Lure. He bribed my maid, with his gold, out of her honesty; and me, with his rhetoric, out of my honour—She admitted him into my chamber, and there he vowed, and swore, and wept, and sighed——and conquered. *Weeps.*

Par. A-lack-a-day, poor fifteen! *Weeps.*

Lure. He swore that he would come down from Oxford in a fortnight, and marry me.

Par. The old bait, the old bait—I was cheated just so myself. [*Aside.*] But had not you the wit to know his name all this while?

Lure. Alas! what wit had innocence like mine? He told me, that he was under an obligation to his companions of concealing himself then, but that he would write to me in two days, and let me know his name and quality. After all the binding oaths of constancy, joining hands, exchanging hearts, I gave him a ring with this motto: *Love and honour*:—then we parted, and I never saw the dear deceiver more.

Par. No, nor never will, I warrant you.

Lure. I need not tell my griefs, which my father's death made a fair pretence for; he left me sole heiress and executrix to three thousand pounds a-year: at last, my love for this single dissembler turned to a hatred of the whole sex; and, to direct my melancholy, and make my large fortune subservient to my pleasure and revenge, I went to travel, where, in most courts of Europe, I have done some execution. Here I will play my last scene: then retire to my country-house, live solitary, and die a penitent.

Par. But don't you still love this fair dissembler?

Lure. Most certainly. 'Tis love of him that keeps my anger warm, representing the baseness of mankind full in view; and makes my resentments work—We shall have that old impertinent letcher, Smuggler, here to-night; I have a plot to swinge him, and his precise nephew, Vizard.

Par. I think, madam, you manage every body that comes in your way.

Lure. No, Parly; those men, whose pretensions I found just and honourable, I fairly dismissed, by letting them know my firm resolutions never to marry. But those villains that would attempt my honour, I've seldom failed to manage.

Par. What d'ye think of the colonel, madam? I suppose his designs are honourable.

Lure. That man's a riddle; there's something of honour in his temper that pleases; I'm sure he loves me, too, because he's soon jealous, and soon satisfied. But he's a man still. When I once tried his pulse about marriage, his blood ran as low as a coward's. He swore, indeed, that he loved me, but could not marry me, forsooth, because he was engaged elsewhere. So poor a pretence made me disdain his passion, which otherwise might have been uneasy to me.—But

hang him. I have teased him enough—Besides, Parly, I begin to be tired of my revenge: but, this tuss and guinea I must maul once more. I'll handsel his women's clothes for him. Go, get me pen and ink; I must write to Vizard, too.

Fortune, this once assist me as before:
Two such machines can never work in vain,
As thy propitious wheel, and my projecting brain.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Covent Garden.*

WILDAIR *and* STANDARD *meeting.*

Stand. I THOUGHT, sir Harry, to have met you ere this in a more convenient place; but, since my wrongs were without ceremony, my revenge shall be so, too. Draw, sir.

Wild. Draw, sir! What shall I draw?

Stand. Come, come, sir, I like your facetious humour well enough; it shews courage and unconcern. I know you brave; and therefore use you thus.——Draw your sword.

Wild. Nay, to oblige you, I will draw; but, the devil take me if I fight. Perhaps, colonel, this is the prettiest blade you have seen.

Stand. I doubt not but the arm is good; and, therefore, think both worth my resentment. Come, sir.

Wild. But, prithee, colonel, dost think that I am such a madman, as to send my soul to the devil, and body to the worms———upon every fool's errand? [*Aside.*

Stand. I hope you're no coward, sir.

Wild. Coward, sir! I have eight thousand pounds a-year, sir.

Stand. You fought in Flanders, to my knowledge.

Wild. Ay, for the same reason that I wore a red coat: because 'twas fashionable.

Stand. Sir, you fought a French count in Paris.

Wild. True, sir; but there was no danger of lands nor tenements: besides, he was a beau, like myself. Now you're a soldier, colonel, and fighting's your trade; and I think it downright madness to contend with any man in his profession.

Stand. Come, sir, no more dallying; I shall take very unseemly methods, if you don't shew yourself a gentleman.

Wild. A gentleman! Why, there again, now. A gentleman! I tell you once more, colonel, that I am a baronet, and have eight thousand pounds a-year. I can dance, sing, ride, fence, understand the languages——Now, I can't conceive how running you through the body should contribute one jot more to my gentility. But, pray, colonel, I had forgot to ask you, what's the quarrel?

Stand. A woman, sir.

Wild. Then I put up my sword. Take her.

Stand. Sir, my honour's concerned.

Wild. Nay, if your honour be concerned with a woman, get it out of her hands as soon as you can. An honourable lover is the greatest slave in nature: some will say, the greatest fool. Come, come, colonel, that is something about the lady Lurewell, I warrant; I can give you satisfaction in that affair.

Stand. Do so, then, immediately.

Wild. Put up your sword first; you know I dare fight: but I had much rather make you a friend than an enemy. I can assure you, this lady will prove too hard for one of your temper. You have too much honour, too much in conscience, to be a favourite with the ladies.

Stand. I'm assured, sir, she never gave you any encouragement.

Wild. A man can never hear reason with a sword in his hand. Sheath your weapon; and then, if I don't satisfy you, sheath it in my body.

Stand. Give me but demonstration of her granting you any favour, and it is enough.

Wild. Will you take my word?

Stand. Pardon me, sir—I cannot.

Wild. Will you believe your own eyes?

Stand. 'Tis ten to one whether I shall or no; they have deceived me already.

Wild. That's hard—but some means I shall devise for your satisfaction—we must fly this place, else that cluster of mob will overwhelm us.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter mob; TOM ERRAND'S *wife hurrying in* CLINCHER, *sen. in* ERRAND'S *clothes.*

Wife. Oh! the villain, the rogue, he has murdered my husband. Ah, my poor Timothy! [*Crying.*

Clin. sen. Dem your Timothy! your husband has murdered me, woman; for he has carried away my fine jubilee clothes.

Wife. Aye, you cut-throat, have you not got his clothes upon your back there? Neighbours, don't you know poor Timothy's coat and apron?

Mob. Aye, aye, it is the same.

1st Mob. What shall we do with him, neighbours?

2d Mob. We'll pull him in pieces.

1st Mob. No, no; then we may be hanged for murder; but we'll drown him.

Clin. sen. Ah, good people, pray don't drown me; for I never learned to swim in all my life. Ah, this plaguy intriguing!

Mob. Away with him! away with him to the Thames!

Clin. sen. Oh! if I had but my swimming girdle now!

Enter Constable.

Con. Hold, neighbours; I command the peace.

Wife. Oh, Mr Constable, here's a rogue that has murdered my husband, and robbed him of his clothes.

Con. Murder and robbery! then he must be a gentleman. Hands off, there; he must not be abused. Give an account of yourself. Are you a gentleman?

Clin. sen. No, sir, I'm a beau.

Con. A beau! Then you have killed nobody, I'm persuaded. How came you by these clothes, sir?

Clin. sen. You must know, sir, that walking along, sir, I don't know how, sir, I cannot tell where, sir, and so the porter and I changed clothes, sir.

Con. Very well. The man speaks reason, and like a gentleman.

Wife. But pray, Mr Constable, ask him how he changed clothes with him?

Con. Silence, woman, and don't disturb the court. Well, sir, how did you change clothes?

Clin. sen. Why, sir, he pulled off my coat, and I drew off his: so I put on his coat, and he put on mine.

Con. Why, neighbour, I don't find that he's guilty: search him; and, if he carries no arms about him, we'll let him go.

[*They search his pockets, and pull out his pistols.*]

Clin. sen. Oh, gemini! my jubilee pistols!

Con. What, a case of pistols! then the case is plain. Speak, what are you, sir? whence came you, and whither go you?

Clin. sen. Sir, I came from Russel-street, and am going to the jubilee.

Wife. You shall go to the gallows, you rogue.

Con. Away with him! away with him to Newgate, straight!

Clin. sen. I shall go to the jubilee, now, indeed.

[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter WILDAIR *and* STANDARD.

Wild. In short, colonel, 'tis all nonsense: fight for a woman! hard by is the lady's house; if you please we'll wait on her together: you shall draw your sword; I'll draw my snuff-box: you shall produce your wounds received in war; I'll relate mine by Cupid's dart: you shall look big; I'll ogle: you shall swear; I'll sigh: you shall sa, sa, and I'll coupée; and if she flies not to my arms like a hawk to its perch, my dancing-master deserves to be damned.

Stand. With the generality of women, I grant you, these arts may prevail.

Wild. Generality of women! Why, there again, you're out. They're all alike, sir: I never heard of any one that was particular, but one.

Stand. Who was she, pray?

Wild. Penelope, I think she's called, and that's a poetical story, too. When will you find a poet, in our age, make a woman so chaste?

Stand. Well, sir Harry, your facetious humour can disguise falsehood, and make calumny pass for satire; but you have promised me ocular demonstration that she favours you: make that good, and I shall then maintain faith and female to be as inconsistent as truth and falsehood.

Wild. Nay, by what you told me, I am satisfied that she imposes on us all: and Vizard, too, seems what I still suspected him: but his honesty once mistrusted, spoils his knavery. But will you be convinced, if our plot succeeds?

Stand. I rely on your word and honour, sir Harry; which, if I doubted, my distrust would cancel the obligation of their security.

Wild. Then meet me half an hour hence, at the Rummer; you must oblige me by taking a hearty glass with me, toward the fitting me out for a certain project, which this night I undertake.

Stand. I guess, by the preparation, that woman's the design.

Wild. Yes, faith! I am taken dangerous ill with two foolish maladies, modesty and love: the first I'll cure with Burgundy, and my love by a night's lodging with the damsel. A sure remedy. *Probatum est.*

Stand. I'll certainly meet you, sir.

[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter CLINCHER *junior and* DICKY.

Clin. Ah, Dicky, this London is a sad place, a sad, vicious place: I wish that I were in the country again. And this brother of mine—I'm sorry he's so great a rake: I had rather see him dead, than see him thus.

Dick. Aye, sir, he'll spend his whole estate at this same jubilee. Who d'ye think lives at this same jubilee?

Clin. Who, pray?

Dick. The Pope.

Clin. The devil he does! my brother go to the place where the Pope dwells! he's bewitched, sure!

Enter TOM ERRAND *in* CLINCHER *senior's clothes.*

Dick. Indeed, I believe he is, for he's strangely altered.

Clin. Altered! why, he looks like a Jesuit already.

Err. This lace will sell. What a blockhead was the fellow to trust me with his coat! If I can get cross the garden, down to the water-side, I am pretty secure.

[*Aside.*

Clin. Brother! Alaw! Oh, gemini! Are you my brother?

Dick. I seize you in the king's name, sir.

Err. Oh, lord! should this prove some parliament man, now!

Clin. Speak, you rogue, what are you?

Err. A poor porter, sir, and going of an errand.

Dick. What errand? speak, you rogue.

Err. A fool's errand, I'm afraid.

Clin. Who sent you?

Err. A beau, sir.

Dick. No, no; the rogue has murdered your brother, and stripped him of his clothes.

Clin. Murdered my brother! Oh, crimini! Oh, my poor jubilee brother! Stay—by Jupiter Ammon, I'm heir, though. Speak, sir, have you killed him? Confess that you have killed him, and I'll give you half a crown.

Err. Who, I, sir? Alack-a-day, sir! I never killed any man but a carrier's horse once.

Clin. Then you shall certainly be hanged; but confess that you killed him, and we'll let you go.

Err. Telling the truth hangs a man, but confessing a lie can do no harm: besides, if the worst come to the worst, I can but deny it again. Well, sir, since I must tell you, I did kill him.

Clin. Here's your money, sir. But are you sure you killed him dead?

Err. Sir, I'll swear it before any judge in England.

Dick. But are you sure that he's dead in law?

Err. Dead in law! I cannot tell whether he be dead in law. But he's as dead as a door-nail; for I gave him seven knocks on the head with a hammer.

Dick. Then you have the estate by statute. Any man that's knocked o' the head is dead in law.

Clin. But are you sure he was *compos mentis* when he was killed?

Err. I suppose he was, sir; for he told me nothing to the contrary afterwards.

Clin. Hey! Then I go the Jubilee. Strip, sir, strip! By Jupiter Ammon, strip!

Dick. Ah! don't swear, sir.

[*Puts on his brother's clothes.*

Clin. Swear, sir! Zoons, ha'n't I got the estate, sir? Come, sir, now I'm in mourning for my brother.

Err. I hope you'll let me go now, sir.

Clin. Yes, yes, sir, but you must do me the favour to swear positively before a magistrate, that you killed him dead, that I may enter upon the estate without any trouble. By Jupiter Ammon! all my religion's gone since I put on these fine clothes—Hey, call me a coach! somebody.

Err. Ay, master, let me go, and I'll call one immediately.

Clin. No, no; Dicky, carry this spark before a justice, and, when he has made oath, you may discharge him. And I'll go see Angelica. [*Exeunt* DICK *and* ERRAND.] Now that I'm an elder brother, I'll court, and swear, and rant, and rake, and go to the Jubilee with the best of them.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—LUREWELL'S *house.*

Enter LUREWELL *and* PARLY.

Lure. Are you sure that Vizard had my letter?

Par. Yes, yes, madam; one of your ladyship's footmen gave it to him in the park, and he told the bearer, with all transports of joy, that he would be punctual to a minute.

Lure. Thus, most villains, some time or other, are punctual to their ruin; and hypocrisy, by imposing on the world, at last deceives itself. Are all things prepared for his reception?

Par. Exactly to your ladyship's order: the alderman, too, is just come, dressed and cooked up for iniquity.

Lure. Then he has got woman's clothes on?

Par. Yes, madam, and has passed upon the family for your nurse.

Lure. Convey him into that closet, and put out the candles, and tell him, I'll wait on him presently.

[*As* PARLY *goes to put out the candles, somebody knocks.*]

Music plays without.

Lure. This must be sir Harry; tell him I am not to be spoken with.

Par. Sir, my lady is not to be spoken with.

Wild. I must have that from her own mouth, Mrs Parly. Play, gentlemen. [*Music plays again.*

Lure. This must be some clown without manners, or a gentleman above ceremony. Who's there?

WILDAIR *sings.*

Thus Damon knocked at Celia's door,
He sighed, and wept, and begged, and swore,
The sign was so, [Knocks.
She answered, No. [Knocks thrice.
No, no, no.
Again he sighed, again he prayed,
No, Damon, no, I am afraid:
Consider, Damon, I'm a maid.
Consider,
No,
I am a maid.
No, &c.
At last his sighs and tears made way,
She rose, and softly turned the key:
Come in, said she, but do not stay.
I may conclude,
You will be rude,
But if you are, you may. [Exit PARLY.

Enter SIR HARRY.

Lure. 'Tis too early for serenading, sir Harry.

Wild. Wheresoever love is, there music is proper: there's an harmonious consent in their

natures, and, when rightly joined, they make up the chorus of earthly happiness.

Lure. But, sir Harry, what tempest drives you here at this hour?

Wild. No tempest, madam, but as fair weather as ever enticed a citizen's wife to cuckold her husband in fresh air. Love, madam.

[WILDAIR *taking her by the hand.*

Lure. As pure and white as angels' soft desires.

Wild. Fierce, as when ripe consenting beauty fires. Is't not so?

Lure. Oh, villain! What privilege have men to our destruction, that thus they hunt our ruin? [*Aside.*] If this be a love-token, [WILDAIR *drops a ring, she takes it up.*] your mistress's favours hang very loose about you, sir.

Wild. I can't, justly, madam, pay your trouble of taking it up, by any thing but desiring you to wear it.

Lure. You gentlemen have the cunningest ways of playing the fool, and are so industrious in your profuseness. Speak seriously; am I beholden to chance, or design, for this ring?

Wild. To design, upon my honour. And I hope my design will succeed. [*Aside.*

Lure. And what shall I give you for such a fine thing?

Wild. You'll give me another; you'll give me another fine thing. [*Both sing.*

Lure. Shall I be free with you, sir Harry?

Wild. With all my heart, madam, so I may be free with you.

Lure. Then, plainly, sir, I shall beg the favour to see you some other time: for, at this very minute, I have two lovers in the house.

Wild. Then to be plain, I must be gone this minute, for I must see another mistress within these two hours.

Lure. Frank and free!

Wild. As you with me—Madam, your most humble servant. [*Exit.*

Lure. Nothing can disturb his humour. Now for my merchant and Vizard.

[*Exit, and takes the candles with her.*

Enter PARLY, *leading in* SMUGGLER, *dressed in women's clothes.*

Par. This way, Mr Alderman.

Smug. Well, Mrs Parly—I'm obliged to you for this trouble: here are a couple of shillings for you. Times are hard, very hard indeed!—but next time I'll steal a pair of silk stockings from my wife, and bring them to you—What are you fumbling about my pockets for?

Par. Only setting the plaits of your gown:—here, sir, get into this closet, and my lady will wait on you presently.

[*Puts him into the closet, runs out, and returns with* VIZARD.

Viz. Where wouldst thou lead me, my dear auspicious little pilot?

Par. You're almost in port, sir; my lady's in the closet, and will come out to you immediately.

Viz. Let me thank thee as I ought. [*Kisses her.*

Par. Pshaw! who has hired me best? a couple of shillings, or a couple of kisses?

Viz. Propitious darkness guides the lover's steps, and night, that shadows outward sense, lights up our inward joy. Night! the great awful ruler of mankind, which, like the Persian monarch, hides its royalty to raise the veneration of the world. Under thy easy reign dissemblers may speak truth: all slavish forms and ceremonies laid aside, and generous villainy may act without constraint.

Smug. [*Peeping out of the closet.*] Bless me! what voice is this?

Viz. Our hungry appetites, like the wild beasts of prey, now scour about to gorge their craving maws; the pleasure of hypocrisy, like a chained lion, once broke loose, wildly indulges its new freedom, ranging through all unbounded joys.

Smug. My nephew's voice, and certainly possessed with an evil spirit; he talks as profanely as an actor possessed with a poet.

Viz. Ha! I hear a voice. Madam—my life, my happiness! where are you, madam?

Smug. Madam! He takes me for a woman too: I'll try him. Where have you left your sanctity, Mr Vizard?

Viz. Talk no more of that ungrateful subject—I left it where it has only business, with daylight; 'tis needless to wear a mask in the dark.

Smug. Oh, the rogue, the rogue!—The world takes you for a very sober, virtuous gentleman.

Viz. Ay, madam, that adds security to all my pleasure. With me a cully 'squire may squander his estate, and ne'er be thought a spendthrift—With me a holy elder may zealously be drunk, and toast his tuneful nose in sack, to make it hold forth clearer——But what is most my praise, the formal rigid she, that rails at vice and men, with me secures her loosest pleasures, and her strictest honour——She who, with scornful mien, and virtuous pride, disdains the name of whore, with me can wanton, and laugh at the deluded world.

Smug. How have I been deceived! Then you are very great among the ladies?

Viz. Yes, madam, they know that, like a mole in the earth, I dig deep, but invisible; not like those fluttering noisy sinners, whose pleasure is the proclamation of their faults; those empty flashes, who no sooner kindle, but they must blaze to alarm the world. But come, madam, you delay our pleasures.

Smug. He surely takes me for the lady Lurewell—she has made him an appointment too——but I'll be revenged of both.——Well, sir, what are those you are so intimate with?

Viz. Come, come, madam, you know very well——those who stand so high, that the

vulgar envy even their crimes, whose figure adds privilege to their sin, and makes it pass unquestioned: fair, high, pampered females, whose speaking eyes, and piercing voice, would arm the statue of a stoic, and animate his cold marble with the soul of an epicure; all ravishing, lovely, soft and kind, like you.

Smug. I'm very lovely and soft indeed! You shall find me much harder than you imagine, friend.———Well, sir, but I suppose your dissimulation has some other motive besides pleasure?

Viz. Yes, madam, the honestest motive in the world—interest—You must know, madam, that I have an old uncle, Alderman Smuggler; you have seen him, I suppose?

Smug. Yes, yes, I have some small acquaintance with him.

Viz. 'Tis the most knavish, precise, covetous old rogue, that ever died of the gout.

Smug. Ah, the young son of a whore! Well, sir, and what of him?

Viz. Hell hungers not more for wretched souls, than he for ill-got pelf: and yet (what's wonderful), he that would stick at no profitable villany himself, loves holiness in another. He prays all Sunday for the sins of the week past; he spends all dinner-time in two tedious graces; and what he designs a blessing to the meat, proves a curse to his family; he's the most—

Smug. Well, well, sir, I know him very well.

Viz. Then, madam, he has a swinging estate, which I design to purchase as a saint, and spend like a gentleman. He got it by cheating, and should lose it by deceit. By the pretence of my zeal and sobriety, I'll cozen the old miser, one of these days, out of a settlement and deed of conveyance—

Smug. It shall be a deed to convey you to the gallows, then, ye young dog. [*Aside.*

Viz. And no sooner he's dead, but I'll' rattle over his grave with a coach and six, to inform his covetous ghost how genteelly I spend his money.

Smug. I'll prevent you, boy; for I'll have my money buried with me. [*Aside.*

Viz. Bless me, madam! here's a light coming this way. I must fly immediately.——When shall I see you, madam?

Smug. Sooner than you expect, my dear.

Viz. Pardon me, dear madam, I would not be seen for the world. I would sooner forfeit my life, my pleasure than my reputation. [*Exit.*

Smug. Reputation, reputation! That poor word suffers a great deal——Well, thou art the most accomplished hypocrite that ever made a grave plodding face over a dish of coffee and a pipe of tobacco. He owes me for seven years maintenance, and shall pay me by seven years imprisonment; when I die, I'll leave him the free simple of a rope and a shilling———Who are there? I begin to be afraid of some mischief———I wish that I were safe within the city liberties———I'll hide myself.

[*Stands close.*

Enter BUTLER, *with other Servants and lights.*

But. I say there are two spoons wanting, and I'll search the whole house. Two spoons will be no small gap in my quarter's wages.

Serv. When did you miss them, James?

But. Miss them! why, I miss them now—— In short, they must be among you; and if you don't return them, I'll go to the cunning man tomorrow morning——My spoons I want, and my spoons I will have.

Serv. Come, come, search about.

[*Search, and discover* SMUGGLER.

But. Hark'e, good woman, what makes you hide yourself? What are you ashamed of?

Smug. Ashamed of! Oh, lord, sir, I'm an honest old woman, that never was ashamed of any thing.

But. What, are you a midwife, then? Speak, did not you see a couple of stray spoons in your travels?

Smug. Stray spoons!

But. Ay, ay, stray spoons. In short, you stole them; and I'll shake your old limbs to pieces, if you don't deliver them presently.

Smug. Bless me! a reverend elder of seventy years old accused for petty larceny!——Why, search me, good people, search me; and if you find any spoons about me, you shall burn me for a witch.

But. Ay, we will search you, mistress.

[*They search, and pull the spoons out of his pocket.*

Smug. Oh, the devil, the devil!

But. Where, where is he! Lord bless us! she is a witch in good earnest, may be.

Smug. Oh, it was some devil, some Covent-Garden, or St. James's devil, that put them in my pocket.

But. Ay, ay, you shall be hanged for a thief, burned for a witch, and then carted for a bawd. Speak, what are you?

Enter LUREWELL.

Smug. I'm the lady Lurewell's nurse.

Lure. What noise is this?

But. Here is an old succubus, madam, that has stole two silver spoons, and says she is your nurse.

Lure. My nurse! Oh, the impudent old jade! I never saw the withered creature before.

Smug. Then I'm finely caught—Oh, madam, madam, don't you know me? Don't you remember buss and guinea?

Lure. Was ever such impudence! I know thee!—Why, thou'rt as brazen as a bawd in the side-box. Take her before a justice, and then to Newgate; away!

Smug. Oh, consider, madam, that I'm an alderman!

Lure. Consider, sir, that you're a compound of covetousness, hypocrisy, and knavery, and must be punished accordingly. You must be in petticoats, gouty monster! must ye? You must buss and guinea, too? you must tempt a lady's honour, old satyr? Away with him!

[*Hurry him off.*

Still may our sex thus frauds of men oppose;
Still may our arts delude these tempting foes.
May honour rule, and never fall betrayed,
But vice be caught in nets for virtue laid.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—LADY DARLING'S *house.*

Enter DARLING *and* ANGELICA.

Dar. DAUGHTER, since you have to deal with a man of so peculiar a temper, you must not think the general arts of love can secure him; you may therefore allow such a courtier some encouragement extraordinary, without reproach to your modesty.

Ang. I am sensible, madam, that a formal nicety makes our modesty sit awkward, and appears rather a chain to enslave, than a bracelet to adorn us; it should shew, when unmolested, easy and innocent as a dove, but strong and vigorous as a falcon, when assaulted.

Dar. I'm afraid, daughter, you mistake sir Harry's gaiety for dishonour.

Ang. Though modesty, madam, may wink, it must not sleep, when powerful enemies are abroad. I must confess, that, of all men's, I would not see sir Harry Wildair's faults; nay, I could wrest his most suspicious words a thousand ways, to make them look like honour. But, madam, in spite of love, I must hate him, and curse those practices which taint our nobility, and rob all virtuous women of the bravest men———

Dar. You must certainly be mistaken, Angelica; for I'm satisfied sir Harry's designs are only to court and marry you.

Ang. His pretence, perhaps, was such; but women, now, like enemies, are attacked; whether by treachery, or fairly conquered, the glory of the triumph is the same. Pray, madam, by what means were you made acquainted with his designs?

Dar. Means, child! Why, my cousin Vizard, who, I'm sure, is your sincere friend, sent him. He brought me this letter from my cousin.

[*Gives her the letter, which she opens.*

Ang. Ha, Vizard!—then I'm abused in earnest—Would sir Harry, by his instigation, fix a base affront upon me? No, I cannot suspect him of so ungenteel a crime—This letter shall trace the truth. [*Aside.*]——My suspicions, madam, are much cleared; and I hope to satisfy your ladyship in my management, when I next see sir Harry.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, here's a gentleman below, calls himself Wildair,

Dar. Conduct him up. [*Exit Servant.*] Daughter, I won't doubt your discretion.

[*Exit* LADY DARLING.

Enter WILDAIR.

Wild. Oh, the delights of love and Burgundy!——Madam, I have toasted your ladyship fifteen bumpers successively, and swallowed cupids like loches to every glass.

Ang. And what then, sir?

Wild. Why, then, madam, the wine has got into my head, and the cupids into my heart; and unless, by quenching quick my flame, you kindly ease the smart, I am a lost man, madam.

Ang. Drunkenness, sir Harry, is the worst pretence a gentleman can make for rudeness;—for the excuse is as scandalous as the fault.—Therefore, pray consider who you are so free with, sir; a woman of condition, that can call half a dozen footmen upon occasion.

Wild. Nay, madam, if you have a mind to toss me in a blanket, half a dozen chambermaids would do better service. Come, come, madam; though the wine makes me lisp, yet it has taught me to speak plainer. By all the dust of my ancient progenitors, I must this night rest in your arms!

Ang. Nay, then——who waits there?

Enter Footmen.

Take hold of that madman, and bind him.

Wild. Nay, then, Burgundy's the word;—slaughter will ensue. Hold—Do you know, scoundrels, that I have been drinking victorious Burgundy? [*Draws.*

Servants. We know you're drunk, sir.

Wild. Then, how have you the impudence, rascals, to assault a gentleman with a couple of flasks of courage in his head?

Servants. We must do as our young mistress commands us.

Wild. Nay, then, have among ye, dogs!

[*Throws money among them; they scramble and take it up: he, pelting them out, shuts the door, and returns.*]

Rascals, poltroons! I have charmed the dragon, and now the fruit's my own.

Ang. Oh, the mercenary wretches! This was a plot to betray me.

Wild. I have put the whole army to flight;—and now I'll take the general prisoner.

[*Laying hold on her.*

Ang. I conjure you, sir, by the sacred name of honour, by your dead father's name, and the fair reputation of your mother's chastity, that you offer not the least offence. Already you have wronged me past redress.

Wild. Thou art the most unaccountable creature——

Ang. What madness, sir Harry, what wild dream of loose desire, could prompt you to attempt this baseness? View me well—the brightness of my mind, methinks, should lighten outwards, and let you see your mistake in my behaviour. I think it shines with so much innocence in my face, that it should dazzle all your vicious thoughts. Think not I am defenceless, because alone. Your very self is guard against yourself; I'm sure there's something generous in your soul: my words shall search it out, and eyes shall fire it for my own defence.

Wild. [*Mimicking.*] Tal tidum, tidum, tal ti didi didum. A million to one, now, but this girl is just come flush from reading the Rival Queens! —'Egad, I'll at her in her own cant—Oh, my Statira! Oh! my angry dear, turn thy eyes on me—behold thy beau in buskins.

Ang. Behold me, sir; view me with a sober thought, free from those fumes of wine that throw a mist before your sight, and you shall find that every glance from my reproaching eyes is armed with sharp resentment, and with a virtuous pride that looks dishonour dead.

Wild. This is the first whore in heroics that I have met with. [*Aside.*] Look ye, madam, as to that slender particular of your virtue, we sha'n't quarrel about it; you may be as virtuous as any woman in England, if you please; you may say your prayers all the time. But, pray, madam, be pleased to consider, what is this same virtue that you make such a mighty noise about—— Can your virtue bespeak you a front row in the boxes? No! for the players cannot live upon virtue. Can your virtue keep a coach and six. No, no; your virtuous women walk on foot.— Can your virtue hire you a pew in the church? Why, the very sexton will tell you, No. Can your virtue stake for you at picquet? No. Then, what business has a woman with virtue? Come, come, madam, I offered you fifty guineas;—— there's a hundred——The devil!——virtuous still!——Why, it is a hundred, five score, a hundred guineas!

Ang. Oh, indignation! Were I a man, you durst not use me thus. But the mean, poor abuse you throw on me, reflects upon yourself: our sex still strikes an awe upon the brave, and only cowards dare affront a woman.

Wild. Affront! 'Sdeath, madam, a hundred guineas will set you up a bank at basset; a hundred guineas will furnish out your lodging with china; a hundred guineas will give you an air of quality; a hundred guineas will buy you a rich escritoire for your billet-doux, or a fine common-prayer-book for your virtue; a hundred guineas will buy a hundred fine things, and fine things are for fine ladies, and fine ladies are for fine gentlemen, and fine gentlemen are——'Egad, this Burgundy makes a man speak like an angel! Come, come, madam, take it, and put it to what use you please.

Ang. I'll use it as I would the base unworthy giver, thus——

[*Throws down the purse, and stamps upon it.*

Wild. I have no mind to meddle in state affairs; but these women will make me a parliament-man in spite of my teeth, on purpose to bring in a bill against their extortion. She tramples under foot that deity which all the world adores——Oh, the blooming pride of beautiful eighteen!——Pshaw! I'll talk to her no longer; I'll make my market with the old gentlewoman; she knows business better——[*Goes to the door.*] Here, you, friend: pray, desire the old lady to walk in——Hark'e, 'egad, madam, I'll tell your mother.

Enter LADY DARLING.

Lady Dar. Well, sir Harry, and how d'ye like my daughter, pray?

Wild. Like her, madam!——Hark'e, will you take it?—Why, faith, madam—Take the money, I say, or, egad, all's out.

Ang. All shall out—Sir, you're a scandal to the name of gentleman.

Wild. With all my heart, madam——In short, madam, your daughter has used me somewhat too familiarly, though I have treated her like a woman of quality.

Lady Dar. How, sir?

Wild. Why, madam, I have offered her a hundred guineas.

Lady Dar. A hundred guineas! Upon what score?

Wild. Upon what score! Lord, lord, how these old women love to hear bawdy! Why, 'faith, madam, I have never a double entendre ready at present; but I'll sing you a song.

Behold the goldfinches, tol al de rall,
And a man of my inches, tol al de rall,
You shall take them, believe me, tol all de rall,
If you will give me your tall al de rall.

A modish minuet, madam, that's all.

Lady Dar. Sir, I don't understand you.

Wild. Aye, she will have it plain terms— Then, madam, in downright English, I offered your daughter a hundred guineas to——

Ang. Hold, sir! stop your abusive tongue, too loose for modest ears to hear——Madam, I did before suspect that his designs were base; now they're too plain. This knight, this mighty man of wit and humour, is made a tool to a knave—— Vizard has sent him on a bully's errand to affront a woman; but I scorn the abuse, and him that offered it.

Lady Dar. How, sir, come to affront us!—D'ye know who we are, sir?

Wild. Know who you are! Why, your daughter there, is Mr Vizard's—cousin, I suppose.—And for you, madam——Now, to call her procuress à-la-mode de France.—[*Aside.*]—J'estime votre occupation——

Lady Dar. Pray, sir, speak English.

Wild. Then, to define her office á-la-mode de Londres. [*Aside.*] I suppose your ladyship to be one of those civil, obliging, discreet old gentlewomen, who keep their visiting days for the entertainment of their presenting friends, whom they treat with imperial tea, a private room, and a pack of cards. Now I suppose you do understand me?

Lady Dar. This is beyond sufferance! But say, thou abusive man, what injury have you ever received from me, or mine, thus to engage you in this scandalous aspersion?

Ang. Yes, sir, what cause, what motives could induce you thus to debase yourself below your rank?

Wild. Hey-day! Now, dear Roxana, and you, my fair Statira, be not so very heroic in your style: Vizard's letter may resolve you, and answer all the impertinent questions you have made me.

Lady Dar. & Ang. We appeal to that.

Wild. And I'll stand to it; he read it to me, and the contents were pretty plain, I thought.

Ang. Here, sir, peruse it, and see how much we are injured, and you deceived.

Wild. [*Opening the letter.*] But, hold, madam, [*To* DARLING.] before I read I'll make some conditions: Mr Vizard says here, that I won't scruple thirty or forty pieces. Now, madam, if you have clapt in another cypher to the account, and made it three or four hundred, 'egad I'll not stand to it.

Ang. Now, I cannot tell whether disdain or anger be the most just resentment for this injury.

Lady Darl. The letter, sir, shall answer you.

Wild. Well, then—[*Reads.*]—'Out of my earnest inclination to serve your ladyship, and my cousin Angelica'—Aye, aye, the very words, I can say 't by heart—'I have sent sir Harry Wildair to——What the devil's this? Sent sir Harry Wildair to court my cousin'—He read to me quite a different thing—'He's a gentleman of great parts and fortune'—He's a son of a whore and a rascal—'And would make your daughter very happy [*Whistles.*] in a husband.'—[*Looks foolish and hums a song.*] Oh! poor sir Harry, what have thy angry stars designed!

Ang. Now, sir, I hope you need no instigation to redress our wrongs, since even the injury points the way.

Lady Dar. Think, sir, that our blood for many generations has run in the purest channel of unsullied honour.

Wild. Ay, madam. [*Bows to her.*

Ang. Consider what a tender flower is woman's reputation, which the least air of foul detraction blasts.

Wild. Yes, madam. [*Bows to the other.*

Lady Dar. Call, then, to mind your rude and scandalous behaviour.

Wild. Right, madam. [*Bows again.*

Ang. Remember the base price you offered me. [*Exit.*

Wild. Very true, madam. Was ever man so catechized?

Lady Dar. Then, think, that Vizard—the villain Vizard—caused all this, yet lives: that's all: farewell.

Wild. Stay, madam, [*To* DARLING.] one word; is there no other way to redress your wrongs, but by fighting?

Lady Dar. Only one, sir; which, if you can think of, you may do; you know the business I entertained you for.

Wild. I understand you, madam. [*Exit* DARLING.] Here am I brought to a very pretty dilemma. I must commit murder, or commit matrimony; which is the best now? a licence from Doctors Commons, or a sentence from the Old Bailey?——If I kill my man, the law hangs me; if I marry my woman, I shall hang myself——But, damn it——cowards dare fight:—I'll marry; that's the most daring action of the two——So, my dear cousin Angelica, have at you. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Newgate.*

CLINCHER *senior, solus.*

Clin. sen. How severe and melancholy are Newgate reflections! Last week my father died; yesterday I turned beau; to-day I am laid by the heels; and to-morrow shall be hung by the neck——I was agreeing with a bookseller about printing an account of my journey through France and Italy: but now the history of my travels must be through Holborn to Tyburn——'The last dying speech of beau Clincher, that was going to the Jubilee——Come, a halfpenny apiece'——A sad sound, a sad sound, faith! 'Tis one way to have a man's death make a great noise in the world.

Enter SMUGGLER *and Gaoler.*

Smug. Well, friend, I have told you who I am: so, send these letters into Thames Street, as directed: they are to gentlemen that will bail me. [*Exit Gaoler.*] Eh! this Newgate is a very populous place! here's robbery and repentance in every corner——Well, friend, what are you? a cut-throat or a bum-bailiff!

Clin. sen. What are you, mistress, a bawd or a witch? Hark'e, if you are a witch, d'ye see, I'll give you a hundred pounds to mount me on a broom-staff, and whip me away to the Jubilee.

Smug. The Jubilee! O, you young rake-hell, what brought you here?

Clin. sen. Ah, you old rogue, what brought you here, if you go to that?

Smug. I knew, sir, what your powdering, your prinking, your dancing, and your frisking, would come to.

Clin. sen. And I knew what your cozening, your extortion, and your smuggling would come to.

Smug. Ay, sir, you must break your indentures, and run to the devil in a full-bottom wig, must you?

Clin. sen. Ay, sir, and you must put off your gravity, and run to the devil in petticoats——You design to swing in masquerade, master, d'ye?

Smug. Ay, you must go to the plays, too, sirrah: Lord, lord! what business has a 'prentice at a play-house, unless it be to hear his master made a cuckold, and his mistress a whore? It is ten to one now, but some malicious poet has my character upon the stage within this month: 'tis a hard matter, now, that an honest sober man cannot sin in private for this plaguy stage. I gave an honest gentleman five guineas myself towards writing a book against it; and it has done no good, we see.

Clin. sen. Well, well, master, take courage! Our comfort is, we have lived together, and shall die together; only with this difference, that I have lived like a fool, and shall die like a knave, and you have lived like a knave, and shall die like a fool.

Smug. No, sirrah! I have sent a messenger for my clothes, and shall get out immediately, and shall be upon your jury by and by——Go to prayers, you rogue, to prayers. [*Exit.*

Clin. sen. Prayers! it is a hard taking when a man must say grace to the gallows—Ah, this cursed intriguing! Had I swung handsomely in a silken garter now, I had died in my duty; but to hang in hemp, like the vulgar, it is very ungenteel.

Enter TOM ERRAND.

A reprieve! a reprieve! thou dear, dear——damned rogue. Where have you been? Thou art the most welcome——son of a whore——where's my clothes?

Err. Sir, I see where mine are. Come, sir, strip, sir, strip!

Clin. sen. What, sir, will you abuse a gentleman?

Err. A gentleman! Ha, ha, ha!—d'ye know where you are, sir? We're all gentlemen here. I stand up for liberty and property. Newgate's a commonwealth. No courtier has business among us. Come, sir.

Clin. sen. Well, but stay; stay till I send for my own clothes: I shall get out presently.

Err. No, no, sir, I'll ha' you into the dungeon, and uncase you.

Clin. sen. Sir, you cannot master me, for I am twenty thousand strong.

[*Exeunt, struggling.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* LADY DARLING'S *house.*

Enter WILDAIR, *with letters; Servants following.*

Wild. Here, fly all around, and bear these as directed; you to Westminster, you to St. James's, and you into the city. Tell all my friends, a bridegroom's joy invites their presence. Look all of ye like bridegrooms also: all appear with hospitable looks, and bear a welcome in your faces. Tell them I am married. If any ask to whom, make no reply; but tell them, that I'm married; that joy shall crown the day, and love the night. Begone, fly!

Enter STANDARD.

A thousand welcomes, friend; my pleasure's now complete, since I can share it with my friend: brisk joy shall bound from me to you: then back again; and, like the sun, grow warmer by reflection.

Stand. You're always pleasant, sir Harry; but this transcends yourself: whence proceeds it?

Wild. Canst thou not guess, my friend? Whence flows all earthly joy? What is the life of man, and soul of pleasure? Woman.——What fires the heart with transport, and the soul with raptures?—Lovely woman.——What is the master-stroke and smile of the creation, but charming, virtuous woman?—When nature, in the general composition, first brought woman forth, like a flushed poet, ravished with his fancy, with ecstasy it blest the fair production!——Methinks, my friend, you relish not my joy. What is the cause?

Stand. Canst thou not guess?—What is the bane of man, and scourge of life, but woman?—What is the heathenish idol man sets up, and is damned for worshipping? Treacherous woman.—What are those, whose eyes, like basilisks, shine beautiful for sure destruction, whose smiles are dangerous as the grin of fiends, but false, deluding woman?—Woman, whose composition inverts humanity; their bodies heavenly, but their souls are clay.

Wild. Come, come, colonel, this is too much: I know your wrongs received from Lurewell may excuse your resentment against her. But it is unpardonable to charge the failings of a single woman upon the whole sex. I have found one, whose virtues——

Stand. So have I, sir Harry: I have found one whose pride's above yielding to a prince. And if lying, dissembling, perjury and falsehood, be no breaches in a woman's honour, she is as innocent as infancy.

Wild. Well, colonel, I find your opinion grows stronger by opposition; I shall now, therefore, waive the argument, and only beg you, for this

day, to make a shew of complaisance at least.—Here comes my charming bride.

Enter LADY DARLING *and* ANGELICA.

Stand. [*Saluting* ANGELICA.] I wish you, madam, all the joys of love and fortune.

Enter CLINCHER *junior.*

Clin. Gentlemen and ladies, I'm just upon the spur, and have only a minute to take my leave.

Wild. Whither are you bound, sir?

Clin. Bound, sir! I am going to the Jubilee, sir.

Lady Dar. Bless me, cousin! how came you by these clothes?

Clin. Clothes! ha, ha, ha! the rarest jest! ha, ha, ha! I shall burst, by Jupiter Ammon, I shall burst.

Lady Dar. What's the matter, cousin?

Clin. The matter! ha, ha, ha! Why an honest porter, ha, ha, ha! has knocked out my brother's brains, ha, ha, ha!

Wild. A very good jest, i'faith, ha, ha, ha!

Clin. Ay, sir, but the jest of all is, he knocked out his brains with a hammer, and so he is as dead as a door-nail, ha, ha, ha!

Lady Dar. And do you laugh, wretch?

Clin. Laugh! ha, ha, ha! let me see e'er a younger brother in England that won't laugh at such a jest.

Ang. You appeared a very sober, pious gentleman some hours ago.

Clin. Pshaw! I was a fool then: but now, madam, I'm a wit; I can rake now. As for your part, madam, you might have had me once; but now, madam, if you should fall to eating chalk, or gnawing the sheets, it is none of my fault. Now, madam—I have got an estate, and I must go to the Jubilee.

Enter CLINCHER *senior in a blanket.*

Clin. sen. Must you so, rogue, must ye? You will go to the Jubilee, will you?

Clin. jun. A ghost! a ghost! Send for the dean and chapter presently.

Clin. sen. A ghost! No, no, sirrah, I'm an elder brother, rogue.

Clin. jun. I don't care a farthing for that; I'm sure you're dead in law.

Clin. sen. Why so, sirrah, why so?

Clin. jun. Because, sir, I can get a fellow to swear he knocked out your brains.

Wild. An odd way of swearing a man out of his life!

Clin. jun. Smell him, gentlemen; he has a deadly scent about him.—

Clin. sen. Truly the apprehensions of death may have made me savour a little. O, lord! the colonel! The apprehension of him may make the savour worse, I'm afraid.

Clin. jun. In short, sir, were you a ghost, or brother, or devil, I will go to the Jubilee, by Jupiter Ammon.

Stand. Go to the jubilee! go to the bear-garden.—The travel of such fools as you doubly injures our country: you expose our native follies, which ridicule us among strangers, and return fraught only with their vices, which you vend here for fashionable gallantry: a travelling fool is as dangerous as a home-bred villain. Get you to your native plough and cart, converse with animals like yourselves, sheep and oxen: men are creatures you don't understand.

Wild. Let them alone, colonel, their folly will be now diverting. Come, gentlemen, we'll dispute this point some other time; I hear some fiddles tuning; let's hear how they can entertain us. [*A servant enters, and whispers* WILDAIR.

Wild. Madam, shall I beg you to entertain the company in the next room for a moment?

[*To* LADY DARLING.

Lady Dar. With all my heart—Come, gentlemen. [*Exeunt all but* WILDAIR.

Wild. A lady to inquire for me! Who can this be?

Enter LUREWELL.

Oh, madam, this favour is beyond my expectation———to come, uninvited, to dance at my wedding.———What d'ye gaze at, madam?

Lure. A monster—If thou'rt married, thou'rt the most perjured wretch that e'er avouched deceit.

Wild. Heyday! Why, madam, I'm sure I never swore to marry you: I made, indeed, a slight promise, upon condition of your granting me a small favour; but you would not consent, you know.

Lure. How he upbraids me with my shame! Can you deny your binding vows, when this appears a witness against your falsehood? [*Shews a ring.*] Methinks the motto of this sacred pledge should flash confusion in your guilty face—Read, read here, the binding words of *Love and Honour!*—words not unknown to your perfidious tongue, though utter strangers to your treacherous heart.

Wild. The woman's stark staring mad, that's certain.

Lure. Was it maliciously designed to let me find my misery when past redress; to let me know you, only to know you false? Had not cursed chance shewed me the surprising motto, I had been happy———The first knowledge I had of you was fatal to me, and this second worse.

Wild. What the devil is all this! Madam, I'm not at leisure for raillery at present, I have weighty affairs upon my hands: the business of pleasure, madam: any other time———

[*Going.*

Lure. Stay, I conjure you, stay.

Wild. 'Faith, I can't, my bride expects me; but hark'e, when the honey-moon is over, about

a month or two hence, I may do you a small favour. [*Exit.*

Lure. Grant me some wild expressions, Heavens, or I shall burst! Woman's weakness, man's falsehood, my own shame, and love's disdain, at once swell up my breast—Words, words, or I shall burst! [*Going.*

Enter STANDARD.

Stand. Stay, madam, you need not shun my sight; for, if you are perfect woman, you have confidence to outface a crime, and bear the charge of guilt without a blush.

Lure. The charge of guilt! What, making a fool of you? I've done it, and glory in the act: the height of female justice were to make you all hang or drown: dissembling to the prejudice of men is virtue; and every look, or sign, or smile, or tear, that can deceive, is meritorious.

Stand. Very pretty principles, truly! If there be truth in woman, 'tis now in thee. Come, madam, you know that you're discovered, and, being sensible that you cannot escape, you would now turn to bay. That ring, madam, proclaims you guilty.

Lure. O, monster, villain! perfidious villain! Has he told you?

Stand. I'll tell it you, and loudly, too.

Lure. O, name it not!—Yet, speak it out; 'tis so just a punishment for putting faith in man, that I will bear it all: and let credulous maids, that trust their honour to the tongues of men, thus hear the shame proclaimed. Speak now, what his busy scandal, and your improving malice, both dare utter.

Stand. Your falsehood can't be reached by malice nor by satire; your actions are the justest libel on your fame; your words, your looks, your tears, I did believe in spite of common fame. Nay, 'gainst mine own eyes, I still maintained your truth. I imagined Wildair's boasting of your favours to be the pure result of his own vanity: at last he urged your taking presents of him; as a convincing proof of which, you yesterday, from him, received that ring, which ring, that I might be sure he gave it, I lent him for that purpose.

Lure. Ha! you lent it him for that purpose!

Stand. Yes, yes, madam, I lent it him for that purpose——No denying it—I know it well, for I have worn it long, and desire you now, madam, to restore it to the just owner.

Lure. The just owner! Think, sir, think but of what importance 'tis to own it: if you have love and honour in your soul, 'tis then most justly yours; if not, you are a robber, and have stolen it basely.

Stand. Ha!—your words, like meeting flints, have struck a light to shew me something strange——But tell me instantly, is not your real name Manly?

Lure. Answer me first: did not you receive this ring about twelve years ago?

Stand. I did.

Lure. And were not you about that time entertained two nights at the house of sir Oliver Manly, in Oxfordshire?

Stand. I was, I was. [*Runs to her, and embraces her.*] The blest remembrance fires my soul with transport——I know the rest——you are the charming she, and I the happy man.

Lure. How has blind fortune stumbled on the right! But, where have you wandered since?—'Twas cruel to forsake me.

Stand. The particulars of my fortune are too tedious now: but, to discharge myself from the stain of dishonour, I must tell you, that immediately upon my return to the university, my elder brother and I quarrelled: my father, to prevent farther mischief, posts me away to travel: I wrote to you from London, but fear the letter came not to your hands.

Lure. I never had the least account of you by letter or otherwise.

Stand. Three years I lived abroad, and at my return found you were gone out of the kingdom, though none could tell me whither: missing you thus, I went to Flanders, served my king till the peace commenced; then, fortunately going on board at Amsterdam, one ship transported us both to England. At the first sight I loved, though ignorant of the hidden cause——You may remember, madam, that, talking once of marriage, I told you I was engaged; to your dear self I meant.

Lure. Then, men are still most generous and brave—and, to reward your truth, an estate of three thousand pounds a-year waits your acceptance; and, if I can satisfy you in my past conduct, and the reasons that engaged me to deceive all men, I shall expect the honourable performance of your promise, and that you will stay with me in England.

Stand. Stay! Nor fame nor glory e'er shall part us more. My honour can be nowhere more concerned than here.

Enter WILDAIR, ANGELICA, *and both* CLINCHERS.

Oh! sir Harry, fortune has acted miracles today: the story's strange and tedious, but all amounts to this——that woman's mind is charming as her person, and I am made a convert, too, to beauty.

Wild. I wanted only this to make my pleasure perfect. And now, madam, we may dance and sing, and love and kiss in good earnest.

A dance here. After the dance, enter SMUGGLER.

Smug. So, gentlemen and ladies, I'm glad to find you so merry; is my gracious nephew among ye?

Wild. Sir, he dares not shew his face among such honourable company; for your gracious nephew is—

Smug. What, sir? Have a care what you say.

Wild. A villain, sir.

Smug. With all my heart. I'll pardon you the beating me for that very word. And pray, sir Harry, when you see him next, tell him this news from me, that I have disinherited him—that I will leave him as poor as a disbanded quarter-master. And this is the positive and stiff resolution of threescore and ten; an age that sticks as obstinately to its purpose, as to the old fashion of its cloak.

Wild. You see, madam, [*To* ANGEL.] how industriously fortune has punished his offence to you.

Ang. I can scarcely, sir, reckon it an offence, considering the happy consequence of it.

Smug. Oh, sir Harry, he is as hypocritical——

Lure. As yourself, Mr Alderman. How fares my good old nurse, pray, sir?

Smug. O, madam, I shall be even with you before I part with your writings and money, that I have in my hands.

Stand. A word with you, Mr Alderman; do you know this pocket-book?

Smug. O lord, it contains an account of all my secret practices in trading. [*Aside.*] How came you by it, sir?

Stand. Sir Harry, here, dusted it out of your pocket at this lady's house yesterday. It contains an account of some secret practices in your merchandising; among the rest, the counterpart of an agreement with a correspondent at Bourdeaux, about transporting French wine in Spanish casks. First, return this lady all her writings; then I shall consider whether I shall lay your proceedings before the parliament or not, whose justice will never suffer your smuggling to go unpunished.

Smug. Oh, my poor ship and cargo!

Clin. sen. Hark'e, master, you had as good come along with me to the Jubilee now.

Ang. Come, Mr Alderman, for once let a woman advise: Would you be thought an honest man, banish covetousness, that worst gout of age: avarice is a poor, pilfering quality of the soul, and will as certainly cheat, as a thief would steal. Would you be thought a reformer of the times, be less severe in your censures, less rigid in your precepts, and more strict in your example.

Wild. Right, madam; virtue flows freer from imitation than compulsion; of which, colonel, your conversion and mine are just examples.

In vain are musty morals taught in schools,
By rigid teachers, and as rigid rules,
Where virtue with a frowning aspect stands,
And frights the pupil from its rough commands:
But woman————
Charming woman can true converts make,
We love the precept for the teacher's sake.
Virtue in them appears so bright, so gay,
We hear with transport, and with pride obey.

[*Exeunt omnes*

THE

INCONSTANT:

OR,

THE WAY TO WIN HIM.

BY

FARQUHAR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

OLD MIRABELL, *an aged gentleman, of an odd compound, between the peevishness incident to his years, and his fatherly fondness towards his son.*

YOUNG MIRABELL, *his son, the Inconstant.*

CAPTAIN DURETETE, *an honest good-natured fellow, that thinks himself a greater fool than he is.*

DUGARD, *brother to* ORIANA.

PETIT, *servant to* DUGARD, *afterwards to his sister.*

WOMEN.

ORIANA, *a lady contracted to* MIRABELL, *who would bring him to reason.*

BISARRE, *a whimsical lady, friend to* ORIANA, *admired by* DURETETE.

LAMORCE, *a woman of contrivance.*

Four Bravoes, two Gentlemen, and two Ladies. Soldiers, Servants, and Attendants.

Scene—Paris.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Street.*

Enter DUGARD, *and his man* PETIT, *in riding habits.*

Dug. SIRRAH, What's a clock?

Pet. Turned of eleven, sir.

Dug. No more! We have rid a swinging pace from Nemours, since two this morning! Petit, run to Rousseau's, and bespeak a dinner at a louis-d'or a-head, to be ready by one.

Pet. How many will there be of you, sir?

Dug. Let me see; Mirabell one, Duretete two, myself, three——

Pet. And I four.

Dug. How now, sir, at your old travelling familiarity! When abroad, you had some freedom for want of better company; but among my friends at Paris, pray remember your distance—Begone, sir! [*Exit* PETIT.] This fellow's wit was necessary abroad, but he's too cunning for a domestic; I must dispose of him some way else.—Who's here? Old Mirabell, and my sister! my dearest sister!

Enter OLD MIRABELL *and* ORIANA.

Ori. My brother! Welcome.

Dug. Monsieur Mirabell! I'm heartily glad to see you.

Old Mir. Honest Mr Dugard! by the blood of the Mirabells, I'm your most humble servant.

Dug. Why, sir, you've cast your skin, sure; you're brisk and gay; lusty health about you; no sign of age but your silver hairs.

Old Mir. Silver hairs! Then, they are quicksilver hairs, sir. Whilst I have golden pockets, let my hairs be silver an they will. Adsbud, sir, I can dance, and sing, and drink, and——no, I can't wench. But, Mr Dugard, no news of my son Bob in all your travels?

Dug. Your son's come home, sir.

Old Mir. Come home! Bob come home! By the blood of the Mirabells, Mr Dugard, what say ye?

Ori. Mr Mirabell returned, sir!

Dug. He's certainly come, and you may see him within this hour or two.

Old Mir. Swear it, Mr Dugard; presently swear it.

Dug. Sir, he came to town with me this morning; I left him at the Bagnieurs, being a little disordered after riding, and I shall see him again presently.

Old Mir. What! And he was ashamed to ask a blessing with his boots on? A nice dog! Well, and how fares the young rogue, ha?

Dug. A fine gentleman, sir. He'll be his own messenger.

Old Mir. A fine gentleman! But is the rogue like me, still?

Dug. Why, yes, sir; he's very like his mother, and as like you as most modern sons are to their fathers.

Old Mir. Why, sir, don't you think that I begat him?

Dug. Why, yes, sir; you married his mother, and he inherits your estate. He's very like you, upon my word.

Ori. And pray, brother, what's become of his honest companion, Duretete?

Dug. Who, the captain? the very same, he went abroad; he's the only Frenchman I ever knew, that could not change. Your son, Mr Mirabell, is more obliged to nature for that fellow's composition, than for his own: for he's more happy in Duretete's folly, than his own wit. In short, they are as inseparable as finger and thumb; but the first instance in the world, I believe, of opposition in friendship.

Old Mir. Very well; will he be home to dinner, think ye?

Dug. Sir, he has ordered me to bespeak a dinner for us at Rousseau's, at a Louis-d'or a head.

Old Mir. A Louis-d'or a head! well said, Bob; by the blood of the Mirabells, Bob's improved. But, Mr Dugard, was it so civil of Bob to visit Monsieur Rousseau before his own natural father? Eh! harkee, Oriana, what think you, now, of a fellow, that can eat and drink ye a whole Louis-d'or at a sitting? He must be as strong as Hercules, life and spirit in abundance. Before Gad, I don't wonder at these men of quality, that their own wives can't serve them. A Louis-d'or a head! 'Tis enough to stock the whole nation with bastards, 'tis faith. Mr Dugard, I leave you with your sister. [*Exit* OLD MIR.

Dug. Well, sister, I need not ask you how you do, your looks resolve me; fair, tall, well-shaped; you're almost grown out of my remembrance.

Ori. Why, truly, brother, I look pretty well, thank nature and my toilet; I have 'scaped the jaundice, green-sickness, and the small-pox; I eat three meals a day, am very merry, when up, and sleep soundly, when I'm down.

Dug. But, sister, you remember, that upon my going abroad, you would chuse this old gentleman for your guardian; he's no more related to our family, than Prester John, and I have no reason to think you mistrusted my management of your fortune: therefore, pray be so kind as to tell me, without reservation, the true cause of making such a choice?

Ori. Look'e, brother, you were going a rambling, and 'twas proper, lest I should go a rambling too, that somebody should take care of me. Old monsieur Mirabell is an honest gentleman, was our father's friend, and has a young lady in his house, whose company I like, and who has chosen him for her guardian, as well as I.

Dug. Who, mademoiselle Bisarre?

Ori. The same; we live merrily together, without scandal or reproach; we make much of the old gentleman between us, and he takes care of us; we eat what we like; go to bed, when we please; rise, when we will; all the week we dance and sing, and, upon Sundays, go first to church, and then to the play. Now, brother, besides these motives for chusing this gentleman for my guardian, perhaps I had some private reasons.

Dug. Not so private as you imagine, sister; your love to young Mirabell's no secret, I can assure you, but so public, that all your friends are ashamed on't.

Ori. O' my word, then, my friends are very bashful; though I'm afraid, sir, that those people are not ashamed enough at their own crimes, who have so many blushes to spare for the faults of their neighbours.

Dug. Aye, but, sister, the people say——

Ori. Pshaw, hang the people! they'll talk treason, and prophane their Maker; must we, therefore, infer, that our king is a tyrant, and religion a cheat? Look'e, brother, their court of enquiry is a tavern, and their informer, claret: they think as they drink, and swallow reputations like loches; a lady's health goes briskly round with the glass, but her honour is lost in the toast.

Dug. Aye, but, sister, there is still something——

Ori. If there be something, brother, 'tis none

of the people's something; marriage is my thing, and I'll stick to't

Dug. Marriage! Young Mirabell marry! He'll build churches sooner. Take heed, sister, though your honour stood proof to his home-bred assaults: you must keep a stricter guard for the future: he has now got the foreign air, and the Italian softness; his wit's improved by converse; his behaviour finished by observation; and his assurance confirmed by success. Sister, I can assure you, he has made his conquests; and 'tis a plague upon your sex, to be the soonest deceived by those very men, that you know have been false to others.

Ori. Then why will you tell me of his conquests? for, I must confess, there is no title to a woman's favour so engaging as the repute of a handsome dissimulation; there is something of a pride to see a fellow lie at our feet, that has triumphed over so many; and then, I don't know, we fancy he must have something extraordinary about him to please us, and that we have something engaging about us to secure him; so we can't be quiet till we put ourselves upon the lay of being both disappointed.

Dug. But then, sister, he's as fickle——

Ori. For God's sake, brother, tell me no more of his faults; for, if you do, I shall run mad for him: say no more, sir; let me but get him into the bands of matrimony, I'll spoil his wandering, I warrant him; I'll do his business that way, never fear.

Dug. Well, sister, I won't pretend to understand the engagements between you and your lover; I expect, when you have need of my counsel or assistance, you will let me know more of your affairs. Mirabell is a gentleman, and, as far as my honour and interest can reach, you may command me to the furtherance of your happiness: in the mean time, sister, I have a great mind to make you a present of another humble servant; a fellow, that I took up at Lyons, who has served me honestly ever since.

Ori. Then, why will you part with him?

Dug. He has gained so insufferably on my good humour, that he's grown too familiar; but the fellow's cunning, and may be serviceable to you in your affair with Mirabell. Here he comes.

Enter PETIT.

Well, sir, have you been at Rousseau's?

Pet. Yes, sir; and who should I find there, but Mr. Mirabell and the captain, hatching as warmly over a tub of ice, as two hen-pheasants over a brood—they would not let me bespeak any thing, for they had dined before I came.

Dug. Come, sir, you shall serve my sister; I shall still continue kind to you; and, if your lady recommends your diligence upon trial, I'll use my interest to advance you; you have sense enough to expect preferment. Here, sirrah, here's ten guineas for thee; get thyself a drugget suit, and a puff wig, and so—I dub thee gentleman-usher. Sister, I must put myself in repair; you may expect me in the evening—wait on your lady home, Petit.

[*Exit* DUGARD.

Pet. A chair, a chair, a chair!

Ori. No, no; I'll walk home, 'tis but next door.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A tavern, discovering young* MIRABELL *and* DURETETE *rising from table.*

Mir. Welcome to Paris once more, my dear captain; we have eat heartily, drank roundly, paid plentifully, and let it go for once. I liked every thing but our women, they looked so lean and tawdry, poor creatures! 'tis a sure sign the army is not paid. Give me the plump Venetian, brisk and sanguine, that smiles upon me like the glowing sun, and meets my lips like sparkling wine, her person shining as the glass, and spirit like the foaming liquor.

Dur. Ah, Mirabell! Italy I grant you; but for our women here in France, they are such thin brawn-fallen jades, a man may as well make a bed-fellow of a cane chair.

Mir. France! A light unseasoned country, nothing but feathers, foppery, and fashions; we're fine indeed, so are our coach-horses: men say we're courtiers; men abuse us; that we are wise and politic, *non credo seigneur*: that our women have wit; parrots, mere parrots. Assurance and a good memory sets them up: there's nothing on this side the Alps worth my humble service t'ye—Ha, Roma la Santa! Italy for my money; their customs, gardens, buildings, paintings, music, policies, wine and women! the paradise of the world; not pestered with a parcel of precise, old gouty fellows, that would debar their children every pleasure, that they themselves are past the sense of: commend me to the Italian familiarity: Here, son, there's fifty crowns, go pay your whore her week's allowance.

Dur. Aye, these are your fathers for you, that understand the necessities of young men; not like our musty dads, who, because they cannot fish themselves, would muddy the water, and spoil the sport of them that can. But now you talk of the plump, what d'ye think of a Dutch woman?

Mir. A Dutch woman's too compact; nay, every thing among them is so. A Dutch man is thick; a Dutch woman is squab; a Dutch horse is round; a Dutch dog is short; a Dutch ship is broad-bottomed: and, in short, one would swear the whole product of the country were cast in the same mould with their cheeses.

Dur. Aye, but, Mirabell, you have forgot the English ladies.

Mir. The women of England were excellent, did they not take such insufferable pains to ruin

what nature has made so incomparably well; they would be delicate creatures, indeed, could they but thoroughly arrive at the French mien, or entirely let it alone; for they only spoil a very good air of their own, by an awkward imitation of ours; their parliaments, and our tailors, give laws to the three kingdoms. But come, Duretete, let us mind the business in hand; mistresses we must have, and must take up with the manufacture of the place, and, upon a competent diligence, we shall find those in Paris shall match the Italians from top to toe.

Dur. Aye, Mirabell, you will do well enough, but what will become of your friend? you know I am so plaguy bashful, so naturally an ass upon these occasions, that——

Mir. Pshaw! you must be bolder, man: travel three years, and bring home such a baby as bashfulness! a great lusty fellow! and a soldier! fy upon it!

Dur. Look'e, sir, I can visit, and I can ogle a little—as thus, or thus, now. Then, I can kiss abundantly, and make a shift to——but if they chance to give me a forbidding look, as some women, you know, have a devilish cast with their eyes—or if they cry—what d'ye mean? what d'ye take me for? fye, sir, remember who I am, sir—a person of quality to be used at this rate! 'egad, I'm struck as flat as a frying-pan!

Mir. Words o' course! never mind them: turn you about upon your heel with a jantée air; hum out the end of an old song; cut a cross caper, and at her again.

Dur. [*Imitates him.*] No, hang it, 'twill never do. Oons, what did my father mean by sticking me up in an university? or to think that I should gain any thing by my head in a nation, whose genius lies all in their heels! well, if ever I come to have children of my own, they shall have the education of the country; they shall learn to dance before they can walk, and be taught to sing before they can speak.

Mir. Come, come, throw off that childish humour; put on assurance, there's no avoiding it; stand all hazards, thou'rt a stout lusty fellow, and hast a good estate; look bluff, hector, you have a good side-box face, a pretty impudent face; so, that's pretty well. This fellow went abroad like an ox, and is returned like an ass.

[*Aside.*

Dur. Let me see now, how I look.—[*Pulls out a pocket-glass, and looks in it.*]—A side-box face, say you! 'egad, I don't like it, Mirabell. Fy, sir, don't abuse your friends; I could not wear such a face for the best countess in Christendom.

Mir. Why can't you, blockhead, as well as I?

Dur. Why, thou hast impudence to set a good face upon any thing; I would change half my gold for half thy brass, with all my heart. Who comes here? Odso, Mirabell, your father!

Enter OLD MIRABELL.

Old Mir. Where's Bob? dear Bob!

Mir. Your blessing, sir.

Old Mir. My blessing! damn ye, ye young rogue! why did ye not come to see your father first, sirrah? my dear boy, I am heartily glad to see thee, my dear child, faith—captain Duretete, by the blood of the Mirabells, I'm your's; well, my lads, ye look bravely, faith. Bob, hast got any money left?

Mir. Not a farthing, sir.

Old Mir. Why, then I won't gi' thee a souse.

Mir. I did but jest, here's ten pistoles.

Old Mir. Why, then here's ten more; I love to be charitable to those, that don't want it: well, and how d'ye like Italy, my boy?

Mir. Oh, the garden of the world, sir; Rome, Naples, Venice, Milan, and a thousand others—all fine.

Old Mir. Aye, say you so! and, they say, that Chiari is very fine, too.

Dur. Indifferent, sir, very indifferent; a very scurvy air, the most unwholesome to a French constitution in the world.

Mir. Pshaw, nothing on't; these rascally Gazeteers have misinformed you.

Old Mir. Misinformed me! Oons, sir, were not we beaten there?

Mir. Beaten, sir! the French beaten!

Old Mir. Why, how was it, pray, sweet sir?

Mir. Sir, the captain will tell you.

Dur. No, sir, your son will tell you.

Mir. The captain was in the action, sir.

Dur. Your son saw more than I, sir, for he was a looker on.

Old Mir. Confound you both, for a brace of cowards! here are no Germans to over-hear you: why don't ye tell me how it was?

Mir. Why, then, you must know, that we marched up a body of the finest, bravest, well-dressed fellows in the universe; our commanders at the head of us, all lace and feather, like so many beaux at a ball—I don't believe there was a man of them but could dance *a charmèr*, morbleau.

Old Mir. Dance! very well, pretty fellows, faith!

Mir. We capered up to their very trenches, and there saw peeping over a parcel of scarecrow, olive-coloured gun-powder fellows, as ugly as the devil.

Dur. 'Egad, I shall never forget the looks of them, while I have breath to fetch.

Mir. They were so civil, indeed, as to welcome us with their cannon; but, for the rest, we found them such unmannerly, rude, unsociable dogs, that we grew tired of their company, and so we e'en danced back again.

Old Mir. And did ye all come back?

Mir. No, two or three thousand of us staid behind.

Old Mir. Why, Bob, why?

Mir. Pshaw—because they could not come that night. But come, sir, we were talking of something else; pray, how does your lovely charge, the fair Oriana?

Old Mir. Ripe, sir, just ripe: you'll find it better engaging with her than with the Germans, let me tell you. And what would you say, my young Mars, if I had a Venus for thee, too?—Come, Bob, your apartment is ready, and pray let your friend be my guest, too: you shall command the house between ye, and I'll be as merry as the best of you.

Mir. Bravely said, father!

Let misers bend their age with niggard cares,
And starve themselves to pamper hungry heirs;
Who, living, stint their sons what youth may crave,
And make them revel o'er a father's grave.
The stock on which I grew does still dispense
Its genial sap into the blooming branch;
The fruit, he knows, from his own root is grown,
And, therefore, sooths those passions once his own.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—OLD MIRABELL'S *house.*

Enter ORIANA *and* BISARRE.

Bis. AND you love this young rake, d'ye?

Ori. Yes.

Bis. In spite of all his ill usage?

Ori. I can't help it.

Bis. What's the matter with ye?

Ori. Pshaw!

Bis. Um! before that any young, lying, swearing, flattering, rakehelly fellow should play such tricks with me, I would wear my teeth to the stumps with lime and chalk. O, the devil take all your Cassandras and Cleopatras for me!—Prithee, mind your airs, modes, and fashions; your stays, gowns, and furbelows. Hark'e, my dear, have you got home your furbelowed smocks yet?

Ori. Prithee, be quiet, Bisarre; you know I can be as mad as you, when this Mirabell is out of my head.

Bis. Pshaw! would he were out, or in, or some way, to make you easy. I warrant, now, you'll play the fool, when he comes, and say you love him; eh!

Ori. Most certainly—I can't dissemble, Bisarre: besides, 'tis past that, we're contracted.

Bis. Contracted! alack-a-day, poor thing!—What, have you changed rings, or broken an old broad-piece between you! Hark'e, child, han't you broke something else between ye?

Ori. No, no, I can assure you.

Bis. Then, what d'ye whine for? Whilst I kept that in my power, I would make a fool of any fellow in France. Well, I must confess, I do love a little coquetting with all my heart! my business should be to break gold with my lover one hour, and crack my promise the next; he should find me one day with a prayer-book in my hand, and with a play-book another. He should have my consent to buy the wedding-ring, and the next moment would I laugh in his face.

Ori. O, my dear! were there no greater tie upon my heart, than there is upon my conscience, I would soon throw the contract out of doors; but the mischief on't is, I am so fond of being tied, that I am forced to be just, and the strength of my passion keeps down the inclination of my sex. But here's the old gentleman.

Enter OLD MIRABELL.

Old Mir. Where's my wenches? where's my two little girls? Eh? Have a care, look to yourselves; faith, they're a coming, the travellers are a coming. Well, which of you two will be my daughter-in-law, now? Bisarre, Bisarre, what say you, mad-cap? Mirabell is a pure wild fellow.

Bis. I like him the worse.

Old Mir. You lie, hussey, you like him the better, indeed you do: What say you, my t'other little filbert? eh?

Ori. I suppose the gentleman will chuse for himself, sir.

Old Mir. Why, that's discreetly said; and so he shall.

Enter MIRABELL *and* DURETETE. *They salute the ladies.*

Hark'e, Bob, you shall marry one of these girls, sirrah.

Mir. Sir, I'll marry them both, if you please.

Bis. [*Aside.*] He'll find that one may serve his turn.

Old Mir. Both! Why, you young dog, d'ye banter me? Come, sir, take your choice. Duretete, you shall have your choice, too; but Robin shall chuse first. Come, sir, begin.

Mir. Well, I an't the first son, that has made his father's dwelling a bawdy house—let me see.

Old Mir. Well! which d'ye like?

Mir. Both.

Old Mir. But which will you marry?

Mir. Neither.

Old Mir. Neither! Don't make me angry now, Bob; pray don't make me angry. Look'e, sirrah, if I don't dance at your wedding to-morrow, I shall be very glad to cry at your grave.

Mir. That's a bull, father.

Old Mir. A bull! Why, how now, ungrateful sir! did I make thee a man, that thou shouldst make me a beast?

Mir. Your pardon, sir. I only meant your expression.

Old Mir. Hark'e, Bob, learn better manners to your father before strangers; I wont be angry this time. But Oons, if ever you do't again, you rascal—remember what I say.

Mir. Pshaw! what does the old fellow mean by mewing me up here with a couple of green girls? Come, Duretete, will you go?

Ori. I hope, Mr Mirabell, you han't forgot.—

Mir. No, no, madam, I han't forgot, I have brought you a thousand Italian curiosities; I'll assure you, madam, as far as a hundred pistoles would reach, I han't forgot the least circumstance.

Ori. Sir, you misunderstand me.

Mir. Odso, the relics, madam, from Rome. I do remember, now, you made a vow of chastity before my departure; a vow of chastity, or something like it—was it not, madam?

Ori. O, sir, I'm answered at present.

[*Exit* ORIANA.

Mir. She was coming full mouth upon me with her contract—Would I might dispatch t'other!

Dur. Mirabell—that lady there, observe her, she's wondrous pretty, faith, and seems to have but few words: I like her mainly; speak to her, man; prithee speak to her.

Mir. Madam, here's a gentleman, who declares——

Dur. Madam, don't believe him, I declare nothing—What the devil do you mean, man?

Mir. He says, madam, that you are as beautiful as an angel.

Dur. He tells a damned lie, madam; I say no such thing: Are you mad, Mirabell? Why, I shall drop down with shame.

Mir. And so, madam, not doubting but your ladyship may like him as well as he does you, I think it proper to leave you together.

[*Going,* DURETETE *holds him.*

Dur. Hold, hold——Why, Mirabell, friend, sure you wont be so barbarous as to leave me alone. Prithee, speak to her for yourself, as it were. Lord, lord, that a Frenchman should want impudence!

Mir. You look mighty demure, madam—She's deaf, captain.

Dur. I had much rather have her dumb.

Mir. The gravity of your air, madam, promises some extraordinary fruits from your study, which moves us with curiosity to inquire the subject of your ladyship's contemplation. Not a word!

Dur. I hope in the lord she's speechless! if she be, she's mine this moment. Mirabell, d'ye think a woman's silence can be natural?

Bis. But the forms, that logicians introduce, and which proceed from simple enumeration, are dubitable, and proceed only upon admittance—

Mir. Hoyty toyty! what a plague have we here? Plato in petticoats.

Dur. Ay, ay, let her go on, man; she talks in my own mother-tongue.

Bis. 'Tis exposed to invalidity from a contradictory instance; looks only upon common operations; and is infinite in its termination.

Mir. Rare pedantry!

Dur. Axioms! Axioms! Self-evident principles.

Bis. Then, the ideas wherewith the mind is pre-occupate—O gentlemen, I hope you'll pardon my cogitation; I was involved in a profound point of philosophy; but I shall discuss it somewhere else, being satisfied that the subject is not agreeable to your sparks, that profess the vanity of the times. [*Exit.*

Mir. Go thy way, good wife Bias: do you hear, Duretete? Dost hear this starched piece of austerity?

Dur. She's mine, man; she's mine: My own talent to a T. I'll match her in dialects, faith. I was seven years at the university, man, nursed up with Barbara, Celarunt, Darii, Ferio, Baralipton. Did you ever know, man, that 'twas metaphysics made me an ass? It was, faith. Had she talked a word of singing, dancing, plays, fashions, or the like, I had foundered at the first step; but as she is—Mirabell, wish me joy.

Mir. You don't mean marriage, I hope.

Dur. No, no, I am a man of more honour.

Mir. Bravely resolved, captain. Now, for thy credit, warm me this frozen snow-ball! 'twill be a conquest above the Alps.

Dur. But will you promise to be always near me?

Mir. Upon all occasions, never fear.

Dur. Why, then, you shall see me in two moments make an induction from my love to her hand, from her hand to her mouth, from her mouth to her heart, and so conclude in her bed, categorematice. [*Exit.*

Mir. Now the game begins, and my fool is entered. But here comes one to spoil my sport; now shall I be teazed to death with this old fashioned contract. I should love her, too, if I might do it my own way; but she'll do nothing without witnesses forsooth. I wonder women can be so immodest.

Enter ORIANA.

Well, madam, why d'ye follow me?

Ori. Well, sir, why do you shun me?

Mir. 'Tis my humour, madam, and I'm naturally swayed by inclination.

Ori. Have you forgot our contract, sir?

Mir. All I remember of that contract is, that it was made some three years ago, and that's enough in conscience to forget the rest on't.

Ori. 'Tis sufficient, sir, to recollect the passing

of it; for in that circumstance, I presume, lies the force of the obligation.

Mir. Obligations, madam, that are forced upon the will, are no tie upon the conscience. I was a slave to my passion, when I passed the instrument; but the recovery of my freedom makes the contract void.

Ori. Sir, you can't make that a compulsion, which was your own choice; besides, sir, a subjection to your own desires has not the virtue of a forcible constraint: And you will find, sir, that, to plead your passion for the killing a man, will hardly exempt you from the justice of the punishment.

Mir. And so, madam, you make the sin of murder and the crime of a contract the very same, because hanging and matrimony are so much alike?

Ori. Come, Mr Mirabell, these expressions I expected from the raillery of your humour; but I hope for very different sentiments from your honour and generosity.

Mir. Look'e, madam; as for my generosity, 'tis at your service, with all my heart: I'll keep you a coach and six horses, if you please, only permit me to keep my honour to myself; for I can assure you, madam, that the thing called honour is a circumstance absolutely unnecessary in a natural correspondence between male and female, and he's a mad-man, that lays it out, considering its scarcity, upon any such trivial occasions. There's honour required of us by our friends, and honour due to our enemies, and they return it to us again; but I never heard of a man that left but an inch of his honour in a woman's keeping, that could ever get the least account on't——Consider, madam, you have no such thing among ye, and 'tis a main point of policy to keep no faith with reprobates—thou art a pretty little reprobate, and so get thee about thy business.

Ori. Well, sir, even all this I will allow to the gaiety of your temper; your travels have improved your talent of talking; but they are not of force, I hope, to impair your morals.

Mir. Morals! Why, there 'tis again now—I tell thee, child, there is not the least occasion for morals in any business between you and I—— Don't you know, that of all commerce in the world, there is no such cozenage and deceit as in the traffic between man and woman? we study all our lives long how to put tricks upon one another—What is your business, now, from the time you throw away your artificial babies, but how to get natural ones with the most advantage! No fowler lays abroad more nets for his game, nor a hunter for his prey, than you do to catch poor innocent men—Why do you sit three or four hours at your toilet in a morning? only with a villainous design to make some poor fellow a fool before night. What are your languishing looks, your studied air and affectations, but so many baits and devices to delude men out of their dear liberty and freedom? What d'ye sigh for? What d'ye weep for? What d'ye pray for? Why, for a husband: That is, you implore Providence to assist you in the just and pious design of making the wisest of his creatures a fool, and the head of the creation a slave.

Ori. Sir, I am proud of my power, and am resolved to use it.

Mir. Hold, hold, madam, not so fast—As you have variety of vanities to make coxcombs of us; so, we have vows, oaths, and protestations, of all sorts and sizes, to make fools of you. As you are very strange and whimsical creatures, so we are allowed as unaccountable ways of managing you. And this, in short, my dear creature, is our present condition. I have sworn and lied briskly to gain my ends of you: your ladyship has patched and painted violently, to gain your ends of me—But, since we are both disappointed, let us make a drawn battle, and part clear on both sides.

Ori. With all my heart, sir; give me up my contract, and I'll never see your face again.

Mir. Indeed I won't, child.

Ori. What, sir, neither do one nor t'other?

Mir. No, you shall die a maid, unless you please to be otherwise upon my terms.

Ori. What do you intend by this, sir?

Mir. Why, to starve you into compliance—look'e, you shall never marry any man; and you had as good let me do you a kindness as a stranger.

Ori. Sir, you're a——

Mir. What am I, mistress?

Ori. A villain, sir!

Mir. I'm glad on't—I never knew an honest fellow in my life, but was a villain upon these occasions——Han't you drawn yourself into a very pretty dilemma? Ha, ha, ha! the poor lady has made a vow of virginity, when she thought of making a vow for the contrary. Was ever poor woman so cheated into chastity?

Ori. Sir, my fortune is equal to yours, my friends as powerful, and both shall be put to the test, to do me justice.

Mir. What! you'll force me to marry you, will ye?

Ori. Sir, the law shall.

Mir. But the law can't force me to do any thing else, can it?

Ori. Pshaw! I despise thee—monster.

Mir. Kiss and be friends, then—Don't cry, child, and you shall have your sugar-plumb—Come, madam, d'ye think I could be so unreasonable as to make you fast all your life long? No, I did but jest, you shall have your liberty; here, take your contract, and give me mine.

Ori. No, I won't.

Mir. Eh! What, is the girl a fool?

Ori. No, sir, you shall find me cunning enough to do myself justice; and since I must

not depend upon your love, I'll be revenged, and force you to marry me out of spite.

Mir. Then I'll beat thee out of spite; and make a most confounded husband.

Ori. O sir, I shall match ye: A good husband makes a good wife at any time.

Mir. I'll rattle down your china about your ears.

Ori. And I'll rattle about the city to run you in debt for more.

Mir. Your face-mending toilet shall fly out of the window.

Ori. And your face-mending periwig shall fly after it.

Mir. I'll tear the furbelow off your clothes; and when you swoon for vexation, you shan't have a penny to buy a bottle of hartshorn.

Ori. And you, sir, shall have hartshorn in abundance.

Mir. I'll keep as many mistresses as I have coach-horses.

Ori. And I'll keep as many gallants as you have grooms.

Mir. I'll lie with your woman before your face.

Ori. Have a care of your valet behind your back.

Mir. But, sweet madam, there is such a thing as a divorce.

Ori. But, sweet sir, there is such a thing as alimony; so divorce on, and spare not. [*Exit.*

Mir. Ay, that separate maintenance is the devil——there's their refuge—o' my conscience, one would take cuckoldom for a meritorious action, because the women are so handsomely rewarded for't! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A large parlour in the same house.*

Enter DURETETE *and* PETIT.

Dur. And she's mighty peevish, you say?

Pet. O sir, she has a tongue as long as my leg, and talks so crabbedly, you would think she always spoke Welsh.

Dur. That's an odd language, methinks, for her philosophy.

Pet. But sometimes she will sit you half a day without speaking a word, and talk oracles all the while, by the wrinkles of her forehead, and the motions of her eye-brows.

Dur. Nay, I shall match her in philosophical ogles, faith; that's my talent: I can talk best, you must know, when I say nothing.

Pet. But d'ye ever laugh, sir?

Dur. Laugh! Won't she endure laughing?

Pet. Why, she's a critic, sir; she hates a jest, for fear it should please her; and nothing keeps her in humour but what gives her the spleen—And then for logic, and all that, you know——

Dur. Ay, ay, I'm prepared; I have been practising hard words, and no sense, this hour to entertain her.

Pet. Then place yourself behind this screen, that you may have a view of her behaviour before you begin.

Dur. I long to engage her, lest I should forget my lesson.

Pet. Here she comes, sir; I must fly.

[*Exit* PETIT, *and* DURETETE *stands peeping behind the curtain.*]

Enter BISARRE *and Maid.*

Bis. [*with a book.*] Pshaw, hang books! they sour our temper, spoil our eyes, and ruin our complexions. [*Throws away the book.*

Dur. Eh! The devil such a word there is in all Aristotle.

Bis. Come, wench; let's be free, call in the fiddle, there's nobody near us.

Enter Fiddler.

Dur. Would to the Lord there was not!

Bis. Here, friend, a minuet! quicker time; ha! would we had a man or two!

Dur. [*Stealing away.*] You shall have the devil sooner, my dear dancing philosopher.

Bis. Uds my life!—Here's one.

[*Runs to* DUR. *and hales him back.*

Dur. Is all my learned preparation come to this?

Bis. Come, sir, don't be ashamed, that's my good boy—you're very welcome, we wanted such a one——Come, strike up——I know you dance well, sir, you're finely shaped for't——Come, come, sir; quick, quick, you miss the time else.

Dur. But, madam, I come to talk with you.

Bis. Ay, ay, talk as you dance; talk as you dance; come.

Dur. But we were talking of Dialectics.

Bis. Hang Dialectics——Mind the time——quicker, sirrah, [*To the Fiddler.*] Come——and how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

Dur. In a fine breathing sweat, doctor.

Bis. All the better, patient, all the better;—Come, sir; sing now, sing, I know you sing well; I see you have a singing face; a heavy, dull, sonata face.

Dur. Who, I sing?

Bis. O you're modest, sir—but come, sit down, closer, closer. Here, a bottle of wine—Come, sir, fa, la, lay; sing, sir.

Dur. But, madam, I came to talk with you.

Bis. O sir, you shall drink first. Come, fill me a bumper—here, sir, bless the king.

Dur. Would I were out of his dominions!—By this light, she'll make me drunk, too.

Bis. O pardon me, sir, you shall do me right; fill it higher.—Now, sir, can you drink a health under your leg?

Dur. Rare philosophy that, faith!

Bis. Come, off with it to the bottom.—Now, how d'ye like me, sir?

Dur. O, mighty well, madam.

Bis. You see how a woman's fancy varies;

sometimes splenetic and heavy, then gay and frolicsome.—And how d'ye like the humour?

Dur. Good madam, let me sit down to answer you, for I am heartily tired.

Bis. Fy upon't! a young man, and tired! up, for shame, and walk about, action becomes us—a little faster, sir—What d'ye think now of my lady La Pal, and lady Coquet, the duke's fair daughter? Ha! Are they not brisk lasses? Then, there is black Mrs Bellair, and brown Mrs Bellface.

Dur. They are all strangers to me, madam.

Bis. But let me tell you, sir, that brown is not always despicable—O lard, sir, if young Mrs Bagatell had kept herself single 'till this time o' day, what a beauty there had been! And then, you know, the charming Mrs Monkeylove, the fair gem of St Germains.

Dur. Upon my soul, I don't.

Bis. And then you must have heard of the English beau, Spleenamore, how unlike a gentleman—

Dur. Hey—not a syllable on't, as I hope to be saved, madam.

Bis. No! Why, then, play me a jig. Come, sir.

Dur. By this light I cannot; faith, madam, I have sprained my leg.

Bis. Then sit you down, sir; and now tell me what's your business with me? What's your errand? Quick, quick, dispatch——Odso, may be you are some gentleman's servant, that has brought me a letter, or a haunch of venison.

Dur. 'Sdeath, madam, do I look like a carrier?

Bis. O, cry you mercy! I saw you just now; I mistook you, upon my word: You are one of the travelling gentlemen—and pray, sir, how do all our impudent friends in Italy?

Dur. Madam, I came to wait on you with a more serious intention than your entertainment has answered.

Bis. Sir, your intention of waiting on me was the greatest affront imaginable, howe'er your expressions may turn it to a compliment: Your visit, sir, was intended as a prologue to a very scurvy play, of which Mr Mirabell and you so handsomely laid the plot.—Marry! No, no, I'm a man of more honour. Where's your honour? Where's your courage now? Ads my life, sir, I have a great mind to kick you.—Go, go to your fellow-rake now; rail at my sex, and get drunk for vexation, and write a lampoon—But I must have you to know, sir, that my reputation is above the scandal of a libel; my virtue is sufficiently approved to those, whose opinion is my interest: And, for the rest, let them talk what they will; for when I please I'll be what I please, in spite of you and all mankind; and so, my dear man of honour, if you be tired, con over this lesson, and sit there till I come to you. [*Runs off.*

Dur. Tum ti dum. [*Sings*] Ha, ha, ha! Ads my life, I have a great mind to kick you!—Oons and confusion! [*Starts up*] Was ever man so abused?—Ay, Mirabell set me on.

Enter PETIT.

Pet. Well, sir, how d'ye find yourself?

Dur. You son of a nine-ey'd whore, d'ye come to abuse me? I'll kick you with a vengeance, you dog! [PETIT *runs off, and* DUR. *after him.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter OLD *and* YOUNG MIRABELL.

Old Mir. Bob, come hither, Bob.

Mir. Your pleasure, sir?

Old Mir. Are not you a great rogue, sirrah?

Mir. That's a little out of my comprehension, sir; for I've heard say, that I resemble my father.

Old Mir. Your father is your very humble slave—I tell thee what, child, thou art a very pretty fellow, and I love thee heartily; and a very great villain, and I hate thee mortally.

Mir. Villain, sir! Then, I must be a very impudent one, for I can't recollect any passage of my life, that I'm ashamed of.

Old Mir. Come hither, my dear friend; dost see this picture? [*Shews him a little picture.*

Mir. Oriana's! Pshaw!

Old Mir. What, sir, won't you look upon't?—Bob, dear Bob, prithee come hither now—Dost want any money, child?

Mir. No, sir.

Old Mir. Why, then, here's some for thee; come here, now——How can'st thou be so hard-hearted, an unnatural, unmannerly rascal (don't mistake me, child, I an't angry) as to abuse this tender, lovely, good-natured dear rogue?——Why, she sighs for thee, and cries for thee, pouts for thee, and snubs for thee; the poor little heart of it is like to burst——Come, my dear boy, be good-natured like your own father, be now—and then, see here, read this—the effigies of the lovely Oriana, with ten thousand pound to her portion—ten thousand pound, you dog; ten thousand pound, you rogue; how dare you refuse a lady with ten thousand pound, you impudent rascal?

Mir. Will you hear me speak, sir?

Old Mir. Hear you speak, sir! If you had ten thousand tongues, you could not out-talk ten thousand pound, sir.

Mir. Nay, sir, if you won't hear me, I'll be gone, sir! I'll take post for Italy this moment.

Old Mir. Ah! the fellow knows I won't part with him. Well, sir, what have you to say?

Mir. The universal reception, sir, that marriage has had in the world, is enough to fix it for a public good, and to draw every body into the common cause; but there are some constitutions, like some instruments, so peculiarly singular, that they make tolerable music by themselves, but never do well in a concert.

Old Mir. Why, this is reason, I must confess, but yet it is nonsense, too; for, though you should reason like an angel, if you argue yourself out of a good estate, you talk like a fool.

Mir. But, sir, if you bribe me into bondage with the riches of Crœsus, you leave me but a beggar for want of my liberty.

Old Mir. Was ever such a perverse fool heard? 'Sdeath, sir, why did I give you education? was it to dispute me out of my senses? Of what colour now is the head of this cane? You'll say 'tis white, and ten to one make me believe it, too—I thought that young fellows studied to get money.

Mir. No, sir, I have studied to despise it; my reading was not to make me rich, but happy, sir.

Old Mir. There he has me again, now! But, sir, did not I marry to oblige you?

Mir. To oblige me, sir! in what respect, pray?

Old Mir. Why, to bring you into the world, sir; was not that an obligation?

Mir. And, because I would have it still an obligation, I avoid marriage.

Old Mir. How is that, sir?

Mir. Because I would not curse the hour I was born.

Old Mir. Look'e, friend, you may persuade me out of my designs, but I'll command you out of yours; and though you may convince my reason that you are in the right, yet there is an old attendant of sixty-three, called positiveness, which you, nor all the wits in Italy, shall ever be able to shake: so, sir, you're a wit, and I'm a father; you may talk, but I'll be obeyed.

Mir. This it is to have the son a finer gentleman than the father! they first give us breeding that they don't understand, then they turn us out of doors because we are wiser than themselves. But I'm a little aforehand with the old gentleman. [*Aside.*] Sir, you have been pleased to settle a thousand pound sterling a-year upon me; in return of which, I have a very great honour for you and your family, and shall take care, that your only, and beloved son, shall do nothing to make him hate his father, or to hang himself. So, dear sir, I'm your very humble servant. [*Runs off.*

Old Mir. Here, sirrah, rogue, Bob, villain!

Enter DUGARD.

Dug. Ah, sir, 'tis but what he deserves.

Old Mir. 'Tis false, sir, he don't deserve it: what have you to say against my boy, sir?

Dug. I shall only repeat your own words.

Old Mir. What have you to do with my words? I have swallowed my words already; I have eaten them up, and how can you come at them, sir?

Dug. Very easily, sir: 'Tis but mentioning your injured ward, and you will throw them up again immediately.

Old Mir. Sir, your sister was a foolish young flirt to trust any such young, deceitful, rakehelly rogue, like him.

Dug. Cry you mercy, old gentleman! I thought we should have the words again.

Old Mir. And what then? 'Tis the way with young fellows to slight old gentlemen's words; you never mind them, when you ought.——I say, that Bob's an honest fellow, and who dares deny it?

Enter BISARRE.

Bis. That dare I, sir:—I say, that your son is a wild, foppish, whimsical, impertinent coxcomb; and, were I abused as this gentleman's sister is, I would make it an Italian quarrel, and poison the whole family.

Dug. Come, sir, 'tis no time for trifling; my sister is abused; you are made sensible of the affront, and your honour is concerned to see her redressed.

Old Mir. Look'e, Mr Dugard, good words go farthest. I will do your sister justice, but it must be after my own rate; nobody must abuse my son but myself. For, although Robin be a sad dog, yet he's nobody's puppy but my own.

Bis. Ay, that's my sweet-natured, kind, old gentleman—[*Wheedling him.*] We will be good, then, if you'll join with us in the plot.

Old Mir. Ah, you coaxing young baggage, what plot can you have to wheedle a fellow of sixty-three?

Bis. A plot that sixty-three is only good for; to bring other people together, sir; a Spanish plot, less dangerous than that of eighty-eight, and you must act the Spaniard 'cause your son will least suspect you; and, if he should, your authority protects you from a quarrel, to which Oriana is unwilling to expose her brother.

Old Mir. And what part will you act in the business, madam?

Bis. Myself, sir; my friend is grown a perfect changeling: these foolish hearts of ours spoil our heads presently; the fellows no sooner turn knaves, but we turn fools: But I am still myself, and he may expect the most severe usage from me, 'cause I neither love him, nor hate him. [*Exit* BIS.

Old Mir. Well said, Mrs Paradox! but, sir, who must open the matter to him?

Dug. Petit, sir, who is our engineer-general. And here he comes.

Enter PETIT.

Pet. O sir, more discoveries; are all friends about us?

Dug. Ay, ay, speak freely.

Pet. You must know, sir——odd's my life, I'm out of breath; you must know, sir—you must know—

Old Mir. What the devil must we know, sir?

Pet. That I have [*Pants and blows.*] bribed, sir, bribed—your son's secretary of state.

Old Mir. Secretary of state!—who's that, for Heaven's sake?

Pet. His valet-de-chambre, sir. You must know, sir, that the intrigue lay folded up with his master's clothes, and when he went to dust the embroidered suit, the secret flew out of the right pocket of his coat, in a whole swarm of your crambo songs, short-footed odes, and long-legged pindarics.

Old Mir. Impossible!

Pet. Ah, sir, he has loved her all along; there was Oriana in every line—but he hates marriage: Now, sir, this plot will stir up his jealousy, and we shall know, by the strength of that, how to proceed farther.

Come, sir, lets about it with speed,
'Tis expedition gives our king the sway;
For expedition to the French give way;
Swift to attack, or swift—to run away.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter MIRABELL *and* BISARRE, *passing carelessly by one another.*

Bis. [*Aside.*] I wonder what she can see in this fellow to like him?

Mir. [*Aside.*] I wonder what my friend can see in this girl to admire her?

Bis. [*Aside.*] A wild, foppish, extravagant rake-hell.

Mir. [*Aside.*] A light, whimsical, impertinent mad-cap.

Bis. Whom do you mean, sir?

Mir. Whom do you mean, madam?

Bis. A fellow, that has nothing left to re-establish him for a human creature, but a prudent resolution to hang himself.

Mir. There is a way, madam, to force me to that resolution.

Bis. I'll do it with all my heart.

Mir. Then, you must marry me.

Bis. Look'e, sir; don't think your ill manners to me shall excuse your ill usage of my friend; nor, by fixing a quarrel here, to divert my zeal for the absent; for, I'm resolved, nay, I come prepared, to make you a panegyric, that shall mortify your pride like any modern dedication.

Mir. And I, madam, like a true modern patron, shall hardly give you thanks for your trouble.

Bis. Come, sir, to let you see what little foundation you have for your dear sufficiency, I'll take you to pieces.

Mir. And what piece will you chuse?

Bis. Your heart, to be sure; because I should get presently rid on't; your courage I would give to a hector, your wit to a lewd play-maker, your honour to an attorney, your body to the physicians, and your soul to its master.

Mir. I had the oddest dream last night of the dutchess of Burgundy; methought the furbelows of her gown were pinned up so high behind, that I could not see her head for her tail.

Bis. The creature don't mind me! do you think, sir, that your humorous impertinence can divert me? No, sir, I'm above any pleasure that you can give, but that of seeing you miserable. And mark me, sir, my friend, my injured friend, shall yet be doubly happy, and you shall be a husband as much as the rites of marriage, and the breach of them, can make you.

[*Here* MIRABELL *pulls out a Virgil, and reads to himself while she speaks.*]

Mir. [Reading.] *At regina dolos, (quis fallere possit amantem?)*

Dissimulare etiam sperásti, perfide tantum

[Very true.] *Posse nefas.*

By your favour, friend Virgil, 'twas but a rascally trick of your hero to forsake poor pug so inhumanly.

Bis. I don't know what to say to him. The devil——what's Virgil to us, sir?

Mir. Very much, madam, the most *apropos* in the world—for, what should I chop upon, but the very place, where the perjured rogue of a lover and the forsaken lady are battling it tooth and nail? Come, madam, spend your spirits no longer; we'll take an easier method: I'll be Æneas now, and you shall be Dido, and we'll rail by book. Now for you, madam Dido.

Nec te noster amor, nec te data dextera quondam,
Nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido——

Ah, poor Dido! [*Looking at her.*

Bis. Rudeness, affronts, impatience! I could almost start out even to manhood, and want but a weapon as long as his to fight him upon the spot. What shall I say?

Mir. Now she rants.

Quæ quibus anteferam? jam jam nec maxima Juno.

Bis. A man! No, the woman's birth was spirited away.

Mir. Right, right, madam; the very words.

Bis. And some pernicious elf left in the cradle with human shape, to palliate growing mischief.

[*Both speak together, and raise their voices by degrees.*]

Mir. *Perfide, sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens*
Caucasus, Hyrcanæque admorunt ubera tigres.

Bis. Go, sir; fly to your midnight revels!

Mir. [Excellent.] *I sequere Italiam ventis, pete regna per undas.*

Spero equidem mediis, si quid pia numina possunt. [*Together again.*

Bis. Converse with imps of darkness of your make! your nature starts at justice, and shivers at the touch of virtue. Now, the devil take his impudence! he vexes me so, I don't know whether to cry or laugh at him.

Mir. Bravely performed, my dear Libyan! I'll write the tragedy of Dido, and you shall act the part: But you do nothing at all, unless you fret yourself into a fit; for here the poor lady is stifled with vapours, drops into the arms of her maids; and the cruel, barbarous, deceitful wanderer, is, in the very next line, called pious Æneas. There's authority for ye.

Sorry, indeed, Æneas stood
To see her in a pout;
But Jove himself, who ne'er thought good
To stay a second bout,
Commands him off, with all his crew,
And leaves poor Dy, as I leave you.
[*Runs off.*

Bis. Go thy ways, for a dear, mad, deceitful, agreeable fellow. O' my conscience, I must excuse Oriana.

That lover soon his angry fair disarms,
Whose slighting pleases, and whose faults are charms. [*Exit* Bis.

SCENE II.

Enter PETIT, *runs about to every door, and knocks.*

Pet. Mr Mirabell! Sir, where are you? no where to be found?

Enter MIRABELL.

Mir. What's the matter, Petit?

Pet. Most critically met——Ah, sir, that one, who has followed the game so long, and brought the poor hare just under his paws, should let a mongrel cur chop in, and run away with the puss!

Mir. If your worship can get out of your allegories, be pleased to tell me, in three words, what you mean.

Pet. Plain, plain, sir. Your mistress and mine is going to be married.

Mir. I believe you lie, sir.

Pet. Your humble servant, sir. [*Going.*

Mir. Come hither, Petit. Married, say you?

Pet. No, sir, 'tis no matter; I only thought to do you a service, but I shall take care how I confer my favours for the future.

Mir. Sir, I beg ten thousand pardons. [*Bowing low.*

Pet. 'Tis enough, sir—I come to tell you, sir, that Oriana is this moment to be sacrificed; married past redemption.

Mir. I understand her—she'll take a husband out of spite to me; and then, out of love to me, she will make him a cuckold. 'Tis ordinary with women, to marry one person for the sake of another, and to throw themselves into the arms of one they hate, to secure their pleasure with the man they love. But who is the happy man?

Pet. A lord, sir.

Mir. I'm her ladyship's most humble servant; a train and a title, hey! Room for my lady's coach; a front-row in the box for her ladyship; lights, lights for her honour! Now must I be a constant attender at my lord's levee, to work my way to my lady's couchee——a countess, I presume, sir?

Pet. A Spanish count, sir, that Mr Dugard knew abroad, is come to Paris, saw your mistress yesterday, marries her to-day, and whips her into Spain to-morrow.

Mir. Ay, is it so? and must I follow my cuckold over the Pyrenees? Had she married within the precincts of a billet-doux, I would be the man to lead her to church; but, as it happens, I'll forbid the banns. Where is this mighty don?

Pet. Have a care, sir! he's a rough cross-grained piece, and there's no tampering with him; would you apply to Mr Dugard, or the lady herself, something might be done, for it is in despight to you, that the business is carried so hastily. Odso, sir, here he comes! I must be gone. [*Exit* Pet.

Enter OLD MIRABELL, *dressed in a Spanish habit, leading* ORIANA.

Ori. Good, my lord, a nobler choice had better suited your lordship's merit. My person, rank, and circumstance, expose me as the public theme of raillery, and subject me so to injurious usage, my lord, that I can lay no claim to any part of your regard, except your pity.

Old Mir. Breathes he vital air, that dares presume,
With rude behaviour, to profane such excellence?
Shew me the man——
And you shall see how my sudden revenge
Shall fall upon the head of such presumption.
Is this thing one? [*Strutting up to* MIRABELL.

Mir. Sir!

Ori. Good my lord.

Old Mir. If he, or any he!

Ori. Pray, my lord! the gentleman's a stranger.

Old Mir. O, your pardon, sir—but if you had—remember, sir—the lady now is mine, her injuries are mine; therefore, sir, you understand me——Come, madam.

[*Leads* ORIANA *to the door, she goes off;* MIRABELL *runs to his father, and pulls him by the sleeve.*

Mir. Ecoutez, Monsieur le compte.

Old Mir. Your business, sir?

Mir. Boh!

Old Mir. Boh? What language is that, sir?

Mir. Spanish, my lord.

Old Mir. What d'ye mean?

Mir. This, sir. [*Trips up his heels.*

Old Mir. A very concise quarrel, truly!—I'll bully him. Trinidade seigneur, give me fair play. [*Offering to rise.*

Mir. By all means, sir. [*Takes away his sword.*] Now, seigneur, where's that bombast look, and fustian face, your countship wore just now? [*Strikes him.*

Old Mir. The rogue quarrels well, very well: my own son right! But hold, sirrah, no more jesting; I'm your father, sir, your father!

Mir. My father! Then, by this light, I could find in my heart to pay thee. [*Aside.*] Is the fellow mad? Why, sure, sir, I han't frighted you out of your senses?

Old Mir. But you have, sir.

Mir. Then I'll beat them into you again. [*Offers to strike him.*

Old Mir. Why, rogue—Bob, dear Bob, don't you know me, child?

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! the fellow's downright distracted: Thou miracle of impudence! would'st thou make me believe, that such a grave gentleman as my father would go a masquerading thus? That a person of threescore and three would run about in a fool's coat, to disgrace himself and family? Why, you impudent villain, do you think I will suffer such an affront to pass upon my honoured father, my worthy father, my dear father? 'Sdeath, sir, mention my father but once again, and I'll send your soul to thy grandfather this minute! [*Offering to stab him.*

Old Mir. Well, well, I am not your father.

Mir. Why, then, sir, you are the saucy, hectoring Spaniard, and I'll use you accordingly.

Old Mir. The devil take the Spaniards, sir! we have all got nothing but blows, since we began to take their part.

Enter DUGARD, ORIANA, MAID, *and* PETIT. DUGARD *runs to* MIRABELL, *the rest to the old gentleman.*

Dug. Fy, fy, Mirabell, murder your father!

Mir. My father? what, is the whole family mad? Give me way, sir, I won't be held.

Old Mir. No? nor I neither; let me be gone, pray. [*Offering to go.*

Mir. My father!

Old Mir. Aye, you dog's face! I am your father, for I have bore as much for thee, as your mother ever did.

Mir. O ho! then this was a trick, it seems; a design, a contrivance, a stratagem—Oh! how my bones ache!

Old Mir. Your bones, sirrah, why yours?

Mir. Why, sir, han't I been beating my own flesh and blood all this while? Oh, madam—[*To* ORIANA.]—I wish your ladyship joy of your new dignity. Here was a contrivance indeed.

Pet. The contrivance was well enough, sir, for they imposed upon us all.

Mir. Well, my dear dulcinea, did your don Quixotte battle for you bravely? My father will answer for the force of my love.

Ori. Pray, sir, don't insult the misfortunes of your own creating.

Dug. My prudence will be counted cowardice, if I stand tamely now.—[*Comes up between* MIRABELL *and his sister.*]—Well, sir!

Mir. Well, sir! Do you take me for one of your tenants, sir, that you put on your landlord face at me?

Dug. On what presumption, sir, dare you assume thus? [*Draws.*

Old Mir. What's that to you, sir? [*Draws.*

Pet. Help! help! the lady faints. [ORIANA *falls into her maid's arms.*

Mir. Vapours! vapours! she'll come to herself: if it be an angry fit, a dram of assafœtida—if jealousy, hartshorn in water—if the mother, burnt feathers—if grief, ratifia—if it be strait stays, or corns, there's nothing like a dram of plain brandy.

Ori. Hold off! give me air—O my brother! would you preserve my life, endanger not your own: would you defend my reputation, leave it to itself; 'tis a dear vindication, that's purchased by the sword; for, though our champion proves victorious, yet our honour is wounded.

Old Mir. Aye, and your lover may be wounded, that's another thing. But I think you are pretty brisk again, my child.

Ori. Aye, sir, my indisposition was only a pretence to divert the quarrel; the capricious taste of your sex excuses this artifice in ours.

For often, when our chief perfections fail,
Our chief defects with foolish men prevail.
[*Exit* ORIANA.

Pet. Come, Mr Dugard, take courage, there is a way still left to fetch him again.

Old Mir. Sir, I'll have no plot, that has any relation to Spain.

Dug. I scorn all artifice whatsoever; my sword shall do her justice.

Pet. Pretty justice, truly! Suppose you run him through the body, you run her through the heart at the same time.

Old Mir. And me through the head——rot your sword, sir, we'll have plots; come, Petit, let's hear.

Pet. What if she pretended to go into a nunnery, and so bring him about to declare himself?

Dug. That, I must confess, has a face.

Old Mir. A face! a face like an angel, sir.—Ad's my life, sir, 'tis the most beautiful plot in Christendom. We'll about it immediately.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Street.*

Enter DURETETE *and* MIRABELL.

Dur. [*In a passion.*]—And though I can't dance, nor sing, nor talk like you, yet I can fight; you know I can, sir.

Mir. I know thou canst, man.

Dur. 'Sdeath, sir, and I will: let me see the proudest man alive make a jest of me!

Mir. But I'll engage to make you amends.

Dur. Danced to death! baited like a bear! ridiculed! threatened to be kicked! confusion! sir, you set me on, and I will have satisfaction; all mankind will point at me.

Mir. [*Aside.*]—I must give this thunderbolt some passage, or 'twill break upon my own head—look'e, Duretete, what do these gentlemen laugh at?

Enter two Gentlemen.

Dur. At me, to be sure—Sir, what made you laugh at me?

1 *Gen.* You're mistaken, sir; if we were merry, we had a private reason.

2 *Gen.* Sir, we don't know you.

Dur. Sir, I'll make you know me; mark and observe me, I won't be named; it sha'nt be mentioned, not even whispered, in your prayers at church. 'Sdeath, sir, d'ye smile?

1 *Gen.* Not I, upon my word.

Dur. Why, then, look grave as an owl in a barn, or a friar with his crown a shaving.

Mir. [*Aside to the gentlemen.*]—Don't be bullied out of your humour, gentlemen; the fellow's mad; laugh at him, and I'll stand by you.

1 *Gen.* 'Egad, and so we will.

Both. Ha, ha, ha!

Dur. Very pretty.—[*Draws.*]—She threatened to kick me. Aye, then, you dogs, I'll murder ye.

[*Fights, and beats them off,* MIRABELL *runs over to his side.*

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! bravely done, Duretete! there you had him, noble captain; hey, they run, they run, Victoria, Victoria—Ha, ha, ha!—how happy am I in an excellent friend! tell me of your virtuosos, and men of sense! a parcel of sour-faced, splenetic rogues—a man of my thin constitution should never want a fool in his company: I don't affect your fine things that improve the understanding, but hearty laughing to fatten my carcase: and, in my conscience, a man of sense is as melancholy without a coxcomb, as a lion without a jackall; he hunts for our diversion, starts game for our spleen, and perfectly feeds us with pleasure.

I hate the man who makes acquaintance nice,
And still discreetly plagues me with advice;
Who moves by caution, and mature delays,
And must give reasons for whate'er he says.
The man, indeed, whose converse is so full,
Makes me attentive, but it makes me dull:
Give me the careless rogue, who never thinks,
That plays the fool as freely as he drinks.
Not a buffoon, who is buffoon by trade,
But one that nature, not his wants have made;
Who still is merry, but does ne'er design it;
And still is ridiculed, but ne'er can find it:
Who, when he's most in earnest, is the best;
And his most grave expression is a jest.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—OLD MIRABELL'S *house.*

Enter OLD MIRABELL *and* DUGARD.

Dug. THE lady abbess is my relation, and privy to the plot: your son has been there, but had no admittance beyond the privilege of the grate, and there my sister refused to see him. He went off more nettled at his repulse, than I thought his gaiety could admit.

Old Mir. Aye, aye, this nunnery will bring him about, I warrant ye.

Enter DURETETE.

Dur. Here, where are ye all? O! Mr Mirabell, you have done fine things for your posterity—and you, Mr Dugard, may come to answer this——I come to demand my friend at your hands; restore him, sir, or——

[*To* OLD MIRABELL.

Old Mir. Restore him! what, d'ye think I have got him in my trunk, or my pocket!

Dur. Sir, he's mad, and you're the cause on't.

Old Mir. That may be; for I was as mad as he, when I begot him.

Dug. Mad, sir! what d'ye mean?

Dur. What do you mean, sir, by shutting up your sister yonder to talk like a parrot through a cage? Or a decoy-duck, to draw others into the snare? Your son, sir, because she has deserted him, he has forsaken the world; and, in three words, has——

Old Mir. Hanged himself!

Dur. The very same—turned friar.

Old Mir. You lie, sir, 'tis ten times worse.—Bob turned friar! Why should the fellow shave his foolish crown when the same razor may cut his throat?

Dur. If you have any command, or you any interest over him, lose not a minute: He has thrown himself into the next monastery, and has ordered me to pay off his servants, and discharge his equipage.

Old Mir. Let me alone to ferret him out; I'll sacrifice the abbot, if he receives him; I'll try

whether the spiritual or the natural father has the most right to the child. But, dear captain, what has he done with his estate?

Dur. Settled it upon the church, sir.

Old Mir. The church! Nay, then the devil won't get him out of their clutches——Ten thousand livres-a-year upon the church! 'Tis downright sacrilege—Come, gentlemen, all hands to work; for half that sum, one of these monasteries shall protect you a traitor from the law, a rebellious wife from her husband, and a disobedient son from his own father. [*Exit* OLD MIRABELL.

Dug. But will you persuade me, that he is gone to a monastery?

Dur. Is your sister gone to the Filles Repenties? I tell you, sir, she's not fit for the society of repenting maids.

Dug. Why so, sir?

Dur. Because she's neither one nor the other; she's too old to be a maid, and too young to repent. [*Exit;* DUGARD *after him.*

SCENE II.—*The inside of a monastery;* ORIANA *in a nun's habit;* BISARRE.

Ori. I hope, Bisarre, there is no harm in jesting with this religious habit.

Bis. To me, the greatest jest in the habit is taking it in earnest: I don't understand this imprisoning people with the keys of Paradise, nor the merit of that virtue, which comes by constraint. Besides, we may own to one another, that we are in the worst company when among ourselves; for our private thoughts run us into those desires, which our pride resists from the attack of the world; and, you may remember, the first woman met the devil when she retired from her man.

Ori. But I'm reconciled, methinks, to the mortification of a nunnery; because I fancy the habit becomes me.

Bis. A well-contrived mortification, truly, that makes a woman look ten times handsomer than she did before! Aye, my dear, were there any religion in becoming dress, our sex's devotion were rightly placed; for our toilets would do the work of the altar; we should all be canonized.

Ori. But don't you think there is a great deal of merit in dedicating a beautiful face and person to the service of religion?

Bis. Not half so much as devoting them to a pretty fellow: If our feminality had no business in this world, why was it sent hither? Let us dedicate our beautiful minds to the service of Heaven; and for our handsome persons, they become a box at the play, as well as a pew in the church.

Ori. But the vicissitudes of fortune, the inconstancy of man, with other disappointments of life, require some place of religion, for a refuge from their persecution.

Bis. Ha, ha, ha! and do you think there is any devotion in a fellow's going to church, when he takes it only for a sanctuary? Don't you know that religion consists in charity with all mankind? and that you should never think of being friends with Heaven, till you have quarrelled with all the world! Come, come, mind your business; Mirabell loves you; 'tis now plain, and hold him to't; give fresh orders that he shan't see you: We get more by hiding our faces sometimes, than by exposing them: a very mask, you see, whets desire; but a pair of keen eyes through an iron grate fire double upon them, with view and disguise. But I must be gone upon my own affairs; I have brought my captain about again.

Ori. But why will you trouble yourself with that coxcomb?

Bis. Because he is a coxcomb: had I not better have a lover like him, that I can make an ass of, than a lover like yours, to make a fool of me? [*Knocking below.*] A message from Mirabell, I'll lay my life. [*She runs to the door.*] Come hither, run: thou charming nun, come hither.

Ori. What's the news? [*Runs to her.*

Bis. Don't you see who's below?

Ori. I see nobody but a friar.

Bis. Ah! Thou poor blind Cupid! O' my conscience, these hearts of ours spoil our heads instantly! the fellows no sooner turn knaves, than we turn fools. A friar! Don't you see a villainous genteel mein under that cloak of hypocrisy, the loose careless air of a tall rake-helly fellow!

Ori. As I live, Mirabell turned friar! I hope, in Heaven, he's not in earnest.

Bis. In earnest! Ha, ha, ha! are you in earnest? Now's your time; this disguise has he certainly taken for a passport, to get in and try your resolutions; stick to your habit, to be sure; treat him with disdain, rather than anger; for pride becomes us more than passion. Remember what I say, if you would yield to advantage, and hold on the attack; to draw him on, keep him off to be sure.

The cunning gamesters never gain too fast;
But lose at first, to win the more at last.

[*Exit.*

Ori. His coming puts me into some ambiguity, I don't know how; I don't fear him, but I mistrust myself; would he were not come! yet I would not have him gone neither—I'm afraid to talk with him, but I love to see him though.

What a strange power has this fantastic fire,
That makes us dread even what we most desire!

Enter MIRABELL *in a friar's habit.*

Mir. Save you, sister—Your brother, young lady, having a regard for your soul's health, has sent me to prepare you for the sacred habit by confession.

Ori. That's false; the cloven foot already.—[*Aside.*] My brother's care I own; and to you,

sacred sir, I confess, that the great crying sin which I have long indulged, and now prepare to expiate, was love. My morning thoughts, my evening prayers, my daily musings, nightly cares, was love! my present peace, my future bliss, the joy of earth, and hopes of heaven, I all contemned for love!

Mir. She's downright mad in earnest! death and confusion, I have lost her! [*Aside.*] You confess your fault, madam, in such moving terms, that I could almost be in love with the sin.

Ori. Take care, sir; crimes, like virtues, are their own rewards; my chief delight became my only grief; he, in whose breast I thought my heart secure, turned robber, and despoiled the treasure that he kept.

Mir. Perhaps, that treasure he esteems so much, that, like the miser, though afraid to use it, he reserves it safe.

Ori. No, holy father: who can be miser in another's wealth, that's prodigal of his own? His heart was open, shared to all he knew; and what, alas, must then become of mine! But the same eyes, that drew his passion in, shall send it out in tears, to which now hear my vow.

Mir. [*Discovering himself.*] No, my fair angel! but let me repent; here, on my knees, behold the criminal, that vows repentance his. Ha! No concern upon her!

Ori. This turn is odd, and the time has been, that such a sudden change would have surprised me into some confusion.

Mir. Restore that happy time; for I am now returned to myself; for I want but pardon to deserve your favour, and here I'll fix till you relent and give it.

Ori. Grovelling, sordid man! why would you act a thing to make you kneel? monarch in your pleasures to be slave to your faults? Are all the conquests of your wandering sway, your wit, your humour, fortune, all reduced to the base cringing of a bended knee? Servile and poor! Pray Heaven this change be real! [*Aside.*

Mir. I come not here to justify my fault but my submission; for though there be a meanness in this humble posture, 'tis nobler still to bend, when justice calls, than to resist conviction.

Ori. No more——thy oft repeated violated words reproach my weak belief; 'tis the severest calumny to hear thee speak; that humble posture, which once could raise, now mortifies my pride. How canst thou hope for pardon from one, that you affront by asking it?

Mir. [*Rises.*] In my own cause I'll plead no more; but give me leave to intercede for you against the hard injunctions of that habit, which, for my fault, you wear.

Ori. Surprising insolence! My greatest foe pretends to give me counsel; but I am too warm upon so cool a subject. My resolutions, sir, are fixed! but as our hearts were united with the ceremony of our eyes, so, I shall spare some tears to the separation. [*Weeps.*] That's all;—farewell.

Mir. And must I lose her? No. [*Runs and catches her.*] Since all my prayers are vain, I'll use the nobler argument of man, and force you to the justice you refuse; you're mine by precontract: And where's the vow so sacred to disannul another? I'll urge my love, your oath, and plead my cause 'gainst all monastic shifts upon the earth.

Ori. Unhand me, ravisher! Would you profane these holy walls with violence? Revenge for all my past disgrace now offers; thy life should answer this, would I provoke the law: urge me no farther, but be gone.

Mir. Inexorable woman! let me kneel again. [*Kneels.*

Enter OLD MIRABELL.

Old Mir. Where, where's this counterfeit nun?

Ori. Madness! Confusion! I'm ruined!

Mir. What do I hear? [*Puts on his hood*] What did you say, sir?

Old Mir. I say she's a counterfeit, and you may be another for aught I know, sir; I have lost my child by these tricks, sir.

Mir. What tricks, sir!

Old Mir. By a pretended trick, sir. A contrivance to bring my son to reason, and it has made him stark mad; I have lost him and a thousand pounds a year.

Mir. [*Discovering himself.*] My dear father, I'm your most humble servant.

Old Mir. My dear boy, [*Runs and kisses him.*] Welcome *ex inferis*, my dear boy; 'tis all a trick; she's no more a nun than I am.

Mir. No!

Old Mir. The devil a bit.

Mir. Then, kiss me again, my dear dad, for the most happy news—And now, most venerable holy sister. [*Kneels.*

Your mercy and your pardon I implore,
For the offence of asking it before.

Look'e, my dear counterfeiting nun, take my advice, be a nun in good earnest; women make the best nuns always, when they can't do otherwise. Ah, my dear father! there is a merit in your son's behaviour that you little think; the free deportment of such fellows as I, makes more ladies religious than all the pulpits in France.

Ori. O! sir, how unhappily have you destroyed what was so near perfection? He is the counterfeit, that has deceived you.

Old Mir. Ha! Look'e, sir, I recant; she is a nun.

Mir. Sir, your humble servant; then I'm a friar this moment.

Old Mir. Was ever an old fool so bantered by a brace of young ones! hang you both!

you're both counterfeits, and my plot's spoiled, that's all.

Ori. Shame and confusion, love, anger, and disappointment, will work my brain to madness.

[*Takes off her habit. Exit.*

Mir. Ay, ay, throw by the rags; they have served a turn for us both, and they shall e'en go off together.

[*Exit, throwing away the habit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* OLD MIRABELL'S *house.*

DURETETE *with a letter.*

Dur. [Reads] 'My rudeness was only a proof 'of your humour, which I have found so agree-'able, that I own myself penitent, and willing 'to make any reparation upon your first appear-'ance to BISARRE.' Mirabell swears she loves me, and this confirms it; then farewell gallantry, and welcome revenge; 'tis my turn now to be upon the sublime; I'll take her off, I warrant her.

Enter BISARRE.

Well, mistress, do you love me?

Bis. I hope, sir, you will pardon the modesty of—

Dur. Of what? of a dancing devil?——Do you love me, I say?

Bis. Perhaps I—

Dur. What?

Bis. Perhaps I do not.

Dur. Ha! abused again! Death, woman, I'll——

Bis. Hold, hold, sir; I do, I do!

Dur. Confirm it, then, by your obedience; stand there, and ogle me now, as if your heart, blood and soul, were like to fly out at your eyes—First, the direct surprise—[*She looks full upon him.*] Right; next the deux yeux par oblique. [*She gives him the side glance.*] Right; now depart, and languish. [*She turns from him, and looks over her shoulder.*] Very well; now sigh. [*She sighs.*] Now drop your fan on purpose. [*She drops her fan.*] Now take it up again: Come now, confess your faults; are not you a proud—say after me.

Bis. Proud.

Dur. Impertinent.

Bis. Impertinent.

Dur. Ridiculous.

Bis. Ridiculous.

Dur. Flirt.

Bis. Puppy.

Dur. Zoons! Woman, don't provoke me! we are alone, and you don't know but the devil may tempt me to do you a mischief; ask my pardon immediately.

Bis. I do, sir, I only mistook the word.

Dur. Cry, then; have you got e'er a handkerchief?

Bis. Yes, sir.

Dur. Cry, then, handsomely; cry like a queen in a tragedy.

[*She pretending to cry, bursts out a laughing, and enter two ladies laughing.*

Bis. Ha, ha, ha!

Ladies both. Ha, ha, ha!

Dur. Hell broke loose upon me, and all the furies fluttered about my ears! Betrayed again?

Bis. That you are, upon my word, my dear captain; ha, ha, ha!

Dur. The lord deliver me!

1 *Lady.* What! Is this the mighty man with the bull-face, that comes to frighten ladies? I long to see him angry; come, begin.

Dur. Ah, madam, I'm the best natured fellow in the world.

2 *Lady.* A man! We're mistaken; a man has manners; the awkward creature is some tinker's trull in a periwig.

Bis. Come, ladies, let's examine him.

[*They lay hold on him.*

Dur. Examine! the devil you will!

Bis. I'll lay my life, some great dairy-maid in man's clothes.

Dur. They will do't;—look'e, dear Christian women, pray, hear me!

Bis. Will you ever attempt a lady's honour again?

Dur. If you please to let me get away with my honour, I'll do any thing in the world.

Bis. Will you persuade your friend to marry mine?

Dur. O yes, to be sure.

Bis. And will you do the same by me?

Dur. Burn me if I do, if the coast be clear.

[*Runs out*

Bis. Ha, ha, ha! the visit, ladies, was critical for our diversions; we'll go make an end of our tea. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MIRABELL *and* OLD MIRABELL.

Mir. Your patience, sir; I tell you I won't marry; and, though you send all the bishops in France to persuade me, I shall never believe their doctrine against their practice.

Old Mir. But will you disobey your father, sir?

Mir. Would my father have his youthful son lie lazing here, bound to a wife, chained like a monkey, to make sport to a woman, subject to her whims, humours, longings, vapours, and caprices—to have her one day pleased, to-morrow peevish, the next day mad, the fourth rebellious; and nothing but this succession of impertinence for ages together! Be merciful, sir, to your own flesh and blood.

Old Mir. But, sir, did not I bear all this? why should not you?

Mir. Then, you think that marriage, like treason, should attaint the whole body? pray, consider, sir, is it reasonable, because you throw yourself down from one story, that I must cast

myself headlong from the garret window? You would compel me to that state, which I have heard you curse yourself, when my mother and you have battled it for a whole week together.

Old Mir. Never but once, you rogue, and that was when she longed for six Flanders mares: Ay, sir, then she was breeding of you, which shewed what an expensive dog I should have of you.

Enter PETIT.

Well, Petit, how does she now?

Pet. Mad, sir, *con pompos*—Ay, Mr Mirabell, you'll believe that I speak truth now, when I confess that I have told you hitherto nothing but lies; our jesting is come to a sad earnest; she's downright distracted.

Enter BISARRE.

Bis. Where is this mighty victor? The great exploit is done; go, triumph in the glory of your conquest, inhuman, barbarous man! O sir, *(To the old gentleman.)* your wretched ward has found a tender guardian of you! where her young innocence expected protection, here has she found her ruin.

Old Mir. Ay, the fault is mine; for I believe that rogue won't marry, for fear of begetting such another disobedient son as his father did. I have done all I can, madam, and now can do no more than run mad for company. [*Cries.*

Enter DUGARD, *with his sword drawn.*

Dug. Away! Revenge, revenge!

Old Mir. Patience, patience, sir. [OLD MIR. *holds him.*] Bob, draw. [*Aside.*

Dug. Patience! The coward's virtue, and the brave man's failing, when thus provoked—— Villain!

Mir. Your sister's frenzy shall excuse your madness; and to shew my concern for what she suffers, I'll bear the villain from her brother—Put up your anger with your sword; I have a heart like your's, that swells at an affront received, but melts at an injury given: and if the lovely Oriana's grief be such a moving scene, 'twill find a part within this breast, perhaps as tender as a brother's.

Dug. To prove that soft compassion for her grief, endeavour to remove it—There, there, behold an object that's infective; I cannot view her, but I am as mad as she: [*Enter* ORIANA, *held by two maids, who put her in a chair.*] A sister, that my dying parents left, with their last words and blessing, to my care. Sister, dearest sister! [*Goes to her.*

Old Mir. Ay, poor child, poor child, d'ye know me?

Ori. You! you are *Amadis de Gaul*, sir—Oh! oh my heart! Were you never in love, fair lady? And do you never dream of flowers and gardens? —I dream of walking fires, and tall, gigantic sights. Take heed, it comes now—What's that? Pray stand away: I have seen that face suer. How light my head is!

Mir. What piercing charms has beauty, even in madness! these sudden starts of undigested words shoot through my soul, with more persuasive force than all the studied art of laboured eloquence—Come, madam, try to repose a little.

Ori. I cannot; for I must be up to go to church; and I must dress me, put on my new gown, and be so fine, to meet my love. Hey ho! ——Will you not tell me where my heart lies buried?

Mir. My very soul is touched—Your hand, my fair!

Ori. How soft and gentle you feel! I'll tell your fortune, friend.

Mir. How she stares upon me!

Ori. You have a flattering face; but 'tis a fine one——I warrant you have five hundred mistresses—Ay, to be sure, a mistress for every guinea in his pocket——Will you pray for me? I shall die to-morrow——And will you ring my passing-bell?

Mir. O woman, woman, of artifice created! whose nature, even distracted, has a cunning: In vain let man his sense, his learning boast, when woman's madness overrules his reason—Do you know me, injured creature?

Ori. No—but you shall be my intimate acquaintance—in the grave. [*Weeps.*

Mir. Oh tears, I must believe you! sure there's a kind of sympathy in madness; for even I, obstinate as I am, do feel my soul so tossed with storms of passion, that I could cry for help as well as she— [*Wipes his eyes.*

Ori. What, have you lost your lover? No, you mock me; I'll go home and pray.

Mir. Stay, my fair innocence! and hear me own my love so loud, that I may call your senses to their place, restore them to their charming, happy functions, and reinstate myself into your favour.

Bis. Let her alone, sir, 'tis all too late; she trembles; hold her; her fits grow stronger by her talking; don't trouble her; she don't know you, sir.

Old Mir. Not know him! what then? she loves to see him for all that.

Enter DURETETE.

Dur. Where are you all? What the devil! melancholy, and I here! Are ye sad, and such a ridiculous subject, such a very good jest among you as I am?

Mir. Away with this impertinence! this is no place for bagatelle: I have murdered my honour, destroyed a lady, and my desire of reparation is come at length too late: See, there.

Dur. What ails her?

Mir. Alas! she's mad.

Dur. Mad! dost wonder at that? By this-

light, they're all so; they're cozening mad; they're brawling mad; they're proud mad; I just now came from a whole world of mad women, that had almost—What, is she dead?

Mir. Dead! Heavens forbid!

Dur. Heavens further it! for 'till they be as cold as a key, there's no trusting them; you're never sure that a woman's in earnest, till she is laid in her coffin. Shall I talk to her? Are you mad, mistress?

Bis. What's that to you, sir?

Dur. Oons, madam, are you there? [*Runs off.*

Mir. Away, thou wild buffoon! how poor and mean this humour now appears! His follies and my own, I here disclaim; this lady's frenzy has restored my senses; and was she perfect now, as once she was, (before you all I speak it) she should be mine; and, as she is, my tears and prayers shall wed her.

Dug. How happy had this declaration been some hours ago!

Bis. Sir, she beckons to you, and waves us to go off; come, come, let's leave them.

[*Exeunt omnes, but* MIR. *and* ORI.

Ori. Oh, sir!

Mir. Speak, my charming angel! if your dear senses have regained their order; speak, fair, and bless me with the news.

Ori. First, let me bless the cunning of my sex, that happy counterfeited frenzy, that has restored to my poor labouring breast the dearest, best beloved of men.

Mir. Tune, all ye spheres, your instruments of joy, and carry round your spacious orbs, the happy sound of Oriana's health! her soul, whose harmony was next to your's, is now in tune again; the counterfeiting fair has played the fool—

She was so mad to counterfeit for me;
I was so mad to pawn my liberty:
But now we both are well, and both are free.

Ori. How, sir, free!

Mir. As air, my dear Bedlamite! what, marry a lunatic! Look ye, my dear, you have counterfeited madness so very well this bout, that you'll be apt to play the fool all your life long—Here, gentlemen.

Ori. Monster! you won't disgrace me?

Mir. O' my faith, but I will; here, come in, gentlemen—A miracle! a miracle! the woman's dispossessed; the devil's vanished.

Enter OLD MIRABELL *and* DUGARD.

Old Mir. Bless us, was she possessed?

Mir. With the worst of demons, sir, a marriage-devil, a horrid devil! Mr Dugard, don't be surprized; I promised my endeavours to cure your sister; no mad doctor in Christendom could have done it more effectually. Take her into your charge; and have a care she don't relapse; if she should, employ me not again, for I am no more infallible than others of the faculty; I do cure sometimes.

Ori. Your remedy, most barbarous man! will prove the greatest poison to my health; for though my former frenzy was but counterfeit, I now shall run into a real madness.

[*Exit;* OLD MIR. *after.*

Dug. This was a turn beyond my knowledge; I'm so confused, I know not how to resent it.

[*Exit.*

Mir. What a dangerous precipice have I 'scaped! Was not I just now upon the brink of destruction?

Enter DURETETE.

Oh, my friend, let me run into thy bosom! no lark, escaped from the devouring pounces of a hawk, quakes with more dismal apprehension.

Dur. The matter, man!

Mir. Marriage! hanging! I was just at the gallows-foot, the running noose about my neck, and the cart wheeling from me—Oh—I shan't be myself this month again.

Dur. Did not I tell you so? They are all alike, saints or devils: their counterfeiting can't be reputed a deceit, for 'tis the nature of the sex, not their contrivance.

Mir. Ay, ay; there's no living here with security; this house is so full of stratagem and design, that I must abroad again.

Dur. With all my heart; I'll bear thee company, my lad; I'll meet you at the play; and we'll set out for Italy to-morrow morning.

Mir. A match; I'll go pay my compliment of leave to my father presently.

Dur. I'm afraid he'll stop you.

Mir. What, pretend a command over me, after his settlement of a thousand pounds a-year upon me! No, no, he has passed away his authority with the conveyance; the will of a living father is chiefly obeyed for the sake of the dying one:—

What makes the world attend and crowd the great?
Hopes, interest, and dependence, make their state:
Behold the anti-chamber filled with beaux,
A horse's levee filled with courtly crows.
Though grumbling subjects make the crown their sport,
Hopes of a place will bring the sparks to court.
Dependence even a father's sway secures,
For though the son rebels, the heir is yours.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The street before the Playhouse.*

Enter MIRABELL *and* DURETETE *as coming from the play.*

Dur. How d'ye like this play?

Mir. I liked the company; the lady, the rich beauty in the front-box, had my attention: These impudent poets bring the ladies together to support them, and to kill every body else.

For deaths upon the stage the ladies cry,
But ne'er mind us, that in the audience die:
The poet's hero should not move their pain,
But they should weep for those their eyes have slain.

Dur. Hoyty, toyty! did Phillis inspire you with all this?

Mir. Ten times more; the playhouse is the element of poetry, because the region of beauty: the ladies, methinks, have a more inspiring triumphant air in the boxes, than any where else; they sit commanding on their thrones with all their subject-slaves about them: Their best clothes, best looks, shining jewels, sparkling eyes, the treasure of the world in a ring. Then there's such a hurry of pleasure to transport us; the bustle, noise, gallantry, equipage, garters, feathers, wigs, bows, smiles, ogles, love, music, and applause: I could wish that my whole life long were the first night of a new play.

Dur. The fellow has quite forgot this journey; have you bespoke post-horses?

Mir. Grant me but three days, dear captain, one to discover the lady, one to unfold myself, and one to make me happy; and then I'm your's to the world's end.

Dur. Hast thou the impudence to promise thyself a lady of her figure and quality in so short a time?

Mir. Yes, sir—I have a confident address, no disagreeable person, and five hundred Louis d'Ors in my pocket.

Dur. Five hundred Louis d'Ors! You a'n't mad?

Mir. I tell you, she's worth five thousand; one of her black brilliant eyes is worth a diamond as big as her head. I compared her necklace with her looks, and the living jewels outsparkled the dead ones by a million.

Dur. But you have owned to me, that, abating Oriana's pretensions to marriage, you loved her passionately; then, how can you wander at this rate?

Mir. I longed for a partridge t'other day off the king's plate; but d'ye think, because I could not have it, I must eat nothing?

Dur. Prithee, Mirabell, be quiet; you may remember what narrow escapes you have had abroad by following strangers; you forget your leap out of the courtezan's window at Bologna, to save your fine ring there.

Mir. My ring's a trifle; there's nothing we possess comparable to what we desire——be shy of a lady bare-faced in the front-box, with a thousand pounds in jewels about her neck! For shame! no more.

Enter ORIANA, *in boy's clothes, with a letter.*

Ori. Is your name Mirabell, sir?

Mir. Yes, sir.

Ori. A letter from your uncle in Picardy.
[*Gives the letter.*

Mir. [*Reads.*] 'The bearer is the son of a 'protestant gentleman, who, flying for his reli-'gion, left me the charge of this youth [a pretty 'boy.]. He's fond of some handsome service, that 'may afford him opportunity of improvement; 'your care of him will oblige Yours.' Has't a mind to travel, child?

Ori. 'Tis my desire, sir; I should be pleased to serve a traveller in any capacity.

Mir. A hopeful inclination; you shall along with me into Italy, as my page.

Dur. I don't think it safe; the rogue's [*Noise without.*] too handsome——The play's done, and some of the ladies come this way.

Enter LAMORCE, *with her train borne up by a page.*

Mir. Duretete, the very dear, identical she!

Dur. And what then?

Mir. Why, 'tis she.

Dur. And what then, sir?

Mir. Then! Why——Look'e, sirrah, the first piece of service I put upon you, is, to follow that lady's coach, and bring me word where she lives.
[*To* ORIANA.

Ori. I don't know the town, sir, and am afraid of losing myself.

Mir. Pshaw!

Lam. Page, what's become of all my people?

Page. I can't tell, madam; I can see no sign of your ladyship's coach.

Lam. That fellow is got into his old pranks, and fallen drunk somewhere; none of the footmen there?

Page. Not one, madam.

Lam. These servants are the plague of our lives; what shall I do?

Mir. By all my hopes, fortune pimps for me; now, Duretete, for a piece of gallantry.

Dur. Why, you won't, sure?

Mir. Won't, brute!—Let not your servants' neglect, madam, put your ladyship to any inconvenience, for you can't be disappointed of an equipage, whilst mine waits below; and would

you honour the master so far, he would be proud to pay his attendance.

Dur. Ay, to be sure. [*Aside.*

Lam. Sir, I won't presume to be troublesome, for my habitation is a great way off.

Dur. Very true, madam, and he's a little engaged; besides, madam, a hackney-coach will do as well, madam.

Mir. Rude beast, be quiet! [*To* DURETETE.] The farther from home, madam, the more occasion you have for a guard—pray, madam—

Lam. Lard, sir—

[*He seems to press, she to decline it, in dumb shew.*]

Dur. Ah! The devil's in his impudence! now he wheedles, she smiles; he flatters, she simpers; he swears, she believes; he's a rogue, and she's a w—— in a moment.

Mir. Without there! my coach: Duretete, wish me joy. [*Hands the lady out.*

Dur. Wish you a surgeon! Here, you little Picard, go follow your master, and he'll lead you—

Ori. Whither, sir?

Dur. To the academy, child: 'tis the fashion, with men of quality, to teach their pages their exercises—go.

Ori. Won't you go with him, too, sir; that woman may do him some harm; I don't like her.

Dur. Why, how now, Mr Page, do you start up to give laws of a sudden? do you pretend to rise at court, and disapprove the pleasure of your betters? Look'e, sirrah, if ever you would rise by a great man, be sure to be with him in all his little actions, and, as a step to your advancement, follow your master immediately, and make it your hope that he goes to a bawdy-house.

Ori. Heavens forbid! [*Exit.*

Dur. Now would I sooner take a cart in company of the hangman, than a coach with that woman: What a strange antipathy have I taken against these creatures! a woman, to me, is aversion upon aversion; a cheese, a cat, a breast of mutton, the squalling of children, the grinding of knives, and the snuff of a candle. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A handsome apartment.*

Enter MIRABELL *and* LAMORCE.

Lam. To convince me, sir, that your service was something more than good breeding, please to lay out an hour of your company upon my desire, as you have already upon my necessity.

Mir. Your desire, madam, has only prevented my request: My hours! make them yours, madam; eleven, twelve, one, two, three, and all that belong to those happy minutes.

Lam. But I must trouble you, sir, to dismiss your returne: because an equipage at my door, at this time of night, will not be consistent with my reputation.

Mir. By all means, madam; all but one little boy——Here, page, order my coach and servants home, and do you stay—'tis a foolish country boy, that knows nothing but innocence.

Lam. Innocence, sir! I should be sorry, if you made any sinister constructions of my freedom.

Mir. O madam, I must not pretend to remark upon any body's freedom, having so entirely forfeited my own.

Lam. Well, sir, 'twere convenient towards our easy correspondence, that we entered into a free confidence of each other, by a mutual declaration of what we are, and what we think of one another. Now, sir, what are you?

Mir. In three words, madam—I am a gentleman; I have five hundred pounds in my pocket, and a clean shirt on.

Lam. And your name is——

Mir. Mustapha. Now, madam, the inventory of your fortunes.

Lam. My name is Lamorce; my birth noble; I was married young, to a proud, rude, sullen, impetuous fellow; the husband spoiled the gentleman; crying ruined my face, till, at last, I took heart, leaped out of a window, got away to my friends, sued my tyrant, and recovered my fortune——I lived, from fifteen to twenty, to please a husband; from twenty to forty, I'm resolved to please myself; and, from thence upwards, I'll humour the world.

Mir. The charming wild notes of a bird broke out of its cage!

Lam. I marked you at the play, and something I saw of a well-furnished, careless, agreeable tour about you. Methought your eyes made their mannerly demands with such an arch-modesty, that I don't know how—but I am eloped. Ha, ha, ha! I'm eloped.

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! I rejoice in your good fortune with all my heart.

Lam. O, now I think on't, Mr Mustapha, you have got the finest ring there, I could scarcely believe it right; pray, let me see it.

Mir. Hum! Yes, madam, 'tis, 'tis right—but, but, but, but, but, it was given me by my mother; an old family ring, madam, an old-fashioned family ring.

Lam. Ay, sir—If you can entertain yourself with a song for a moment, I'll wait on you immediately; come in there.

Enter Singers.

Call what you please, sir.

Mir. The new song——"Prithee, Phillis."

SONG.

Certainly the stars have been in a strange intriguing humour, when I was born—Ay, this night should I have had a bride in my arms, and that I should like well enough: But what should I have to-morrow night? The same. And what next night? The same. And what next night? The

very same: Soup for breakfast, soup for dinner, soup for supper, and soup for breakfast again—But here's variety.

I love the fair who freely gives her heart,
That's mine by ties of nature, not of art;
Who boldly owns whate'er her thoughts indite,
And is too modest for a hypocrite.

LAMORCE *appears at the door. As he runs towards her, four Bravoes step in before her. He starts back.*

She comes, she comes—hum, hum—bitch—murdered, murdered to be sure! The cursed strumpet! To make me send away my servants—Nobody near me! These cut-throats always make sure work. What shall I do? I have but one way. Are these gentlemen your relations, madam?

Lam. Yes, sir.

Mir. Gentlemen, your most humble servant; sir, your most faithful; yours, sir, with all my heart; your most obedient—come, gentlemen, [*Salutes all round.*] please to sit—no ceremony; next the lady, pray sir.

Lam. Well, sir, and how d'ye like my friends?

[*They all sit.*

Mir. O, madam, the most finished gentlemen! I was never more happy in good company in my life; I suppose, sir, you have travelled?

1 *Bra.* Yes, sir.

Mir. Which way, may I presume?

1 *Bra.* In a western barge, sir.

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! very pretty; facetious pretty gentleman!

Lam. Ha, ha, ha! sir, you have got the prettiest ring upon your finger there——

Mir. Ah! madam, 'tis at your service with all my heart. [*Offering the ring.*

Lam. By no means, sir, a family-ring!

[*Takes it.*

Mir. No matter, madam. Seven hundred pound, by this light. [*Aside.*

2 *Bra.* Pray, sir, what's o'clock?

Mir. Hum! sir, I have left my watch at home.

2 *Bra.* I thought I saw the string of it just now——

Mir. Ods my life, sir, I beg your pardon, here it is—but it don't go. [*Putting it up.*

Lam. O dear sir, an English watch! Tompion's, I presume?

Mir. D'ye like it, madam—no ceremony——'tis at your service with all my heart and soul—Tompion's! Hang ye. [*Aside.*

1 *Bra.* But, sir, above all things, I admire the fashion and make of your sword-hilt.

Mir. I'm mighty glad you like it, sir.

1 *Bra.* Will you part with it, sir?

Mir. Sir, I won't sell it.

1 *Bra.* Not sell it, sir?

Mir. No, gentlemen——but I'll bestow it with all my heart. [*Offering it.*

1 *Bra.* O, sir, we shall rob you.

Mir. That you do, I'll be sworn. [*Aside.*] I have another at home; pray, sir—Gentlemen, you're too modest; have I any thing else that you fancy?—Sir, will you do me a favour? [*To the 1st Bravo.*] I am extremely in love with that wig which you wear; will you do me the favour to change with me?

1 *Bra.* Look'e, sir, this is a family wig, and I would not part with it, but if you like it——

Mir. Sir, your most humble servant.

[*They change wigs.*

1 *Bra.* Madam, your most humble slave.

[*Goes up foppishly to the lady, salutes her.*

2 *Bra.* The fellow's very liberal; shall we murder him?

1 *Bra.* What! Let him escape to hang us all! And I to lose my wig! no, no; I want but a handsome pretence to quarrel with him, for you know we must act like gentlemen. Here, some wine—[*Wine here.*] Sir, your good health.

[*Pulls* MIRABELL *by the nose.*

Mir. Oh! Sir, your most humble servant; a pleasant frolic enough, to drink a man's health, and pull him by the nose: ha, ha, ha! the pleasantest pretty-humoured gentleman!

Lam. Help the gentleman to a glass.

[MIRABELL *drinks.*

1 *Bra.* How d'ye like the wine, sir?

Mir. Very good o' the kind, sir: But I tell ye what; I find we're all inclined to be frolicsome, and, e'gad, for my own part, I was never more disposed to be merry; let's make a night on't, ha! This wine is pretty, but I have such Burgundy at home! Look'e, gentlemen, let me send for half a dozen flasks of my Burgundy; I defy France to match it; 'twill make us all life, all air; pray, gentlemen.

2 *Bra.* Eh! Shall we have his Burgundy?

1 *Bra.* Yes, faith, we'll have all we can; here, call up the gentleman's servant—What think you, Lamorce?

Lam. Yes, yes———your servant is a foolish country boy, sir; he understands nothing but innocence.

Mir. Ay, ay, madam. Here, page!

Enter ORIANA.

take this key, and go to my butler, order him to send half a dozen flasks of the red Burgundy, marked a thousand; and be sure you make haste! I long to entertain my friends here, my very good friends.

Omnes. Ah, dear sir!

1 *Bra.* Here, child, take a glass of wine——Your master and I have changed wigs, honey, in a frolic. Where had you this pretty boy, honest Mustapha?

Ori. Mustapha!

Mir. Out of Picardy—this is the first errand

he has made for me, and if he does it right, I'll encourage him.

Ori. The red Burgundy, sir.

Mir. The red, marked a thousand; and be sure you make haste!

Ori. I shall, sir. [*Exit.*

1 *Bra.* Sir, you were pleased to like my wig, have you any fancy for my coat?—Look'e, sir, it has served a great many honest gentlemen very faithfully.

Mir. Not so faithfully, for I'm afraid it has got a scurvy trick of leaving all its masters in necessity. The insolence of these dogs is beyond their cruelty. [*Aside.*

Lam. You're melancholy, sir.

Mir. Only concerned, madam, that I should have no servant here but this little boy——he'll make some confounded blunder, I'll lay my life on't; I would not be disappointed of my wine for the universe.

Lam. He'll do well enough, sir; but supper's ready, will you please to eat a bit, sir?

Mir. O, madam, I never had a better stomach in my life.

Lam. Come, then—we have nothing but a plate of soup.

Mir. Ah! The marriage-soup I could dispense with now. [*Aside.*] [*Exit, handing the lady.*

2 *Bra.* That wig won't fall to your share.

1 *Bra.* No, no, we'll settle that after supper; in the mean time, the gentleman shall wear it.

2 *Bra.* Shall we dispatch him?

3 *Bra.* To be sure. I think he knows me.

1 *Bra.* Ay, ay, dead men tell no tales; I wonder at the impudence of the English rogues, that will hazard the meeting a man at the bar, whom they have encountered upon the road! I han't the confidence to look a man in the face, after I have done him an injury; therefore, we'll murder him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* OLD MIRABELL'S *house.*

Enter DURETETE.

Dur. My friend has forsaken me, I have abandoned my mistress, my time lies heavy upon my hands, and my money burns in my pocket—But, now I think on't, my myrmidons are upon duty to-night; I'll fairly stroll down to the guard, and nod away the night with my honest lieutenant over a flask of wine, a rake-helly story, and a pipe of tobacco.

Going off, BISSARET *meets him.*

Bis. Who comes there? stand!

Dur. Hey day! now she's turned dragoon.

Bis. Look'e, sir, I'm told you intend to travel again. I design to wait on you as far as Italy.

Dur. Then, I'll travel into Wales.

Bis. Wales! what country's that?

Dur. The land of mountains, child, where you're never out of the way, 'cause there's no such thing as a high road.

Bis. Rather always in a high road, 'cause you travel all upon hills; but, be it as it will, I'll jog along with you.

Dur. But we intend to sail to the East Indies.

Bis. East or west, 'tis all one to me; I'm tight and light, and the fitter for sailing.

Dur. But suppose we take through Germany, and drink hard?

Bis. Suppose I take through Germany, and drink harder than you?

Dur. Suppose I go to a bawdy-house?

Bis. Suppose I shew you the way?

Dur. 'Sdeath, woman, will you go to the guard with me, and smoke a pipe?

Bis. Allons donc!

Dur. The devil's in the woman! suppose I hang myself?

Bis. There I'll leave you.

Dur. And a happy riddance; the gallows is welcome.

Bis. Hold, hold, sir.—[*Catches him by the arm going.*]—one word before we part.

Dur. Let me go, madam, or I shall think that you're a man, and perhaps may examine you.

Bis. Stir, if you dare; I have still spirits to attend me; and can raise such a muster of fairies, as shall punish you to death—come, sir, stand there, now, and ogle me:—[*He frowns upon her.*]—Now a languishing sigh!—[*He groans.*]—Now run and take up my fan,—faster.—[*He runs and takes it up.*]—Now play with it handsomely.

Dur. Aye, aye.

[*He tears it all in pieces.*

Bis. Hold, hold, dear humourous coxcomb; captain, spare my fan, and I'll——why, you rude, inhuman monster, don't you expect to pay for this?

Dur. Yes, madam, there's twelve-pence; for that is the price on't.

Bis. Sir, it cost a guinea.

Dur. Well, madam, you shall have the sticks again.

[*Throws them to her, and exit.*

Bis. Ha, ha, ha! ridiculous below my concern. I must follow him, however, to know if he can give me any news of Oriana.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to* LAMORCE'S *lodgings.*

Enter MIRABELL, *solus.*

Mir. Bloody hell-hounds! I overheard you: was not I two hours ago the happy, gay, rejoicing Mirabell? How did I plume my hopes in a fair-coming prospect of a long scene of years? Life courted me with all the charms of vigour, youth, and fortune; and to be torn away from all my promised joys is more than death; the manner, too—by villains! Oh, my Oriana, this very moment might have blessed me in thy arms, and my

poor boy! The innocent boy! Confusion! But hush, they come: I must dissemble still—no news of my wine, gentlemen?

Enter the four Bravoes.

1 *Bra.* No, sir, I believe your country-booby has lost himself, and we can wait no longer for't: true, sir, you're a pleasant gentleman, but I suppose you understand our business.

Mir. Sir, I may go near to guess at your employments; you, sir, are a lawyer, I presume; you a physician; you a scrivener; and you a stock-jobber. All cut-throats, 'egad!

[*Aside.*

4 *Bra.* Sir, I am a broken officer; I was cashiered at the head of the army for a coward: so, I took up the trade of murderer to retrieve the reputation of my courage.

3 *Bra.* I am a soldier, too, and would serve my king, but I don't like the quarrel; and I have more honour than to fight in a bad cause.

2 *Bra.* I was bred a gentleman, and have no estate; but I must have my whore and my bottle, through the prejudice of education.

1 *Bra.* I am a ruffian, too; by the prejudice of education, I was bred a butcher. In short, sir, if your wine had come, we might have trifled a little longer. Come, sir, which sword will you fall by? mine, sir? [*Draws.*

2 *Bra.* Or mine? [*Draws.*

3 *Bra.* Or mine? [*Draws.*

4 *Bra.* Or mine? [*Draws.*

Mir. I scorn to beg my life; but to be butchered thus! O there's the wine! this moment *(knocking)* for my life or death.

Enter ORIANA.

Lost! for ever lost! where's the wine, child?

[*Faintly.*

Ori. Coming up, sir.

[*Stamps.*

Enter DURETETE *with his sword drawn, and six of the grand musquetcers, with their pieces presented; the ruffians drop their swords.*

[ORIANA *goes off.*

Mir. The wine! the wine! the wine! Youth, pleasure, fortune, days, and years, are now my own again. Ah, my dear friends, did not I tell you this wine would make me merry? Dear captain, these gentlemen are the best-natured, facetious, witty creatures, that ever you knew.

Enter LAMORCE.

Lam. Is the wine come, sir!

Mir. O yes, madam, the wine is come——see there!—[*Pointing to the soldiers.*]—Your ladyship has got a very fine ring upon your finger.

Lam. Sir, 'tis at your service.

Mir. O ho! is it so? thou dear seven hundred pound, thou'rt welcome home again, with all my heart—Ad's my life, madam, you have got the finest built watch there? Tompion's, I presume.

Lam. Sir, you may wear it.

Mir. Oh, madam, by no means: 'tis too much—rob you of all!—[*Taking it from her.*]—Good dear time, thou'rt a precious thing! I am glad I have retrieved thee:—[*Putting it up.*]—What, my friends, neglected all this while! Gentlemen, you'll pardon my complaisance to the lady. How now—is it civil to be so out of humour at my entertainment, and I so pleased with yours? Captain, you're surprised at all this! but we're in our frolics, you must know. Some wine here.

Enter servant with wine.

Come, captain, this worthy gentleman's health.

[*Tweaks the first bravo by the nose; he roars.*

But now, where—where's my dear deliverer, my boy, my charming boy!

1 *Bra.* I hope some of our crew below-stairs have dispatched him.

Mir. Villain, what say'st thou? Dispatched! I'll have ye all tortured, racked, torn to pieces alive, if you have touched my boy. Here, page! page! page!

[*Runs out.*

Dur. Here, gentlemen, be sure you secure those fellows.

1 *Bra.* Yes, sir, we know you and your guard will be very civil to us.

Dur. Now for you, madam. He, he, he! I'm so pleased to think that I shall be revenged of one woman before I die—well, Mrs Snap-Dragon, which of these honourable gentlemen is so happy to call you a wife?

1 *Bra.* Sir, she should have been mine to-night, 'cause Sampre here had her last night. Sir, she's very true to us all four.

Dug. Take them to justice.

[*The guards carry off the Bravoes.*

Enter OLD MIRABELL, DUGARD, *and* BISARRE.

Old Mir. Robin, Robin, where's Bob? where's my boy? what, is this the lady? a pretty whore, faith! heark'e, child, because my son was so civil as to oblige you with a coach, I'll treat you with a cart; indeed I will.

Dug. Aye, madam, and you shall have a swinging equipage, three or four thousand footmen at your heels at least.

Dur. No less becomes her quality.

Bis. Faugh! the monster!

Dur. Monster! aye, you're all a little monstrous, let me tell you.

Enter MIRABELL.

Old Mir. Ah, my dear Bob, art thou safe, man?

Mir. No, no, sir, I'm ruined; the saver of my life is lost.

Old Mir. No, he came and brought us the news.

Mir. But where is he?

Enter ORIANA.

Ha!—[*Runs and embraces her.*]—My dear preserver! what shall I do to recompense your trust? Father, friends, gentlemen, behold the youth, that has relieved me from the most ignominious death, from the scandalous poniards of these bloody ruffians, where to have fallen would have defamed my memory with vile reproach.—My life, estate, my all, is due to such a favour—command me, child; before you all, before my late so kind indulgent stars, I swear to grant whate'er you ask.

Ori. To the same stars, indulgent now to me, I will appeal as to the justice of my claim; I shall demand but what was mine before—the just performance of your contract to Oriana.

[*Discovering herself.*

Om. Oriana!

Ori. In this disguise, I resolved to follow you abroad; counterfeited that letter, that got me into your service; and so, by this strange turn of fate, I became the instrument of your preservation. Few common servants would have had such cunning; my love inspired me with the meaning of your message, because my concern for your safety made me suspect your company.

Dur. Mirabell, you're caught.

Mir. Caught! I scorn the thought of imposition; the tricks and artful cunning of the sex I have despised, and broke through all contrivance. Caught! no, 'tis my voluntary act; this was no human stratagem; but by my providential stars designed to shew the dangers wandering youth incurs by the pursuit of an unlawful love, to plunge me headlong in the snares of vice, and then to free me by the hands of virtue: here, on my knees, I humbly beg my fair preserver's pardon; my thanks are needless, for myself I owe. And now, for ever, do protest me yours.

Old Mir. Tall, all di dall.—[*Sings.*]—Kiss me, daughter—no, you shall kiss me first—[*To* LAMORCE]—for you're the cause on't. Well, Bisarre, what say you to the captain?

Bis. I like the beast well enough, but I don't understand his paces so well, as to endanger him in a strange road.

Old Mir. But marriage is so beaten a path, that you can't go wrong.

Bis. Aye, 'tis so beaten, that the way is spoiled.

Dur. There is but one thing should make me thy husband—I could marry thee to-day, for the privilege of beating thee to-morrow.

Old Mir. Come, come, you may agree for all this. Mr Dugard, are not you pleased with this?

Dug. So pleased, that if I thought it might secure your son's affection to my sister, I would double her fortune.

Mir. Fortune! has she not given me mine? my life, estate, my all, and, what is more, her virtuous self? Virtue, in this so advantageous life, has her own sparkling charms, more tempting far than glittering gold or glory. Behold the foil—[*Pointing to* LAMORCE]—that sets this brightness off!—[*To* ORIANA.]—Here view the pride—[*To* ORIANA]—and scandal of the sex.—[*To* LAMORCE.]—There—[*To* LAMORCE.]—the false meteor, whose deluding light leads mankind to destruction; here—[*To* ORIANA]—the bright shining star, that guides to a security of happiness; a garden, and a single she—[*To* ORIANA]—was our first father's bliss; the tempter—[*To* LAMORCE.]—and to wander was his curse.

What liberty can be so tempting there?

[*To* LAMORCE.

As a soft, virtuous, am'rous bondage here?

[*To* ORIANA.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SHE WOU'D AND SHE WOU'D NOT.

BY

CIBBER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

DON MANUEL, *father to* ROSARA.
DON PHILIP, *slighted by* HYPOLITA.
DON LOUIS, *nephew to* DON MANUEL.
OCTAVIO, *in love with* ROSARA.
TRAPPANTI, *a cast servant of* DON PHILIP.
SOTO, *servant to* DON PHILIP.

WOMEN.

HYPOLITA, *secretly in love with* DON PHILIP.
ROSARA, *in love with* OCTAVIO.
FLORA, *confidante to* HYPOLITA.
VILETTA, *woman to* ROSARA.
Host, Alguazil, and Servants.

Scene—Madrid.

ACT. I.

SCENE I.—*An Inn in Madrid.*

Enter TRAPPANTI, *alone, talking to himself.*

INDEED, my friend Trappanti, thou'rt in a very thin condition; thou hast neither master, meat, nor money: not but, couldst thou part with that unappeaseable itch of eating, too, thou hast all the ragged virtues that were requisite to set up an ancient philosopher: contempt and poverty, kicks, thumps, and thinking, thou hast endured with the best of them; but—when fortune turns thee up to hard fasting, that is to say, positively not eating at all, I perceive thou art a downright dunce, with the same stomach, and no more philosophy, than a hound upon horse-flesh—Fasting's the devil!—Let me see—this, I take it, is the most frequented inn about Madrid, and if a keen guest or two should drop in now—Hark!

Host. [*Within.*] Take care of the gentlemen's horses there; see them well rubbed and littered.

Trap. Just alighted! if they do but stay to eat now! Impudence assist me. Ha! a couple of pretty young sparks, faith!

Enter HYPOLITA *and* FLORA *in men's habits, a Servant with a portmanteau.*

Trap. Welcome to Madrid, sir; welcome, sir!

Flo. Sir, your servant!

Ser. Have the horses pleased your honour?

Hyp. Very well indeed, friend. Prithee, set down the portmanteau, and see that the poor creatures want nothing: they have performed well, and deserve our care.

Trap. I'll take care of that, sir. Here, ostler! [*Exeunt* TRAP. *and Servant.*

Flo. And pray, madam, what do I deserve, that have lost the use of my limbs to keep pace with you? 'Sheart! you whipped and spurred like a fox-hunter: its a sign you had a lover in view: I'm sure my shoulders ache as if I had carried my horse on them.

Hyp. Poor Flora! thou art fatigued indeed! but I shall find a way to thank thee for't.

Flo. Thank me, quotha! Egad, I shan't be able to sit this fortnight. Well, I'm glad our journey's at an end, however; and now, madam,

pray, what do you propose will be the end of our journey?

Hyp. Why, now, I hope the end of my wishes —Don Philip, I need not tell you how far he is in my heart.

Flo. No, your sweet usage of him told me that long enough ago; but now, it seems, you think fit to confess it: and what is it you love him for, pray?

Hyp. His manner of bearing that usage.

Flo. Ah, dear pride! how we love to have it tickled! But he does not bear it, you see, for he's coming post to Madrid to marry another woman; nay, one he never saw.

Hyp. An unknown face cannot have very far engaged him.

Flo. How came he to be engaged to her at all?

Hyp. Why, I engaged him.

Flo. To another!

Hyp. To my whole sex, rather than own I loved him.

Flo. Ah, done like a woman of courage!

Hyp. I could not bear the thought of parting with my power; besides, he took me at such an advantage, and pressed me so home to a surrender, I could have torn him piece-meal.

Flo. Ay, I warrant you, an insolent—agreeable puppy. Well, but to leave impertinence, madam, pray how came you to squabble with him?

Hyp. I'll tell thee, Flora: you know Don Philip wants no charms that can recommend a lover; in birth and quality, I confess him my superior; and it is the thought of that has been a constant thorn upon my wishes. I never saw him in the humblest posture, but still I fancied he secretly presumed his rank and fortune might deserve me. This always stung my pride, and made me overact it: nay, sometimes, when his sufferings have almost drawn tears into my eyes, I have turned the subject with some trivial talk, or hummed a spiteful tune, though I believe his heart was breaking.

Flo. A very tender principle, truly!

Hyp. Well, I don't know, it was in my nature. But to proceed—this, and worse usage, continued a long time; at last, despairing of my heart, he then resolved to do a violence on his own, by consenting to his father's commands of marrying a lady of considerable fortune here in Madrid.—The match is concluded, articles are sealed, and the day is fixed for his journey. Now, the night before he set out, he came to take his leave of me, in hopes, I suppose, I would have staid him. I need not tell you my confusion at the news; and though I could have given my soul to have deferred it, yet, finding him, unless I bade him stay, resolved upon the marriage, I (from the pure spirit of contradiction) swore to myself I would not bid him do it; so called for my veil, and told him I was in haste, begged his pardon, your servant, and so whipped to prayers.

Flo. Well said again! that was a clincher.—Ah, had not you better been at confession?

Hyp. Why, really, I might have saved a long journey by it. To be short, when I came from church, Don Philip had left this letter at home for me, without requiring an answer———Read it——

Flo. [*Reads.*] 'Your usage has made me justly despair of you, and now, any change must 'better my condition; at least, it has reduced 'me to the necessity of trying the last remedy, 'marriage with another; if it prove ineffectual, 'I only wish you may, at some hours, remember 'how little cause I have given you to have made 'me for ever miserable.

PHILIP.'

Poor gentleman! very hard, by my conscience! Indeed, madam, this was carrying the jest a little too far.

Hyp. Ah, by many a long mile, Flora; but what would you have a woman do, when her hand's in?

Flo. Nay, the truth of it is, we never know the difference between enough and a surfeit; but, love be praised, your proud stomach's come down for it.

Hyp. Indeed, it is not altogether so high as it was. In a word, his last letter set me at my wit's end; and when I came to myself, you may remember you thought me bewitched; for I immediately called for my boots and breeches, a straddle we got, and so rode after him.

Flo. Why, truly, madam, as to your wits, I have not much altered my opinion for them, for I cannot see what you propose by it.

Hyp. My whole design, Flora, lies in this portmanteau, and these breeches.

Flo. A notable design, no doubt! but, pray, let's hear it.

Hyp. Why, I do propose to be twice married between them.

Flo. How! twice?

Hyp. By the help of the portmanteau, I intend to marry myself to Don Philip's new mistress; and then——I'll put off my breeches, and marry him.

Flo. Now, I begin to take ye: but, pray, what's in the portmanteau, and how came you by it?

Hyp. I hired one to steal it from his servant at the last inn we lay at in Toledo. In it are jewels of value, presents to my bride, gold good store, settlements, and credential letters, to certify, that the bearer (which I intend to be myself) is Don Philip, only son and heir of Don Fernando de las Torres, now residing at Seville, whence we came.

Flo. A very smart undertaking, by my troth! And, pray, madam, what part am I to act?

Hyp. My woman still; when I cannot lie for myself, you are to do it for me, in the person of a cousin-german

Flo. And my name is to be——

Hyp. Don Guzman, Diego, Mendez, or what you please: be your own goodfather.

Flo. 'Egad, I begin to like it mightily! this may prove a very pleasant adventure, if we can but come off without fighting, which, by the way, I don't easily perceive we shall; for, to be sure, Don Philip will make the devil to do with us when he finds himself here before he come h ther.

Hyp. Oh, let me alone to give him satisfaction.

Flo. I'm afraid it must be alone, if you do give him satisfaction; for my part, I can push no more than I can swim.

Hyp. But can you bully upon occasion?

Flo. I can scold, when my blood's up.

Hyp. That's the same thing: bullying would be scolding in petticoats.

Flo. Say ye so? Why, then, Don, look to yourself; if I don't give you as good as you bring, I'll be content to wear breeches as long as I live, though I lose the end of my sex by it. Well, madam, now you have opened the plot, pray, when is the play to begin?

Hyp. I hope to have it all over in less than four hours: we'll just refresh ourselves with what the house affords, comb out our wigs, and wait upon my father-in-law——How now! what would this fellow have?——

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Trap. Servant, gentlemen; I have taken nice care of your nags; good cattle they are, by my troth! right and sound, I warrant them; they deserve care, and they have had it, and shall have it, if they stay in this house. I always stand by, sir; see them rubbed down with my own eyes——Catch me trusting an ostler—I'll give you leave to fill for me, and drink for me, too.

Flo. I have seen this fellow somewhere.

Trap. Hey-day! what, no cloth laid? was ever such attendance! Hey, house! tapster! landlord! hey! [*Knocks.*] What was it you bespoke, gentlemen?

Hyp. Really, sir, I ask your pardon; I have almost forgot you.

Trap. Pshaw! dear sir, never talk of it; I live here hard by—I have a lodging——I cannot call it a lodging, neither—that is, I have a—— Sometimes I am here, and sometimes I am there; and so, here and there, one makes shift, you know. Hey! will these people never come? [*Knocks.*

Hyp. You give a very good account of yourself, sir.

Trap. Oh, nothing at all, sir. Lord, sir—was it fish or flesh, sir?

Flo. Really, sir, we have bespoke nothing yet.

Trap. Nothing! for shame! it's a sign you are young travellers. You don't know this house, sir; why, they'll let you starve if you don't stir and call, and that like thunder, too——Hey! [*Knocks.*

Hyp. Ha! you eat here sometimes, I presume, sir?

Trap. Umph! Aye, sir, that's as it happens—I seldom eat at home, indeed—things are genenerally, you know, so out of order there, that—Did you hear any fresh news upon the road, sir?

Hyp. Only, sir, that the king of France lost a great horse-match upon the Alps t'other day.

Trap. Ha! a very odd place for a horse-race—but the king of France may do any thing—did you come that way, gentlemen? or—Hey! [*Knocks.*

Enter HOST.

Host. Did you call, gentlemen?

Trap. Yes, and bawl, too, sir. Here, the gentlemen are almost famished, and nobody comes near them. What have you in the house, now, that will be ready presently?

Host. You may have what you please, sir.

Hyp. Can you give us a partridge?

Host. Sir, we have no partridges; but we'll get you what you please in a moment. We have a very good neck of mutton, sir; if you please, it shall be clapped down in a moment.

Hyp. Have you no pigeons or chickens?

Host. Truly, sir, we have no fowl in the house at present; if you please, you may have any thing else in a moment.

Hyp. Then, prithee, get us some young rabbits.

Host. Upon my word, sir, rabbits are so scarce, they are not to be had for money.

Flo. Have you any fish?

Host. Fish, sir! I drest yesterday the finest dish that ever came upon a table; I am sorry we have none left, sir; but if you please, you may have any thing else in a moment.

Trap. Pox on thee! hast thou nothing but any thing else in the house?

Host. Very good mutton, sir.

Hyp. Prithee get us a breast, then.

Host. Breast! don't you love the neck, sir?

Hyp. Have ye nothing in the house but the neck?

Host. Really, sir, we don't use to be so unprovided; but at present we have nothing else left.

Trap. Faith, sir, I don't know but a nothing else may be very good meat, when any thing else is not to be had.

Hyp. Then, prithee, friend, let's have thy neck of mutton before that is gone, too.

Trap. Sir, he shall lay it down this minute; I'll see it done, gentlemen; I'll wait upon ye presently; for a minute I must beg your pardon, and leave to lay the cloth myself.

Hyp. By no means, sir.

Trap. No ceremony, dear sir! Indeed I'll do it. [*Exeunt* HOST *and* TRAPPANTI.

Hyp. What can this familiar puppy be?

Flo. With much ado, I have recollected his face. Don't you remember, madam, about two or three years ago, Don Philip had a trusty servant, called Trappanti, that used now and then to slip a note into your hand as you came from church?

Hyp. Is this he, that Philip turned away for saying I was as proud as a beauty, and homely enough to be good humoured?

Flo. The very same I assure ye; only, as you see, starving has altered his air a little.

Hyp. Poor fellow! I am concerned for him. What makes him so far from Seville?

Flo. I am afraid all places are alike to him.

Hyp. I have a great mind to take him into my service; his assurance may be useful, as my case stands.

Flo. You would not tell him who you are?

Hyp. There's no occasion for it——I'll talk with him.

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Trap. Your dinner's upon the spit, gentlemen, and the cloth is laid in the best room—Are you not for a whet, sir? What wine? what wine? hey!

Flo. We give you trouble, sir.

Trap. Not in the least, sir——Hey! [*Knocks.*

Enter HOST.

Host. D'ye call, gentlemen?

Hyp. Ay; what wine have ye?

Host. What sort you please, sir.

Flo. Sir, will you please to name it?

[*To* TRAP.

Trap. Nay, pray, sir!

Hyp. No ceremony, dear sir! upon my word you shall.

Trap. Upon my soul you'll make me leave ye, gentlemen.

Hyp. Come, come, no words; prithee, you shall.

Trap. Psha! but why this among friends, now? Here—have ye any right Galicia?

Host. The best in Spain, I warrant it.

Trap. Let's taste it; if it be good, set us out half a dozen bottles for dinner.

Host. Yes, sir. [*Exit* HOST.

Flo. Who says this fellow's a starving now? On my conscience, the rogue has more impudence than a lover at midnight.

Hyp. Hang him, 'tis inoffensive; I'll humour him——Pray, sir, (for I find we are like to be better acquainted, therefore, I hope you won't take my question ill)——

Trap. Oh, dear sir!

Hyp. What profession may you be of?

Trap. Profession, sir—I—I—'Ods me? here's a fine

Enter HOST.

Come, fill out—hold—let me taste it first—Ye blockhead, would ye have the gentleman drink before he knows whether it be good or not? [*Drinks.*] Yes, 'twill do—Give me the bottle, I'll fill myself. Now, sir, is not that a glass of right wine?

Hyp. Extremely good, indeed——But, sir, as to my question.

Trap. I'm afraid, sir, that mutton won't be enough for us all.

Hyp. Oh, pray sir, bespeak what you please.

Trap. Sir, your most humble servant——Here, master! prithee, get us a—ha! ay, get us a dozen of poached eggs—a dozen, dy'e hear—just to—pop down a little.

Host. Yes, sir. [*Going.*

Trap. Friend——let there be a little slice of bacon to every one of them.

Hyp. But, sir——

Trap. 'Odso! I had like to have forgot——here a—Sancho, Sancho! Ay, is not your name Sancho?

Host. Diego, sir.

Trap. Oh, ay, Diego; that's true, indeed, Diego. Umph!

Hyp. I must e'en let him alone; there's no putting in a word till his mouth's full.

Trap. Come, here's to thee, Diego—[*Drinks and fills again.*] That I should forget thy name, though.

Host. No great harm, sir.

Trap. Diego, ha! a very pretty name, faith—I think you are married, are you not, Diego?

Host. Ay, ay, sir.

Trap. Ha! how many children?

Host. Nine girls and a boy, sir.

Trap. Ha! nine girls—Come, here's to thee again, Diego——Nine girls! a stirring woman, I dare say; a good housewife, ha, Diego?

Host. Pretty well, sir.

Trap. Makes all her pickles herself, I warrant ye——Does she do olives well?

Host. Will you be pleased to taste them, sir?

Trap. Taste them! hum! prithee, let's have a plate, Diego.

Host. Yes, sir.

Hyp. And our dinner as soon as you please, sir: when it's ready, call us.

Host. Yes, sir. [*Exit* HOST.

Hyp. But, sir, I was asking you of your profession.

Trap. Profession! really, sir, I don't use to profess much: I am a plain-dealing sort of a man: if I say I'll serve a gentleman, he may depend upon me.

Flo. Have you ever served, sir?

Trap. Not these two last campaigns.

Hyp. How so?

Trap. Some words with my superior officer; I was a little too free in speaking my mind to him.

Hyp. Don't you think of serving again, sir?

Trap. If a good post fall in my way.

Hyp. I believe I could help you—Pray, sir, when you served last, did you take pay or wages?

Trap. Pay, sir!——Yes, sir, I was paid, cleared, subsistence and arrears, to a farthing.

Hyp. And your late commander's name was—

Trap. Don Philip de las Torres.

Hyp. Of Seville?

Trap. Of Seville.

Hyp. Sir, your most humble servant. You need not be curious, for I am sure you don't know me, though I do you, and your condition, which, I dare promise you, I'll mend upon our better acquaintance: and your first step to deserve it, is to answer me honestly to a few questions. Keep your assurance still; it may do me service; I shall like you better for it. Come, here's to encourage you. [*Gives him money.*

Trap. Sir, my humble service to you.

Hyp. Well said.

Flo. Nay, I'll pass my word he sha'n't dwindle into modesty.

Trap. I never heard a gentleman talk better in my life. I have seen such sort of a face before; but where——I don't know, nor I don't care. It's your glass, sir.

Hyp. Grammercy! here, cousin. [*Drinks to Flora.*] Come now, what made Don Philip turn you out of his service? why did you leave him?

Trap. 'Twas time, I think; his wits had left him—the man was mad.

Hyp. Mad!

Trap. Ay, stark mad——in love.

Hyp. In love! how, pray?

Trap. Very deep—up to the ears—over head——drowned by this time—he would in——I would have had him stopped when he was up to the middle.

Hyp. What was she he was in love with?

Trap. The devil.

Hyp. So, now for a very ugly likeness of my own face. [*Aside.*] What sort of a devil?

Trap. The damning sort——a woman.

Hyp. Had she no name?

Trap. Her Christian name was Donna Hypolita, but her proper name was Shittlecock.

Flo. How dy'e like that? [*Aside to* HYP.

Hyp. Pretty well. [*Aside to* FLO.] Was she handsome?

Trap. Umph——so, so.

Flo. How dy'e like that? [*To* HYP.

Hyp. Umph——so, so. [*To* FLO.] Had she wit?

Trap. Sometimes.

Hyp. Good humour?

Trap. Very seldom.

Hyp. Proud?

Trap. Ever.

Hyp. Was she honest?

Trap. Very proud.

Hyp. What, had she no good qualities?

Trap. Faith, I don't remember them.

Hyp. Ha! dy'e think she loved him?

Trap. If she did, 'twas as the cobler loved his wife.

Hyp. How's that?

Trap. Why, he beat her thrice a-day, and told his neighbours he loved her ne'er the worse, but he was resolved she should never know it.

Hyp. Did she use him so very ill?

Trap. Like a jade.

Flo. How d'ye do now? [*To* HYP.

Hyp. I don't know—methinks, I—But sure; what, was she not handsome, say ye?

Trap. A devilish tongue.

Hyp. Was she ugly?

Flo. Ay, say that at your peril. [*Aside.*

Hyp. What was she? how did she look?

Trap. Look! why, faith, the woman looked very well when she had a blush in her face.

Hyp. Did she often blush?

Trap. I never saw her.

Hyp. Never saw her! had she no charm? what made him love her?

Trap. Really, I can't tell.

Flo. How d'ye like the picture, madam? [*Aside.*

Hyp. Oh, oh, extremely well! the rogue has put me into a cold sweat. I am as humble as an offending lover.

Enter HOST.

Host. Gentlemen, your dinner's upon the table. [*Exit* HOST.

Hyp. That's well. Come, sir; at dinner I'll give you farther instructions how you may serve yourself and me.

Trap. Come, sir. [*To* FLORA.

Flo. Nay, dear sir! no ceremony.

Trap. Sir, your very humble servant. [*As they are going,* HYP. *stops them.*

Hyp. Come back; here's one I don't care should see me.

Trap. Sir, the dinner will be cold.

Hyp. Do you eat it hot, then; we are not hungry.

Trap. Sir, your very humble servant again. [*Exit* TRAP.

Flo. You seem concerned; who is it?

Hyp. My brother Octavio, as I live!—Come this way. [*They retire.*

Enter OCTAVIO *and a Servant.*

Oct. Jasper, run immediately to Rosara's woman; tell her I am just come to town; slip that note into her hand, and stay for an answer.

Flo. 'Tis he!

Re-enter HOST, *conducting* DON PHILIP.

Host. Here, sir, please to walk this way.

Flo. And Don Philip, by Jupiter!

D. Phi. When my servant comes, send him to me immediately.

Host. Yes, sir.

Hyp. Nay, then, it is time for us to make ready —*Alons!* [*Exeunt* HYP. *and* FLO.

Oct. Don Philip!

D. Phi. Dear Octavio!

Oct. What lucky point of the compass could blow us to one another so?

D. Phi. Faith a wind very contrary to my inclination; but the worst, I see, blows some good. I am overjoyed to see you. But what makes you so far from the army?

Oct. Who thought to have found you so far from Seville?

D. Phi. What do you do at Madrid?

Oct. Oh, friend, such an unfortunate occasion, and yet such a lucky discovery! such a mixture of joy and torment, no poor dog upon earth was ever plagued with.

D. Phi. Unriddle, pray.

Oct. Don't you remember, about six months ago, I wrote you word of a dear, delicious, sprightly creature, that I had bombarded for a whole summer to no purpose?

D. Phi. I remember.

Oct. That same silly, stubborn, charming angel, now capitulates.

D. Phi. Then she's taken.

Oct. I can't tell that; for, you must know, her perfidious father, contrary to his treaty with me, and her inclination, is going to——

D. Phi. Marry her to another——

Oct. Of a better estate than mine, it seems. She tells me here, he is within a day's march of her; begs me to come upon the spur to her relief; and, if I don't arrive too late, confesses she loves me well enough to open the gates, and let me enter the town before him. There's her express, read it——

HYPOLITA, FLORA, *and* TRAPPANTI *appear in the Balcony.*

Hyp. Hark! they are talking of a mistress—let us observe.

Flo. Trappanti, there's your old master.

Trap. Ay, I know him again; but I may chance to tell him, he did not know a good servant when he had him.

D. Phi. [*Reads.*] 'My father has concluded 'a match for me with one I never saw, and in- 'tends, in two days, to perfect it: the gentleman 'is expected every hour. In the mean time, if 'you know any friend that has a better title to 'me, advise him forthwith to put in his claim. I 'am almost out of my senses, which you will 'easily believe when I tell you, if such a one 'should make haste, I sha'nt have time to refuse 'him any thing.'

Hyp. How is this?

D. Phi. No name?

Oct. She never would trust it in a letter.

Flo. If this should be Don Philip's mistress?

Trap. Sir, you may take my word it is: I know the lady, and what the neighbours say of her.

Hyp. This was a lucky discovery—but hush.

D. Phi. What will you do in this case?

Oct. That I don't yet know: I am half distracted; I have just sent my servant to tell her I am come to town, and beg an opportunity to speak with her; I long to see her; I warrant the poor fool will be so soft and so humble, now she's in a fright.

D. Phi. What will you purpose at your meeting her?

Oct. I don't know; may be another meeting; at least it will come to a kind look, a kiss, good bye, and a sigh—Ah, if I can but persuade her to run away with me!

D. Phi. Consider——

Oct. Ah, so I do! What pleasure 'twould be, to have her steal out of her bed in a sweet moonshiny night; to hear her come pat, pat, pat, along in her slippers, with nothing but a thin silk night-gown loose about her, and in this tempting dress, to have her jump into my arms, breathless with fear; her panting bosom close to mine; then to stifle her with kisses, and curl myself about her smooth warm limbs, that breathe an healing odour from their pores, enough to make the senses ache, or fancy mad!

D. Phi. Octavio, I envy thee; thou art the happiest man in thy temper—

Oct. And thou art the most altered I ever knew. Pr'ythee, what makes thee so much upon the humdrum? Well, are my sister and you come to a right understanding yet? When do you marry?

Hyp. So, now I shall have my picture by another hand.

D. Phi. My condition, Octavio, is very much like your mistress's; she is going to marry the man she never saw, and I the woman.

Oct. 'Sdeath, you make me tremble! I hope 'tis not my mistress.

D. Phi. Thy mistress! that were an idle fear; Madrid's a wide place—or if it were, (she loving you) my friendship and my honour would oblige me to desist.

Oct. That's generous, indeed! but still you amaze me! Are you quite broke off with my sister? I hope she has given you no reason to forget her.

Hyp. Now, I tremble.

D. Phi. The most severe that ever beauty printed in the heart of man; a coldness unaccountable to sense.

Oct. Psha, dissembled.

Hyp. Ha!

D. Phi. I cann't think it; lovers are soon flattered into hope; but she appeared to me indifferent to so nice a point, that she has ruined me without the trouble of resolving it.

Flo. Well, men are fools.

Oct. And by this time she's in fits for your

leaving her; 'tis her nature; I know her from her bib and baby: I remember, at five years old, the vixen has fasted three days together, in pure spite to her governess.

Hyp. So!

Oct. Nothing could ever, in appearance, make her pleased or angry; always too proud to be obliged, too high to be affronted, and thought nothing so low as to seem fond of revenge: she had a stomach that could digest every thing but humility.

Hyp. Good lack, Mr Wit!

Oct. Yet, with all this, I have sometimes seen her good-natured, generous, and tender.

Hyp. There the rogue was civil again.

D. Phi. I have thought so, too. [*Sighing.*

Hyp. How can he speak of me with so much generosity?

Oct. For all her usage of you, I'll be racked if she did not love you.

D. Phi. I rather think she hated me: however, now 'tis past, and I must endeavour to think no more of her.

Hyp. Now I begin to hate myself.

Oct. Then you are determined to marry this other lady?

D. Phi. That's my business to Madrid.

Trap. Which shall be done to your hand.

D. Phi. Besides, I am now obliged by contract.

Oct. Then, (though she be my sister) may some jealous, old, ill-natured dog, revenge your quarrel to her.

Hyp. Thank you, sir.

D. Phi. Come, forget it.

Hyp. Come, we have seen enough of the enemy's motions, to know 'tis time for us to decamp.

[*Exeunt* HYPOLITA, FLORA, *and* TRAPPANTI.

Oct. With all my heart; let's go in, and drink your new mistress's health. When do you visit her?

D. Phi. I intended it immediately, but an unlucky accident hindered me: one of my servants fell sick upon the road, so that I am forced to make shift with one, and he is the most negligent, sottish rogue in nature; he has left my portmanteau, where all my writings and letters of concern are, behind him at the last town we lay at, so that I can't properly visit the lady, or her father, till I am able to assure them who I am.

Oct. Why don't you go back yourself to see for them?

D. Phi. I have sent my servant, for I am really tired: I was loath to appear so much concerned for them, lest the rascal should think it worth his while to run away with them.

Enter Servant to OCTAVIO.

Oct. How now?

Ser. Here's an answer, sir. [*Gives a letter.*

Oct. [*To D. Phi.*] My dear friend, I beg a thousand pardons; I must leave you this minute; the kind creature has sent for me. I am a soldier, you know, and orders must be obeyed; when I come off duty I'll immediately wait upon you.

D. Phi. You'll find me here, or hear of me. Adieu. Here, house! [*Exit* OCTAVIO.

Enter HOST.

Prithee, see if my servant be come yet.

Host. I believe he is, sir; is he not in blue?

D. Phi. Ay, where is the sot?

Host. Just refreshing himself with a glass at the gate.

D. Phi. Pray, tell the gentleman I'd speak with him.—[*Exit* HOST.] In all the necessaries of life, there is not a greater plague than servants. Hey, Soto!

Enter SOTO, *drunk.*

Soto. Did you please to—uch!—call, sir?

D. Phi. What's the reason, blockhead, I must always wait upon you thus?

Soto. Sir, I did not know any thing of it. I—I—came as soon as you se—se—se—sent for me.

D. Phi. And why not without sending, sir? Did you think I expected no answer to the business I sent you about?

Soto. Yes, sir—I did think you would be willing—that is—to have an account—so, I staid to take a glass at the door, because I would not be out of the way——huh!

D. Phi. You are drunk, rascal!——Where's the portmanteau?

Soto. Sir, I am here—if you please I'll give you the whole account how the matter is—huh!

D. Phi. My mind misgives me———speak, villain!— [*Strikes him.*

Soto. I will, sir, as soon as I can put my words into an intelligible order: I ar'n't running away, sir.

D. Phi. To the point, sirrah.

Soto. Not of your sword, dear sir!

D. Phi. Sirrah, be brief, or I'll murder you: where's the portmanteau?

Soto. Sir, as I hope to breathe, I made all the strictest search in the world, and drank at every house upon the road going and coming, and asked about it; and so, at last, as I was coming within a mile of the town here, I found, then——

D. Phi. What?

Soto. That it must certainly be lost.

D. Phi. Dog! d'ye think this must satisfy me? [*Beats him.*

Soto. Lord, sir, you won't hear reason——Are you sure you ha'n't it about you?——If I know any thing of it I wish I may be burnt!

D. Phi. Villain! your life can't make me satisfaction.

Soto. No, sir, that's hard—a man's life can't—for my part—I—I—

D. Phi. Why do I vent my rage against a sot, a clod of earth? I should accuse myself for trusting him.

Soto. Sir—I had rather—bought a portmanteau out of my own pocket, than have had such a life about it.

D. Phi. Be dumb!

Soto. Ahuh! Yes.

D. Phi. If this rascal had stole it, sure he would not have ventured to come back again.—I am confounded! Neither Don Manuel nor his daughter know me, nor any of his family. If I should not visit him till I can receive fresh letters from my father, he'll in the mean time think himself affronted by my neglect.——What shall I do?—Suppose I go and tell him my misfortune, and beg his patience till we can hear again from Seville. I must think. Hey, sot!

[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter HYPOLITA, FLORA, *and* TRAPPANTI.

Trap. Hold, sir; let me touch up your foretop a little.

Hyp. So! my gloves.—Well, Trappanti, you know your business, and if I marry the lady, you know my promise, too.

Trap. Sir, I shall remember them both——'Odso! I had like to have forgot—Here, house! a bason and wash-ball—I've a razor about me. Hey! [*Knocks.*

Hyp. What's the matter?

Trap. Sir, you are not shaved.

Hyp. Shaved!

Trap. Ever while you live, sir, go with a smooth chin to your mistress. Hey! [*Knocks.*

Hyp. This puppy does so plague me with his impertinence, I shall laugh out and discover myself.

Trap. Why, Diego!

Hyp. Psha! prithee don't stand fooling, we're in haste.

Flo. Ay, ay, shave another time.

Trap. Nay, what you please, sir; your beard is not much, you may wear it to-day.

[*Taking her by the chin.*

Flo. Ay, and to-morrow, too: pray, sir, will you see the coach ready, and put in the things.

Trap. Sir, I'll see the coach ready, and put in the things. [*Exit* TRAP.

Flo. Come, madam, courage! Now, let's do something for the honour of our sex, give a proof of our parts, and tell mankind we can contrive, fatigue, bustle, and bring about as well as the best of them.

Hyp. Well said, Flora! for the honour of our sex be it, then, and let the grave dons think themselves as wise as they please; but Nature knows there goes more wit to the management of some amours, than the hardest point in politics;

Therefore, to men the affair of state's confined.
Wisely to us the state of love's assigned,
As love's the weightier business of mankind.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—DON MANUEL'S *house.*

Enter ROSARA *and* VILETTA.

Vil. HEAR reason.

Ros. Talk of Octavio, then.

Vil. How do you know but the gentleman your father designs you for, may prove as pretty a fellow as he? If you should happen to like him as well, would not that do your business as well?

Ros. Do you expect Octavio should thank you for this?

Vil. The gentleman is no fool.

Ros. He'll hate any one that is not a friend to his love.

Vil. Hang them, say I: but can't one quench one's thirst without jumping into the river? Is there no difference between cooling and drowning? Octavio's now in a very good post——keep him there——I know the man; he understands the business he is in to a hair; but, faith, you'll spoil him; he's too pretty a fellow, and too poor a one for an husband.

Ros. Poor! he has enough.

Vil. That's the most he has.

Ros. 'Twill do our business.

Vil. But when you have no portion (which I'm afraid you won't have with him) he'll soon have enough of you, and how will your business be done then, pray?

Ros. Psha! you talk like a fool.

Vil. Come, come, if Octavio must be the man, I say let Don Philip be the husband.

Ros. I tell you, fool, I'll have no man but an husband, and no husband but Octavio: when you find I am weary of him, I'll give you leave to talk to me of somebody else.

Vil. In vain, I see——I have done, madam—one must have time to be wise: but, in the mean while, what do you resolve? positively not to marry Don Philip?

Ros. I don't know what I shall do, till I see Octavio. When did he say he would be here?

Vil. Oh! I dare not tell you, madam.

Ros. Why?

Vil. I am bribed to the contrary.

Ros. By whom?

Vil. Octavio; he just now sent me this lovely

piece of gold not to tell you what time he would be here.

Ros. Nay, then, Viletta, here are two pieces that are twice as lovely; tell me, when shall I see him?

Vil. Umph! these are lovely pieces, indeed. [*Smiling.*

Ros. When, Viletta?

Vil. Have you no more of them, madam?

Ros. Psha! there, take purse and all; will that content thee?

Vil. Oh, dear madam! I should be unconscionable to desire more; but, really, I was willing to have them all first. [*Curtseying.*

Ros. When will he come?

Vil. Why, the poor gentleman has been hankering about the house this quarter of an hour; but, I did not observe, madam, you were willing to see him till you had convinced me by so plain a proof.

Ros. Where's my father?

Vil. Fast asleep in the great chair.

Ros. Fetch him in, then, before he wakes.

Vil. Let him wake, his habit will protect him.

Ros. His habit!

Vil. Ay, madam, he's turned friar to come at you: if your father surprises us, I have a lie ready to back him.——Hist, Octavio! you may enter.

Enter OCTAVIO, *in a friar's habit.*

Oct. After a thousand frights and fears, do I live to see my dear Rosara once again, and kind?

Ros. What shall we do, Octavio? [*Looking kindly on him.*

Oct. Kind creature! Do! why, as lovers should do; what nobody can undo; let's run away this minute, tie ourselves in the church-knot, and defy fathers and mothers.

Ros. And fortunes, too?

Oct. Psha! we shall have it one day: they must leave their money behind them.

Ros. Suppose you first try my father's good-nature? You know he once encouraged your addresses.

Oct. First, let's be fast married: perhaps he may be good-natured when he can't help it: if we should try him now, 'twill but set him more upon his guard against us: since we are listed under Love, don't let us serve in a separate garrison. Come, come, stand to your arms, whip a suit of night-clothes into your pocket, and let's march off in a body together.

Ros. Ah! my father!

Oct. Dead!

Vil. To your function.

Enter DON MANUEL.

D. Man. Viletta!

Vil. Sir.

D. Man. Where's my daughter?

Vil. Hist! don't disturb her.

D. Man. Disturb her! Why, what's the matter?

Vil. She's at confession, sir.

D. Man Confession! I don't like that; a young woman ought to have no sins at all.

Vil. Ah! dear sir, there's no living without them.

D. Man. She's now at years of discretion.

Vil. There's the danger, sir; she's just of the tasting age: one has really no relish of a sin till fifteen.

D. Man. Ah! then, the jades have swinging stomachs. I find her aversion to the marriage I have proposed her has put her upon disobedient thoughts: there can be no confession without guilt.

Vil. Nor no pardon, sir, without confession.

D. Man. Fiddle faddle! I won't have her seem wicked. Hussy, you shall confess for her; I'll have her send her sins by you: you know them, I'm sure; but I'll know what the friar has got out of her——Save you, father!

Oct. Bless you, son!

D. Man. How now! What's become of Father Benedict? Why is not he here?

Vil. Sir, he is not well; and so desired this gentleman, his brother here, to officiate for him.

D. Man. He seems very young for a confessor.

Vil. Ay, sir; he has not been long at it.

Oct. Nor don't desire to be long in it: I wish I understand it well enough to make a fool of my old Don here. [*Aside.*

D. Man. Well, sir, how do you find the pulse of iniquity beat there? What sort of sin has she most stomach to?

Oct. Why, truly, sir, we have all frailties, and your daughter has had most powerful temptations.

D. Man. Nay, the devil has been very busy with her these two days.

Oct. She has told me a most lamentable story.

D. Man. Ten to one but this lamentable story proves a most damnable lie.

Oct. Indeed, son, I find, by her confession, that you are much to blame for your tyrannical government of her.

D. Man. Hey-day! what, has the jade been inventing sins for me, and confessing them instead of her own? Let me come—she shall be locked up till she repents them, too.

Oct. Son, forbear; this is now a corroboration of your guilt: this is inhuman.

D. Man. Sir, I have done; but pray, if you please, let's come to the point: what are these terrible cruelties that this tender lady accuses me of?

Oct. Nay, sir, mistake her not: she did not, with any malicious design, expose your faults, but as her own depended on them; her frailties were the consequence of your cruelty.

D. Man. Let's have them both, antecedent and consequent.

Oct. Why, she confessed her first maiden innocent affection had long been settled upon a young gentleman, whose love to her you had once encouraged, and after their most solemn vows of mutual faith, you have most barbarously broke in upon her hopes; and, to the utter ruin of her peace, contracted her to a man she never saw.

D. Man. Very good! I see no harm in all this.

Oct. Methinks the welfare of a daughter, sir, might be of weight enough to make you serious.

D. Man. Serious! so I am, sir. What a devil! must I needs be melancholy, because I have got her a good husband?

Oct. Her melancholy may tell you, sir, she can't think him a good one.

D. Man. Sir, I understand thinking better than she, and I'll make her take my word.

Oct. What have you to object against the man she likes?

D. Man. The man I like.

Oct. Suppose the unhappy youth she loves should throw himself distracted at your feet, and try to melt you into pity—

D. Man. Ay! that if he can.

Oct. You would not, sir, refuse to hear him?

D. Man. Sir, I shall not refuse him any thing that I am sure will signify nothing.

Oct. Were you one moment to reflect upon the pangs which separated lovers feel—were Nature dead in you, that thought might wake her.

D. Man. Sir, when I am asked to do a thing I have not a mind to do, my nature sleeps like a top.

Oct. Then I must tell you, sir, this obstinacy obliges me, as a churchman, to put you in mind of your duty, and to let you know, too, you ought to pay more reverence to our order.

D. Man. Sir, I am not afraid of the sin of marrying my daughter to the best advantage; and so, if you please, father, you may walk home again—when any thing lies upon my conscience, I'll send for you.

Oct. Nay, then, 'tis time to claim a lover's right, and to tell you, sir, the man that dares to ask Rosara from me, is a villain.

[*Throws off his disguise.*

Vil. So! here will be fine work! [*Aside.*

D. Man. Octavio! the devil!

Oct. You'll find me one, unless you do me speedy justice: since not the bonds of honour, nature, nor submissive reason, can oblige you, I am reduced to take a surer, shorter way, and force you to be just. I leave you, sir, to think on't. [*Walks about angrily.*

D. Man. Ah! here's a confessor! ah! that jade of mine!—and that other jade of my jade's!—Here has been rare doings!—Well! it shan't hold long; madam shall be noosed to-morrow morning——Ha! sir's in a great passion here, but it won't do—those long strides, Don, will never bring you the sooner to your mistress.——Rosara! step into that closet, and fetch my spectacles off o' the table there. Tum! tum!

[*Sings.*

Vil. I don't like the old gentleman's looks.

[*Aside.*

Ros. This obstinacy of yours, my dear father, you shall find runs in the family.

[*Exit* ROSARA, *and* DON MAN. *locks her in.*

D. Man. Tum! dum! dum! [*Sings.*

Oct. Sir, I would advise you, as your nearest friend, to defer this marriage for three days.

D. Man. Tum! dum! dum!

Vil. Sir, you have locked my mistress in.

[*Pertly.*

D. Man. Tum! dum! dum!

Vil. If you please to lend me the key, sir, I'll let her out.

D. Man. Tum! dum! dum!

Oct. You might afford me at least, as I am a gentleman, a civil answer, sir.

D. Man. Why, then, in one word, sir, you shall not marry my daughter; and, as you are a gentleman, I'm sure you won't think it good manners to stay in my house, when I submissively beg of you to walk out.

Oct. You are the father of my mistress, and something, sir, too old to answer, as you ought, this wrong; therefore, I'll look for reparation where I can with honour take it; and since you have obliged me to leave your house, I'll watch it carefully; I'll know who dares enter it. This, sir, be sure of; the man that offers at Rosara's love, shall have one virtue, courage, at least; I'll be his proof of that, and ere he steps before me, force him to deserve her. [*Exit.* OCT.

D. Man. Ah! poor fellow! he's mad now, and does not know what he would be at.—But, however, 'twill be no harm to provide against him—Who waits there?

Enter a Servant.

Run you for an alguazil, and bid your fellows arm themselves; I expect mischief at my door immediately: if Octavio offers any disturbance, knock him down, and bring him before me. [*Exit Ser.*

Vil. Hist! don't I hear my mistress's voice?

Ros. [*Within.*] Viletta!

Vil. Here, here, madam—Bless me! what's this?

[VILETTA *listens at the closet door, and* ROSARA *thrusts a billet to her through the key-hole.*]

Ha! a billet——to Octavio—a—hem.

[*Puts it into her bosom.*

D. Man. How now, hussy? What are you fumbling about that door for?

Vil. Nothing, sir; I was only peeping to see if my mistress had done prayers yet.

D. Man. Oh! she had as good let them alone; for she shall never come out till she has stomach

enough to fall to upon the man I have provided for her. But hark you, Mrs Modesty, was it you, pray, that let in that able comforter for my babe of grace there?

Vil. Yes, sir; I let him in. [*Pertly.*

D. Man. Did you so? Ha! then, if you please, madam, I'll let you go out—go—go—get a sheet of brown paper, pack up your things, and let me never see that damned ugly face of thine as long as I live.

Vil. Bless me! sir, you are in a strange humour, that you won't know when a servant does as she should do.

D. Man. Thou art strangely impudent.

Vil. Only the farthest from it in the world, sir.

D. Man. Then I am strangely mistaken; didst not thou own just now thou lettest him in?

Vil. Yes—but 'twas in disguise—for I did not design you should see him, because I know you did not care my mistress should see him.

D. Man. Ha!

Vil. And I knew, at the same time, she had a mind to see him.

D. Man. Ha!

Vil. And you know, sir, that the sin of loving him had lain upon her conscience a great while; so I thought it high time she should come to a thorough confession.

D. Man. Ha!

Vil. So upon this, sir, as you see—I—I—I let him in, that's all.

D. Man. Nay, if it be so as thou sayest, he was a proper confessor, indeed.

Vil. Ay, sir, for you know this was not a spiritual father's business.

D. Man. No, no; this matter was utterly carnal.

Vil. Well, sir, and judge you now if my mistress is not beholden to me?

D. Man. Oh! extremely; but you'll go to hell, my dear, for all this—though, perhaps, you'll chuse that place: I think you never much cared for your husband's company; and, if I don't mistake, you sent him to heaven in the old road. Hark! what noise is that? [*Noise without*

Vil. So, Octavio's pushing his fortune—he'll have a wife or a halter, that's positive—I'll go see. [*Exit* VILETTA.

Enter a Servant, hastily.

D. Man. How now?

Ser. O, sir, Octavio has set upon a couple of gentlemen just as they were alighting out of a coach at the door; one of them, I believe, is he that is to marry my young mistress; I heard them name her name; I'm afraid there will be mischief, sir: there they are, all at it, helter, skelter!

D. Man. Run into the hall, take down my back, breast, and head-piece; call an officer; raise the neighbours; give me my great gun; I'll shoot him out of the garret-window.

[*Exit* DON MANUEL.

Enter HYPOLITA *and* FLORA, *putting up their swords,* OCTAVIO *in the Alguazil's hands, and* TRAPPANTI.

Hyp. Bring him along—This is such an insolence! damn it! at this rate, no gentleman can walk the streets.

Flo. I suppose, sir, your business was more with our pockets than our persons. Are our things safe?

Trap. Ay, sir, I secured them as soon as ever I saw his sword out; I guessed his design, and scoured off with the portmanteau.

Hyp. I'll know now who set you on, sir.

Oct. Prithee, young man, don't be troublesome; but thank the rascal, that knocked me down, for your escape.

Hyp. Sir, I'd have you know, if you had not been knocked down, I should have owed my escape to the same arm you would have owed the reward for your insolence. Pray, sir, what are you? who knows you?

Oct. I'm glad, at least, to find it is not Don Philip that's my rival. [*Aside.*

Ser. Sir, my master knows the gentleman very well; he belongs to the army.

Hyp. Then, sir, if you'd have me use you like a gentleman, I desire your meaning of those familiar questions you asked me at the coach-side.

Oct. Faith, young gentleman, I'll be very short: I love the lady you are to marry, and if you don't quit your pretences in two hours, it will entail perpetual danger upon you and your family.

Hyp. Sir, if you please, the danger's equal—for, rot me, if I am not as fond of cutting your throat, as you can be of mine!

Oct. If I were out of these gentlemen's hands, on my word, sir, you should not want an opportunity.

Hyp. O, sir! these gentlemen shall protect neither of us; my friend and I will be your bail from them.

Flo. Ay, sir, we'll bail you; and, if you please sir, bring your friend, I'm his. Damn me! what! d'ye think you have boys to deal with?

Oct. Sir, I ask your pardon, and shall desire to kiss your hands, about an hour hence, at—— [*Whispers.*

Flo. Very well, sir, we'll meet you.

Hyp. Release the gentleman.

Ser. Sir, we dare not, without my master's order. Here he is, sir.

Enter DON MANUEL.

D. Man. How now, bully confessor? What! in limbo?

Hyp. Sir, Don Ferdinando de las Torres, whom I am proud to call my father, commanded me to deliver this into the hands of his most dear and

worthy friend, Don Manuel Grimaldi, and, at the same time, gave me assurance of a kind reception.

D. Man. Sir, you are thrice welcome; let me embrace ye. I'm overjoyed to see you—Your friend, sir?

Hyp. Don Pedro Velada, my near relation, who has done me the honour of his company from Seville, sir, to assist at the solemnity of his friend's happiness.

D. Man. Sir, you are welcome; I shall be proud to know you.

Flo. You do me honour, sir.

D. Man. I hope you are not hurt, gentlemen.

Hyp. Not at all, sir; thanks to a little skill in the sword.

D. Man. I am glad of it; however, give me leave to interrupt our business for a moment, till I have done you justice on the person that offered you this insolence at my gate.

Hyp. Your pardon, sir; I understand he is a gentleman, and beg you would not let my honour suffer, by receiving a lame reparation from the law.

D. Man. A pretty mettled fellow, faith!—I must not let him fight though. [*Aside.*] But, sir, you don't know, perhaps, how deeply this man is your enemy.

Hyp. Sir, I know more of his spleen and folly than you imagine, which, if you please to discharge him, I'll acquaint you with.

D. Man. Discharge him! Pray consider, sir—
[*They seem to talk.*

Enter VILLETA, *and slips a note into* OCTAVIO'S *hand.*

Vil. Send your answer to me. [*Exit* VIL.

Oct. [*Aside.*] Now for a beam of hope in a tempest! [*Reads.*] 'I charge you, don't hazard 'my ruin and your own, by the madness of a 'quarrel: the closet window, where I am, is but 'a step to the ground: be at the back-door of 'the garden exactly at the close of the evening, 'where you will certainly find one that may put 'you in the best way of getting rid of a rival.' Dear, kind creature! Now if my little don's fit of honour does but hold out to bail me, I am the happiest dog in the universe.

D. Man. Well, sir, since I find your honour is dipt so deep in the matter—here—release the gentleman.

Flo. So, sir, you have your freedom; you may depend upon us.

Hyp. You will find us punctual.——Sir, your servant.

Oct. So, now, I have a very handsome occasion to put off the tilt, too. Gentlemen, I ask your pardon; I begin to be a little sensible of the rashness I committed; and, I confess, your manner of treating me has been so very much like men of honour, that I think myself obliged, from the same principle, to assure ye, that, though I love Rosara equal to my life, yet no consideration shall persuade me to be a rude enemy, even to my rival. I thank you for my freedom, and am your humble servant. [*Exit* OCT.

Hyp. Your servant, sir——I think we released my brother very handsomely; but I ha'n't done with him. [*Aside to* FLORA.

D. Man. What can this sudden turn of civility mean? I'm afraid 'tis but a cloak to some new roguery he has in his head.

Hyp. I don't know how old it may be, but my servant here has discovered a piece of villainy of his that exceeds any other he can be capable of.

D. Man. Is it possible? Why would you let him go, then?

Hyp. Because I'm sure he can do me no harm, sir.

D. Man. Pray, be plain, sir; what is it?

Hyp. This fellow can inform you—for, to say truth, he's much better at a lie. [*Aside.*

D. Man. Come hither, friend; pray, what is this business?

Hyp. Ay, what was that you overheard between Octavio and another gentleman at the inn where we alighted?

Trap. Why, sir, as I was unbuckling my portmanteau in the yard there, I observed Octavio and another spark very familiar with your honour's name; upon which, sir, I pricked up the ears of my curiosity, and took in all their discourse.

D. Man. Pray, who was that other spark, friend?

Trap. A brother rake, sir; a damned sly-looked fellow.

D. Man. So!

Flo. How familiarly the rogue treats his old master! [*Aside.*

Hyp. Poor Don Philip! [*Aside.*

Trap. Says one of them, says he, No, damn him, the old rogue (meaning you, sir) will never let you have her by fair means; however, says Octavio, I'll try soft words; but, if those won't do, bully him, says t'other.

D. Man. Ah, poor dog! but that would not do neither, sir; he has tried them both to-day to no purpose.

Trap. Say you so, sir! then you'll find what I say is all of a piece. Well, and if neither of these will do, says he, you must e'en tilt the young prig, your rival, (meaning you, then, sir).
[*To* HYP.

D. Man. Ha, ha! that, I perceive, my spark did not greatly care for.

Trap. No, sir; that, he found, was catching a Tartar. 'Sbud! my master fought like a lion, sir.

Hyp. Truly, I did not spare him.

Flo. No, faith—after he was knocked down.
[*Aside.*

Trap. But now, sir, comes the cream of the roguery.

Hyp. Pray observe, sir.

Trap. Well, says Slylooks, and if all these fail, I have a rare trick in my head, that will certainly defer the marriage for three or four days at least, and, in that time, the devil's in't if you don't find an opportunity to run away with her.

D. Man. Would you so, Mr Dog? but he'll be hanged.

Hyp. O, sir, you'll find we were mighty fortunate in this discovery.

D. Man. Pray, sir, let's hear: what was this trick to be, friend?

Trap. Why, sir, to alarm you, that my master was an impostor, and that Slylooks was the true Don Philip, sent by his father, from Seville, to marry your daughter; upon which (says he) the old put (meaning you again, sir), will be so bamboozled, that——

D. Man. But pray, sir, how did young Mr Coxcomb conclude that the old put was to believe all this? Had they no sham proofs that they proposed to bamboozle me with, as you call it?

Trap. You shall hear, sir; (the plot was pretty well laid, too) I'll pretend, says he, that the rascal, your rival, (meaning you, then, sir), has robbed me of my portmanteau, where I had put all my jewels, money, and letters of recommendation from my father: we are neither of us known in Madrid, says he, so that a little impudence, and a grave face, will certainly set those dogs a snarling, while you run away with the bone. That's all, sir.

D. Man. Impudent rogue!

Hyp. What think ye, sir? Was not this business pretty handsomely laid?

Flo. Faith, it might have wrought a very ridiculous consequence.

D. Man. Why, truly, if we had not been forearmed by this discovery, for aught I know, Mr Dog might have ran away with the bone indeed; but, if you please, sir, since these ingenious gentlemen are so pert upon the matter, we'll e'en let them see, that you and I have wit enough to do our business, and e'en clap up the wedding tomorrow morning.

Hyp. Sir, you are too obliging—but will your daughter, think ye, be prevailed with?

D. Man. Sir, I'll prepare her this minute—— It's pity, methinks, we relieved this bully, tho'—

Hyp. Not at all, sir; I don't suppose he can have the impudence to pursue his design; or, if he should, sir—now we know him beforehand.

D. Man. Nay, that's true, as you say——but therefore, methinks, I'd have him come: I love mightily to laugh in my sleeve at an impudent rogue, when I'm sure he can do me no harm.—Udsflesh! if he comes, the dog shan't know whether I believe him or not—I'll try if the old put can bamboozle him or no.

Hyp. 'Egad, sir, you're in the right on't; knock him down with his own weapon.

Trap. And, when he's down, I have a trick to keep him so.

Flo. The devil's in it, if we don't maul this rascal among us.

D. Man. A son of a whore—I am sorry we let him go so soon, faith.

Flo. We might as well have held him a little.

Hyp. Really, sir, upon second thoughts, I wish we had—his excusing the challenge so abruptly, makes me fancy he is in hopes of carrying his point some other way—did not you observe your daughter's woman whisper him!

D. Man. Humh!

Flo. They seem very busy, that's certain.

Hyp. I cannot say about what——but it will be worth our while to be upon our guard.

D. Man. I am alarmed.

Hyp. Where is your daughter at this time?

D. Man. I think she's pretty safe—but I'll go make her sure.

Flo. 'Twill be no harm to look about ye, sir. Where's her woman?

D. Man. I'll be upon her presently—she shall be searched for intelligence—you'll excuse me, gentlemen.

Hyp. Sir, the occasion presses you.

D. Man. If I find all safe, I'll return immediately; and then, if you please, we'll run over some old stories of my good friend Fernando.—Your servant.

[*Exit* DON MANUEL.

Hyp. Sir, your most humble servant—Trappanti, thou art a rare fellow! thou hast an admirable face, and, when thou diest, I'll have thy whole statue cast all in the same metal.

Flo. 'Twere pity the rogue was not bred to the law.

Trap. So 'tis, indeed, sir—a man should not praise himself; but if I had been bred to the gown, I dare venture to say I become a lie as well as any man that wears it.

Hyp. Nay, now, thou art modest—but, sirrah, we have more work for ye: you must get in with the servants, attack the lady's woman; there, there's ammunition, rogue!—[*Gives him money.*] —Now, try if you can make a breach into the secrets of the family.

Trap. Ah, sir, I warrant you—I could never yet meet with a woman that was this sort of pistol-proof—I have known a handful of these do more than a barrel of gun-powder: the French charge all their cannon with them; the only weapon in the world, sir. I remember my old master's father used to say, the best thing in the Greek grammar was——*Arguriois lonchasy machou, kai panta crateseis.*

[*Exit* TRAPPANTI.

Hyp. Well, dear Flora, let me kiss thee: thou hast done thy part to a miracle.

Flo. 'Egad, I think so: didn't I bear up briskly? Now, if Don Philip should come while my blood's up, let him look to himself.

Hyp. We shall find him a little tough, I believe: for, poor gentleman! he is like to meet with a very odd reception from his father-in-law.

Flo. Nay, we have done his business there, I believe.

Hyp. How glibly the old gentleman swallowed Trappanti's lie!

Flo. And how rarely the rogue told it!

Hyp. And how soon it worked with him! for, if you please, says he, we'll let him see that we have wit enough to do our business, and clap up the wedding to-morrow morning.

Flo. Ah, we have it all the way——well, what must we do next?

Hyp. Why, now for the lady—I'll be a little brisk upon her, and then——

Flo. Victoria! [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Continued.*

Enter VILETTA *hastily,* DON MANUEL, *and* TRAPPANTI *behind, observing her.*

Vil. So, with much ado, I have given the old Don the slip; he has dangled with me through every room in the house, high and low, up stairs and down, as close to my tail as a great boy hankering after one of his mother's maids. Well—now we will see what monsieur Octavio says.

[*Takes a letter from her bosom.*

Trap. Hist! there she is, and alone. When the devil has any thing to do with a woman, sir, that's his time to take her. Stand close.

D. Man. Ah, he's at work already—there's a letter.

Trap. Leave her to me, sir; I'll read it.

Vil. Ha, two pistoles! well, I'll say that for him, the man knows his business; his letters always come post-paid.

[*While she is reading,* TRAPPANTI *steals behind, and looks over her shoulder.*]

'Dear Viletta, convey the inclosed immediately to your mistress, and, as you prize my life, use all possible means to keep the old gentleman from the closet, till you are sure she is safe out of the window. Your real friend.'

Trap. Octavio!

[*Reading.*

Vil. Ah!

[*Shrieking.*

Trap. Madam, your ladyship's most humble servant.

Vil. You're very impertinent, methinks, to look over other people's letters.

Trap. Why, I never read a letter in my life without looking it over.

Vil. I don't know any business you had to look upon this.

Trap. There's the thing——your not knowing that, has put you into this passion.

Vil. You may chance to have your bones broke, Mr Coxcomb.

Trap. Sweet honeycomb! don't be so waspish; or, if I keep your counsel, d'ye see, I don't know why my bones may'nt keep their places; but if I peach, whose bones will pay for it, then?

Vil. Ha! the fool says true; I had better wheedle him.

[*Aside.*

Trap. My dear queen! don't be frighted—I come as a friend; now, be serious.

Vil. Well, what would you have?

Trap. Don't you love money above any thing in the world—except one?

Vil. I except nothing.

Trap. Very good—and pray, how many letters do you expect to be paid for when Octavio has married your mistress, and has no occasion to write to her? Look you, child, though you are of counsel for him, use him like a lawyer; make difficulties where there are none, that he may fee you where he needs not. Dispatch is out of practice; delay makes long bills: stick to it; once get him his cause, there's no more advice to be paid for.

Vil. What do you mean?

Trap. Why, that, for the same reason, I have no mind to put an end to my own fees by marrying my master: while they are lovers, they will always have occasion for a confidant and a pimp; but when they marry—*serviteur*—good night vails; our harvest is over. What d'ye think of me, now?

Vil. Why, I like what you say very well; but I don't know, my friend—to me that same face of yours looks like the title-page to a whole volume of roguery—what is it you drive at?

Trap. Money, money, money! Don't you let your mistress marry Octavio: I'll do my best to hinder my master. Let you and I lay our heads together to keep them asunder, and so make a penny of them all three.

Vil. Look you, seignior, I'll meet you half way, and confess to you I had made a rough draught of this project myself: but say I should agree with you to go on upon't, what security can you give me for performance of articles?

Trap. More than bond or judgment—my person in custody.

Vil. Ah, that won't do.

Trap. No, my love! why, there's many a sweet bit in it—taste it.

[*Offering to kiss her, she puts him away.*

Vil. No.

Trap. Faith, you must give me one.

Vil. Indeed, my friend, you are too ugly for me; though I am not handsome myself, I love to play with those that are.

Trap. And yet, methinks, an honest fellow, of my size and complexion, in a careless posture, playing the fool thus with his money——

[*Tosses a purse, she catches it, and he kisses her.*

Vil. Pshaw! Well, if I must, come, then—— to see how a woman may be deceived at first sight of a man!

Trap. Nay, then, take a second thought of me, child. [*Again.*

D. Man. Ha! this is laying their heads together indeed!

[*Behind.*

Vil. Well, now get you gone; I have a letter to give to my mistress. Slip into the garden—I'll come t'ye presently.

Trap. Is't from Octavio?

Vil. Pshaw! begone, I say.

[*Snatches the letter.*

Trap. Hist!

[TRAPPANTI *beckons* DON MANUEL, *who goes softly behind.*

Vil. Madam! madam! ha!

D. Man. Now, strumpet, give me the other letter, or I'll murder you.

[*Draws.*

Vil. Ah lud! oh lud! there!

[*Squeaking.*

D. Man. Now, we shall see what my gentleman would be at—[*Reads.*]—'My dear angel!'—Ha! soft and impudent!—'Depend upon me 'at the garden door, by seven this evening: pity 'my impatience, and believe you can never come 'too soon to the arms of your

'OCTAVIO.'

Ah! now would this rampant rogue make no more of debauching my gentlewoman, than the gentlewoman would of him, if he were to debauch her. Hold—let's see; what does he say here—um—um!

[*Reads to himself.*

Vil. What a sot was I to believe this old fool durst do me any harm! but a fright's the devil. Would I had my letters again!—though 'tis no great matter: for, as my friend Trappanti says, delaying Octavio's business is doing my own.

D. Man. [*Reading.*] Um—um! sure she is safe out of the window. Oh, there the mine is to be sprung, then! The gentleman makes a warm siege on't, in troth, and, one would think, was in a fair way of carrying the place, while he has such an admirable spy in the middle of the town. Now, were I to act like a true Spaniard, I ought to rip up this jade for more intelligence; but I'll be wise; a bribe and a lie will do my business a great deal better. Now, gentlewoman, what do ye think, in your conscience, I ought to do to ye?

Vil. What I think in my conscience, you'll not do to me—make a friend of me—you see, sir, I dare be an enemy.

D. Man. Nay, thou dost not want courage; I'll say that for thee; but is it possible any thing can make thee honest?

Vil. What do you suppose would make me otherwise?

D. Man. Money.

Vil. You have nicked it.

D. Man. And would the same sum make thee surely one as t'other?

Vil. That I cannot say, neither; one must be heavier than t'other, or else the scale cannot turn.

D. Man. Say it be so, would that turn thee into my interest?

Vil. The very minute you turn into mine, sir: judge yourself—here stands Octavio with a letter, and two pieces to give it to my mistress—there stand you with a hem! and four pieces—where would the letter go, d'ye think?

D. Man. There needs no more—I'm convinced, and will trust thee—there's to encourage thee before-hand, and, when thou bringest me a letter of Octavio's, I'll double the sum.

Vil. Sir, I'll do it—and will take care he shall write presently.

[*Aside.*

D. Man. Now, as you expect I should believe you, begone, and take no notice of what I have discovered.

Vil. I am dumb, sir——

[*Exit* VILETTA.

D. Man. So, this was done like a wise general: and, now I have taken the counterscarp, there may be some hopes of making the town capitulate. Rosara!

[*Unlocks the closet.*

Enter ROSARA.

Ros. Did you call me, sir?

D. Man. Ay, child. Come, be cheerful; what I have to say to you, I'm sure ought to make you so.

Ros. He has certainly made some discovery; Viletta did not cry out for nothing—What shall I do—dissemble? [*Aside.*

D. Man. In one word, set your heart at rest, for you shall marry Don Philip this very evening.

Ros. That's but short warning for the gentleman, as well as myself; for I don't know that we ever saw one another. How are you sure he will like me?

D. Man. Oh, as for that matter, he shall see you presently; and I have made it his interest to like you—but if you are still positively resolved upon Octavio, I'll make but few words—pull off your clothes, and go to him.

Ros. My clothes, sir!

D. Man. Ay, for the gentleman shan't have a rag with you.

Ros. I am not in haste to be starved, sir.

D. Man. Then let me see you put on your best airs, and receive Don Philip as you should do.

Ros. When do you expect him, sir?

D. Man. Expect him, sir!—he has been here this hour—I only staid to get you out of the sullens——He's none of your hum-drums—all life and mettle! 'Odzooks, he has the courage of a cock! a duel's but a dance to him: he has been at sa! sa!—sa! for you already.

Ros. Well, sir, I shan't be afraid of his courage, since I see you are resolved he shall be the man—He shall find me a woman, sir; let him win me and wear me as soon as you please.

D. Man. Ah, now, thou art my own girl! hold but in this humour one quarter of an hour, and I'll toss thee t'other bushel of doubloons into thy portion——Here, bid a—Come, I'll fetch him myself—She's in a rare cue i'faith! ah, if he does but nick her now! [*Exit* DON MAN.

Ros. Now, I have but one card to play——if that don't hit, my hopes are crushed indeed: if this young spark be not a downright coxcomb, I may have a trick to turn all yet——Dear fortune! give him but common sense, I'll make it impossible for him to like me—Here they come—

[*Walks carelessly, and sings.*

I'll rove and I'll range——

Enter DON MANUEL *and* HYPOLITA.

Hyp. *I'll love and I'll change*—[Sings with her.

D. Man. Ah, he has her, he has her!

Hyp. Madam, I kiss your ladyship's hands: I find, by your gaiety, you are no stranger to my business. Perhaps you expected I should have come in, with a grave bow and a long speech; but my affairs are in a little more haste; therefore, if you please, madam, we'll cut the work short; be thoroughly intimate at the first sight, and see one another's humours in a quarter of an hour, as well as if we had been weary of them this twelvemonth.

D. Man. Ah!

Ros. Troth, sir, I think you are very much in the right. The sooner I see you, the sooner I shall know whether I like you or not.

Hyp. Psha! as for that matter, you'll find me a very fashionable husband; I shan't expect my wife to be very fond of me.

Ros. But I love to be in the fashion too, sir, in taking the man I have a mind to.

Hyp. Say you so? why, then, take me as soon as you please.

Ros. I only stay for my mind, sir: as soon as ever that comes to me, upon my word I'm ready to wait upon you.

Hyp. Well, madam, a quarter of an hour shall break no squares——Sir, if you'll find an occasion to leave us alone, I see we shall come to a right understanding presently.

D. Man. I'll do it, sir. Well, child, speak in thy conscience, is not he a pretty fellow?

Ros. The gentleman's very well, sir; but, methinks, he is a little too young for a husband.

D. Man. Young! a fiddle! you'll find him old enough for a wife, I warrant ye. Sir, I must beg your pardon for a moment: but if you please, in the mean time, I'll leave you my daughter, and so pray make your best of her.

[*Exit* DON MANUEL.

Hyp. I thank ye, sir. [HYPOLITA *stands some time mute, looks carelessly at* ROSARA, *and she smiles as in contempt of him.*] Why, now, methinks, madam, you had as good put on a real smile, for I am doomed to be the happy man, you see.

Ros. So my father says, sir.

Hyp. I'll take his word.

Ros. A bold man——but he'll break it.

Hyp. He won't.

Ros. He must.

Hyp. Whether he will or no?

Ros. He can't help it now.

Hyp. How so, pray?

Ros. Because he has promised you, you shall marry me; and he has always promised me, I should marry the man I could love.

Hyp. Ay—that is, he would oblige you to love the man you should marry.

Ros. The man that I marry will be sure of my love; but for the man that marries me——mercy on him!

Hyp. No matter for that; I'll marry you.

Ros. Come, I don't believe you are so ill-natured.

Hyp. Why, dost thou not like me, child?

Ros. Um——No.

Hyp. What's the matter?

Ros. The old fault.

Hyp. What?

Ros. I don't like you.

Hyp. Is that all?

Ros. No.

Hyp. That's hard——the rest?

Ros. That you won't like.

Hyp. I'll stand it——try me.

Ros. Why, then, in short, I like another:—another man, sir, has got into my head, and has made such work there, you'll never be able to set me to rights as long as you live—What d'ye think of me now, sir? Won't this serve for a reason why you should not marry me?

Hyp. Um—the reason is a pretty smart sort of a reason, truly: but it won't do—To be short with ye, madam, I have reason to believe I shall be disinherited if I don't marry you.

Ros. And what have you reason to believe you shall be, if you do marry me?

Hyp. In the Spanish fashion, I suppose, jealous to a degree.

Ros. You may be in the English fashion, and something else to a degree.

Hyp. Oh, if I have not courage enough to prevent that, madam, let the world think me, in the

English city fashion, content to a degree. Now, here in Spain, child, we have such things as back rooms, barred windows, hard fare, poison, daggers, bolts, chains, and so forth.

Ros. Ay, sir; and there are such things as bribes, plots, shams, letters, lies, walls, ladders, keys, confidants, and so forth.

Hyp. Hey! a very complete regiment indeed! what a world of service might these do in a quarter of an hour, with a woman's courage at the head of them! Really, madam, your dress and humour have the prettiest loose French air, something so quality, that, let me die, madam, I believe in a month I should be apt to poison ye.

Ros. So, it takes! [*Aside.*] And, let me die, sir, I believe I should be apt to deserve it of ye.

Hyp. I shall certainly do it.

Ros. It must be in my breakfast, then——for I should certainly run away before the wedding-dinner came up.

Hyp. That's over-acted; but I'll startle her. [*Aside.*] Then I must tell you, madam, a Spanish husband may be provoked as well as a wife.

Ros. My life on't, his revenge is not half so sweet! and if she's provoked, 'tis a thousand to one but she licks her lips before she's nailed in her coffin!

Hyp. You are very gay, madam.

Ros. I see nothing to fright me, sir, for I cannot believe you'll marry me now——I have told you my humour: if you like it, you have a good stomach.

Hyp. Why, truly, you may probably lie a little heavy upon it, but I can better digest you than poverty: As for your inclination, I'll keep your body honest, however; that shall be locked up; and if you don't love me, then—I'll stab you.

Ros. With what? your words? it must be those you say after the priest, then—You'll be able to do very little that will reach my heart, I assure ye.

Hyp. Well, well, madam, you need not give yourself half this trouble; I am heartily convinced you will make the damned'st wife that ever poor dog of a husband wished at the devil: but really, madam, you are very unfortunate; for, notwithstanding all the mighty pains you have taken, you have met with a positive coxcomb, that's still just fool and stout enough to marry you.

Ros. 'Twill be a proof of your courage, indeed.

Hyp. Madam, you rally very well, 'tis confessed: but now, if you please, we'll be a little serious.

Ros. I think I am—What does he mean? [*Aside.*

Hyp. Come, come, this humour is as much affected as my own: I could no more bear the qualities you say you have, than I know you are guilty of them: your pretty arts in striving to avoid, have charmed me. Had you been precisely coy, or over-modest, your virtue, then, might have been suspected: your shewing me what a man of sense should hate, convinces me you know, too, what he ought to love; and she, that's once so well acquainted with the charms of virtue, never can forsake it. I both admire and love you now; you have made, what only was my interest, my happiness. At my first view, I woo'd you only to secure a sordid fortune, which now I, overjoyed, could part with, nay, with my life, with any thing, to purchase your unrivalled heart.

Ros. Now I am plunged indeed! [*Aside.*] Well, sir, I own you have discovered me; and, since you have obliged me to be serious, I now, from my sincerity, protest my heart's already given, from whence no power nor interest shall recall it.

Hyp. I hate my interest, and would owe no power or title, but to love.

Ros. If, as you say, you think I find a charm in virtue, you'll know, too, there's a charm in constancy. You ought to scorn me, should I flatter you with hope, since now you are assured I must be false before I can be yours. If what I have said seems cold, or too neglectful of your merit, call it not ingratitude or scorn, but faith unmoved, and justice to the man I love.

Hyp. Death! I have fooled away my hopes: she must consent, and soon, or yet I'm lost. [*Aside.*

Ros. He seems a little thoughtful; if he has honour, there may yet be hopes. [*Aside.*

Hyp. It must—it can be only so; that way I make her sure, and serve my brother, too. [*Aside.*] Well, madam, to let you see I'm a friend to love, though love's an enemy to me, give me but a seeming proof that Octavio is the undisputed master of your heart, and I'll forego the power your father's obligations give me, and throw my hopes into his arms with you.

Ros. Sir, you confound me with this goodness! A proof! is it possible? will that content ye? Command me to what proof you please; or, if you'll trust to my sincerity, let these tears of joy convince you. Here, on my knees, by all my hopes of peace, I swear——

Hyp. Hold! swear never to make a husband, but Octavio.

Ros. I swear, and Heaven befriend me as I keep this vow inviolate!

Hyp. Rise, madam; and now receive a secret which I need not charge you to be careful of, since, as well your quiet as my own depends upon it. A little common prudence between us, in all probability, before night, may make us happy in our secret wishes.

Ros. What mean you, sir? sure you are some angel sent to my deliverance.

Hyp. Truly, madam, I have been often told so; but, like most angels of my kind, there is a mortal man in the world, who, I have a great mind should know that I am—but a woman.

Ros. A woman! are not you Don Philip?

Hyp. His shadow, madam, no more; I just run before him—nay, and after him, too.

Ros. I am confounded—a woman!

Hyp. As arrant a woman, from top to toe, as ever man run mad for.

Ros. Nay, then, you are an angel.

Hyp. Perhaps, you'll think me little a kin to one at least. Octavio, madam, your lover, is my brother; my name Hypolita; my story you shall know at leisure.

Ros. Hypolita! nay, then, from what you've said, and what I have heard Octavio say of you, I guess your story: but this was so extravagant a thought.

Hyp. That's true, madam, it—it—it was a little round about, indeed; I might have found a nearer way to Don Philip; but these men are such testy things, they can never stay one's time; always in haste, just as they please; now we are to look kind, then grave; now soft, then sincere—Fiddlestick! when, may be, a woman has a new suit of knots on her head—so, if we happen not to be in their humour, forsooth, then we coquette, and are proud and vain, and then they are to turn to fools, and tell us so; then, one pouts and the other huffs; and you see there is such a plague, that——I don't know——one does not care to be rid of them neither.

Ros. A very generous confession!

Hyp. Well, madam, now you know me thoroughly, I hope you'll think me as fit for a husband as another woman.

Ros. Then I must marry ye?

Hyp. Aye, and speedily, too; for I expect Don Philip every moment, and, if we don't look about us, he will be apt to forbid the banns.

Ros. If he comes, what shall we do?

Hyp. I am provided for him——Here comes your father——he's secure. Come, put on a dumb, consenting air, and leave the rest to me.

Ros. Well, this getting the better of my wise papa won't be the least part of my satisfaction.

Enter DON MANUEL.

D. Man. So, son, how does the battle go now? Have you cannonaded stoutly? Does she cry quarter?

Hyp. My dear father! let me embrace your knees; my life's too poor to make you a return; you have given me an empire, sir; I would not change to be grand signior.

D. Man. Ah, rogue! he has done it, he has done it; he has her! ha! is't not so, my little champion?

Hyp. Victoria, sir! the town's my own. Look here! and here, sir! thus have I been plundering this half hour; and thus, and thus, and thus, till my lips ache again. [*Kisses her.*

D. Man. Ah! give me the great coin——I cannot bear my joy——You rampant rogue! could not ye give the poor girl a quarter of an hour's warning?

Hyp. My charmer! [*Embracing* ROSARA.

D. Man. Ah, my cares are over!

Hyp. Oh, I told you, sir; hearts and towns are never too strong for a surprise.

D. Man. Prithee, be quiet, I hate the sight of ye—Rosara! come hither, you wicked thing; come hither, I say.

Ros. I am glad to see you well pleased, sir.

D. Man. Oh, I cannot live— I cannot live it; it pours upon me like a torrent; I am as full as a bumper——it runs over at my eyes; I shall choke——Answer me two questions, and kill me outright.

Ros Any thing that will make you more pleased, sir.

D. Man. Are you positively resolved to marry this gentleman?

Ros. Sir, I am convinced 'tis the first match that can make me happy.

D. Man. I am the miserablest dog alive——and I warrant you are willing to marry him tomorrow morning, if I should ask you?

Ros. Sooner, sir, if you think it necessary.

D. Man. Oh, this malicious jade has a mind to destroy me all at once——Ye cursed toad! how did you do to get in with her so?

[*To* HYPOLITA.

Ros. Come, sir, take heart; your joy won't be always so troublesome.

D. Man. You lie, hussy, I shall be plagued with it as long as I live.

Hyp. You must not live above two hours, then. [*Aside.*

D. Man. I warrant this raking rogue will get her with child, too—I shall have a young squab Spaniard upon my lap, that will so grandpapa me! Well, what want you, gloomy face?

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, here's a gentleman desires to speak with you; he says he comes from Seville.

D. Man. From Seville! Ha! prithee, let him go thither again—tell him, I am a little busy about being overjoyed.

Hyp. My life on it, sir, this must be the fellow that my servant told you of, employed by Octavio.

D. Man. Very likely.

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Trap. Sir, sir——News, news!

D. Man. Aye, this fellow has a good merry face, now——I like him. Well, what dost thou say, lad?——But, hold, sirrah! has any body told thee how it is with me?

Trap. Sir?

D. Man. Do you know, puppy, that I am ready to cry?

Trap. Cry, sir! for what?

D. Man. Joy! joy! you whelp; my cares

are over; madam's to marry your master, sirrah, and I am as wet with joy as if I had been thrown into a sea full of good-luck. Why don't you cry, dog?

Trap. Uh! Well, sir, I do—But now, if you please, let me tell you my business.

D. Man. Well, what's the matter, sirrah?

Trap. Nay, no great matter, sir; only—— Slylooks is come, that's all.

D. Man. Slylooks! what, the bamboozler!—ha, ha!

Trap. He, sir, he.

D. Man. I'm glad of it, faith—now I shall have a little diversion to moderate my joy—I'll wait on the gentleman myself—Don't you be out of the way, son; I'll be with ye presently——Oh my jaws! this fit will carry me off. Ye dear toad! good-bye. [*Exit.*

Hyp. Ha, ha, ha! the old gentleman's as merry as a fiddle; how he'll start when a string snaps in the middle of his tune!

Ros. At least, we shall make him change it, I believe.

Hyp. That we shall; and here comes one that's to play upon him.

Enter FLORA, *hastily.*

Flo. Don Philip, where are you? I must needs speak with ye. Begging your ladyship's pardon, madam. [*Whispers* HYPOLITA.] Stand to your arms; the enemy's at the gate, faith:—but I've just thought of a sure card to win the lady into our party.

Ros. Who can this youth be she is so familiar with? he must certainly know her business here, and she is reduced to trust him. What odd things we women are! never to know our own minds. How very humble now has her pride made her!

Hyp. [*To* FLORA.] I like your advice so well, that, to tell you the truth, I have made bold to take it before you gave it me.

Flo. Is it possible?

Hyp. Come, I'll introduce ye.

Flo. Then, the business is done.

Hyp. Madam, if your ladyship pleases.

[*To* ROSARA.

Ros. Is this gentleman your friend, sir?

Hyp. This friend, madam, is my gentlewoman, at your service.

Ros. Gentlewoman! What, are we all going into breeches, then?

Flo. That used to be my post, madam, when I wore a needle; but, now I have got a sword by my side, I shall be proud to be your ladyship's humble servant.

Ros. Troth, I think it's a pity you should either of you ever part with your swords: I never saw a prettier couple of adroit cavaliers in my life.

Flo. Egad, I don't know how it is, madam; but, methinks, these breeches give me such a nettled air, I cannot help fancying but that I left my sex at home in my petticoats.

Hyp. Why, faith, for aught I know, hadst thou been born to breeches instead of a *fille de chambre*, fortune might have made thee a *beau garçon* at the head of a regiment——But hush! there's Don Philip and the old gentleman: we must not be seen yet. If you please to retire, madam, I'll tell you how we intend to deal with them.

Ros. With all my heart——Come, ladies—— Gentlemen—I beg your pardon. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter DON MANUEL *and* DON PHILIP.

D. Man. WELL, sir; and so you were robbed of your portmanteau, you say, at Toledo, in which are all your letters and writings relating to your marriage with my daughter, and that's the reason you are come without them.

D. Phi. I thought, sir, you might reasonably take it ill I should have lain a week or two in town, without paying you my duty. I was not robbed of the regard I owe my father's friend; that, sir, I have brought with me, and 'twould have been ill manners not to have paid it at my first arrival.

D. Man. Ah, how smooth the spark is!—— [*Aside.*] Well, sir, I am pretty considerably glad to see you; but, I hope, you'll excuse me if, in a matter of this consequence, I seem a little cautious.

D. Phi. Sir, I sha'nt propose any immediate progress in my affair, till you receive fresh advice from my father; in the mean time, I shall think myself obliged by the bare freedom of your house, and such entertainment as you'd, at least, afford a common stranger.

D. Man. Impudent rogue! the freedom of my house! yes, that he may be always at hand to secure the main chance for my friend Octavio—But now I'll have a touch of the bamboozle with him. [*Aside.*] Look ye, sir, while I see nothing to contradict what you say you are, d'ye see, you shall find me a gentleman.

D. Phi. So my father told me, sir.

D. Man. But, then, on the other hand, d'ye see, a man's honesty is not always written in his face; and (begging your pardon) if you should prove a damned rogue now, d'ye see?

D. Phi. Sir, I cannot, in reason, take any thing ill, that proceeds only from your caution.

D. Man. Civil rascal! [*Aside.*] No, no, as

you say, I hope you won't take it ill neither; for how do I know, you know, but what you tell me (begging your pardon again, sir,) may be all a lie!

D. Phi. Another man, indeed, might say the same to you; but I shall take it kindly, sir, if you suppose me a villain no oftener than you have occasion to suspect me.

D. Man. Sir, you speak like a man of honour, it is confessed; but (begging your pardon again, sir,) so may a rascal too, sometimes.

D. Phi. But a man of honour, sir, can never speak like a rascal.

D. Man. Why, then, with your honour's leave, sir, is there nobody here in Madrid that knows you?

D. Phi. Sir, I never saw Madrid till within these two hours, though there is a gentleman in town that knew me intimately at Seville. I met him by accident at the inn where I alighted; he's known here; if it will give you any present satisfaction, I believe I could easily produce him to vouch for me.

D. Man. At the inn, say ye, did you meet this gentleman? What's his name, pray?

D. Phi. Octavio Cruzado.

D. Man. Ha, my bully confessor! this agrees word for word with honest Trappanti's intelligence——[*Aside.*]——Well, sir, and pray what does he give you for this job?

D. Phi. Job, sir!

D. Man. Ay, that is, do you undertake it out of good fellowship, or are you to have a sort of fellow-feeling in the matter?

D. Phi. Sir, if you believe me to be the son of Don Fernando, I must tell ye, your manner of receiving me is what you ought not to suppose can please him, or I can thank you for; if you think me an impostor, I'll ease you of the trouble of suspecting me, and leave your house, till I can bring better proofs who I am.

D. Man. Do so, friend; and in the mean time, d'ye see, pray give my humble service to the politician, and tell him, that to your certain knowledge the old fellow, the old rogue, and the old put, d'ye see, knows how to bamboozle as well as himself.

D. Phi Politician! and bamboozle! Pray, sir, let me understand you, that I may know how to answer you.

D. Man. Come, come, don't be discouraged, friend——sometimes, you know, the strongest wits must fail. You have an admirable head, it is confessed, with as able a face to it as ever stuck upon two shoulders; but who the devil can help ill luck? for it happens at this time, d'ye see, that it won't do.

D. Phi. Won't do, sir?

D. Man. Nay, if you won't understand me now, here comes an honest fellow that will speak you point blank to the matter.

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Come hither, friend; dost thou know this gentleman?

Trap. Bless me, sir! is it you? Sir, this is my old master I lived with at Seville.

D. Phi. I remember thee; thy name's Trappanti; thou wert my servant when I first went to travel.

Trap. Ay, sir, and about twenty months after you came home, too.

D. Phi. You see, sir, this fellow knows me.

D. Man. Oh, I never questioned it in the least, sir! Prithee, what's this worthy gentleman's name, friend?

Trap. Sir, your honour has heard me talk of him a thousand times; his name, sir—his name is Guzman: his father, sir, old Don Guzman, is the most eminent lawyer in Seville, was the very person that drew up the settlement and articles of my master's marriage with your honour's daughter: this gentleman knows all the particulars as well as if he had drawn them up himself: but, sir, I hope there's no mistake in them that may defer the marriage.

D. Phi. Confusion!

D. Man. Now, sir, what sort of answer d'ye think fit to make me?

D. Phi. Now, sir? that I'm obliged, in honour, not to leave your house till I at least have seen the villain that calls himself Don Philip, that has robbed me of my portmanteau, and would you, sir, of your honour and your daughter—As for this rascal—

Trap. Sir, I demand protection.

[*Runs behind* DON MANUEL.

D. Man. Hold, sir; since you are so brisk, and in my own house, too—call your master, friend: you'll find we have swords within can match you.

Trap. Ay, sir, I may chance to send you one will take down your courage.

[*Exit* TRAPPANTI.

D. Phi. I ask your pardon, sir; I must confess the villany I saw designed against my father's friend had transported me beyond good manners; but be assured, sir, use me henceforward as you please, I will detect it though I lose my life. Nothing shall affront me, now, till I have proved myself your friend indeed, and Don Fernando's son.

D. Man. Nay, look ye, sir, I will be very civil, too—I won't say a word—you shall e'en squabble it out by yourselves; not but, at the same time, thou art to me the merriest fellow that ever I saw in my life.

Enter HYPOLITA, FLORA, *and* TRAPPANTI.

Hyp. Who's this that dares usurp my name, and calls himself Don Philip de las Torres?

D. Phi. Ha! this is a young competitor indeed! [*Aside.*

Flo. Is this the gentleman, sir?

D. Man. Yes, yes; that's he: ha, ha!

D. Phi. Yes, sir, I'm the man who, but this morning, lost that name upon the road. I'm informed an impudent young rascal has picked it out of some writings in the portmanteau he robbed me of, and has brought it hither before me. D'ye know any such, sir?

Flo. The fellow really does it very well, sir.

D. Man. Oh, to a miracle! [*Aside*

Hyp. Prithee, friend, how long dost thou expect thy impudence will keep thee out of gaol? Could not the coxcomb, that put thee upon this, inform thee, too, that this gentleman was a magistrate?

D. Man. Well said, my little champion.

D. Phi. Now, in my opinion, child, that might as well put thee in mind of thy own condition; for, suppose thy wit and impudence should so far succeed, as to let thee ruin this gentleman's family, by really marrying his daughter, thou can's't not but know 'tis impossible thou shouldst enjoy her long; a very few days must unavoidably discover thee: in the mean time, if thou wilt spare me the trouble of exposing thee, and generously confess thy roguery, thus far I'll forgive thee; but, if thou still proceedest upon his credulity to a marriage with the lady, don't flatter thyself that all her fortune shall buy off my evidence; for I'm bound in honour, as well as law, to hang thee for the robbery.

Hyp. Sir, you are extremely kind.

Flo. Very civil, 'egad.

Hyp. But may not I presume, my dear friend, this wheedle was offered as a trial of this gentleman's credulity? Ha, ha, ha!

D. Man. Indeed, my friend, 'tis a very shallow one. Canst thou think I'm such a sot as to believe, that, if he knew 'twere in thy power to hang him, he would not have run away at the first sight of thee?

Trap. Aye, sir, he must be a dull rogue indeed, that would not run away from a halter—Ha, ha, ha!

[*All laugh.*

D. Phi. Sir, I ask your pardon; I begin now to be a little sensible of my folly——I perceive this gentleman has done his business with you effectually: however, sir, the duty I owe my father obliges me not to leave your cause, though I'll leave your house immediately. When you see me next, you'll know Don Philip from a rascal.

D. Man. Ah, 'twill be the same if I know a rascal from Don Philip! But, if you please, sir, never give yourself any further trouble in this business; for what you have done, d'ye see, is so far from interrupting my daughter's marriage, that, with this gentleman's leave, I'm resolved to finish it this very hour; so that, when you see your friend the politician, you must tell him you had cursed luck; that's all. Ha, ha, ha!

D. Phi. Very well, sir; I may have better when I see you next.

Hyp. Look ye, sir, since your undertaking (though you designed it otherwise) has promoted my happiness, thus far I pass it by; though I question if a man, that stoops to do such base injuries, dares defend them with his sword: however, now at least you're warned; but be assured, your next attempt——

D. Phi. Will startle you, my spark. I am afraid you'll be a little humbler when you are hand-cuffed. Though you won't take my word against him, sir, perhaps another magistrate may my oath, which, because I see his marriage is in haste, I am obliged to make immediately. If he can outface the law, too, I shall be content to be the coxcomb then you think me.

[*Exit* DON PHILIP.

D. Man. Ah, poor fellow! he's resolved to carry it off with a good face, however. Ha, ha, ha!

Trap. Aye, sir, that's all he has for't, indeed.

Hyp. Trappanti, follow him, and do as I directed.

[*Aside to* TRAPPANTI.

Trap. I warrant ye, sir.

[*Exit* TRAPPANTI.

D. Man. Ha! my little champion, let me kiss thee; thou hast carried the day like a hero.—Man, nor woman, nothing can stand before thee. I'll make thee monarch of my daughter immediately.

Hyp. That's the Indies, sir.

D. Man. Well said, my lad—Ah, my heart's going to dance again! Prithee, let's in before it gets the better of me, and give the bride an account of thy victory.

Hyp. Sir, if you please to prepare the way, I'll march after you in form, and lay my laurels at her feet like a conqueror.

D. Man. Say'st thou so, my little soldier? Why, then, I'll send for the priest, and thou shalt be married in triumph.

[*Exit* DON MANUEL.

Hyp. Now, Flora.

Flo. Aye, now, madam, who says we are not politicians? I'd fain see any turn of state managed with half this dexterity. But pray, what is Trappanti detached for?

Hyp. Only to interrupt the motions of the enemy, girl, till we are safe in our trenches; for, should Don Philip chance to rally upon us with an Alguazil and a warrant, before I am fast tied to the lady, we may be routed, for all this.

Flo. Trappanti knows his business, I hope.

Hyp. You'll see presently—but hush! here comes my brother: poor gentleman! he's upon thorns, too; I have made Rosara write him a most provoking letter.

Flo. Nay, you have an admirable genius to mischief. But what has poor Octavio done to you, that he must be plagued, too?

Hyp. Well, dear Flora, don't chide; indeed this shall be the last day of my reign. Come, now, let's in, keep up the old Don's humour, and laugh at him.

Flo. Aye, there, with all my heart!

[*Exeunt.*

Enter OCTAVIO *with a letter, and* VILETTA.

Oct. Rosara false! distraction!

Vil. Nay, don't be in such a passion.

Oct. Confess it, too! so changed within an hour!

Vil. Ah, dear sir, if you had but seen how the young gentleman laid about him, you'd ha' wondered how she held out so long.

Oct. Death! 'tis impossible!

Vil. Common, sir, common. I have known a prouder lady as nimble as she. What will you lay, that, before the moon changes, she is not false to your rival?

Oct. Don't torture me, Viletta.

Vil. Come, sir, take heart; my life on't, you'll be the happy man at last.

Oct. Thou art mad. Does she not tell me here, in her letter, she has herself consented to marry another? nay, does not she, too, insult me with a——yet loves me better than the person she's to marry?

Vil. Insult! is that the best you can make on't? Ah, you men have such heads!

Oct. What dost thou mean?

Vil. Sir, to be free with you, my mistress is grown wise at last; my advice, I perceive, begins to work with her, and your business is done.

Oct. What was thy advice?

Vil. Why, to give the post of husband to your rival, and put you in for a deputy. You know the business of the place, sir, if you mind it: by the help of a few good stars, and a little moonshine, there's many a fair perquisite may fall in your way.

Oct. Thou ravest, Viletta! 'tis impossible she can fall so low.

Vil. Ah, sir, you cannot think how love will humble a body!

Oct. I'll believe nothing ill of her, till her own mouth confess it: she can never own this letter: she cannot but know I should stab her with reproaches: therefore, dear Viletta, ease me of my torments; go this moment, and tell her I'm upon the rack till I speak with her.

Vil. Sir, I dare not for the world! the old gentleman's with her; he'll knock my brains out.

Oct. I'll protect thee with my life.

Vil. Sir, I would not venture to do it for—for—for—yes, I would for a pistole.

Oct. Confound her!—There, there 'tis: dear Viletta, be my friend this time, and I'll be thine for ever.

Vil. Now, sir, you deserve a friend.

[*Exit* VILETTA.

Oct. Sure this letter must be but artifice, a humour to try how far my love can bear——and yet, methinks, she cannot but know the impudence of my young rival, and her father's importunity, are too pressing to allow her any time to fool away: and, if she were really false, she could not take a pride in confessing it. Death! I know not what to think: the sex is all a riddle, and we are the fools that crack our brains to expound them.

Re-enter VILETTA.

Now, dear Viletta!

Vil. Sir, she begs your pardon; they have just sent for the priest; but they will be glad to see you about an hour hence, as soon as the wedding's over.

Oct. Viletta!

Vil. Sir, she says, in short, she cannot possibly speak with you now, for she is just going to be married.

Oct. Death! daggers! blood! confusion! and ten thousand furies!

Vil. Hey-day! what's all this for?

Oct. My brains are turned, Viletta.

Vil. Aye, by my troth, so one would think, if one could but believe you had any at all: if you have three grains, I'm sure you cannot but know her compliance with this match must give her a little liberty; and can you suppose she'd desire to see you an hour hence, if she did not design to make use of it?

Oct. Use of it! Death! When the wedding's over?

Vil. Dear sir, but the bedding won't be over, and, I presume, that's the ceremony you have a mind to be master of.

Oct. Don't flatter me, Viletta.

Vil. Faith, sir, I'll be very plain: you are, to me, the dullest person I ever saw in my life; but, if you have a mind, I'll tell her you won't come.

Oct. No, don't say so, Viletta.

Vil. Then pray, sir, do as she bids you: don't stay here to spoil your own sport; you'll have the old gentleman come thundering down upon ye by-and-by, and then we shall have ye at your ten thousand furies again. Hist! Here's company; good-bye to ye.

[*Exit* VILETTA.

Oct. How now, what's the meaning of this?

Enter DON PHILIP, *his sword drawn, and* TRAPPANTI.

D. Phi. Come, sir, there's no retreating now; this you must justify.

Trap. Sir, I will, and a great deal more; but, pray, sir, give me leave to recover my courage—I protest, the keen looks of that instrument have quite frighted it away. Pray, put it up, sir.

D. Phi. Nay, to let thee see I had rather be thy friend than enemy, I'll bribe thee to be honest. Discharge thy conscience like a man, and I'll engage to make these five ten pieces.

Enter a Servant.

Trap. Sir, your business will be done effectually.

D. Phi. Here, friend, will ye tell your master I desire to speak with him?

Oct. Don Philip!

D. Phi. Octavio! this is fortunate indeed! the only place in the world I would have wished to have found ye in.

Oct. What's the matter?

D. Phi. You'll see presently. But, prithee, how stands your affair with your mistress?

Oct. The devil take me if I can tell ye!——I don't know what to make of her; about an hour ago, she was for scaling walls to come at me; and this minute—whip, she's going to marry the stranger I told you of; nay, confesses, too, 'tis with her own consent; and yet begs, by all means, to see me as soon as her wedding's over. Is it not very pretty?

Re-enter a Servant.

D. Phi. Something gay, indeed.

Ser. Sir, my master will wait on you presently.

Oct. But the plague on't is, my love cannot bear this jesting. Well, now, how stands your affair? have you seen your mistress yet?

D. Phi. No, I can't get admittance to her.

Oct. How so?

D. Phi. When I came to pay my duty here to the old gentleman——

Oct. Here!

D. Phi. Ay, I found an impudent young rascal here before me, that had taken my name upon him, robbed me of my portmanteau, and, by virtue of some papers there, knew all my concerns to a tittle: he has told a plausible tale to her father, faced him down that I'm an impostor, and, if I don't this minute prevent him, is going to marry the lady.

Oct. Death and hell! [*Aside.*] What sort of fellow was this rascal?

D. Phi. A little pert coxcomb: by his impudence and dress, I guess him to be some French page.

Oct. A white wig, red coat——

D. Phi. Right; the very picture of the little Englishman we knew at Paris.

Oct. Confusion! my friend at last my rival, too——Yet hold—my rival is my friend; he owns he has not seen her yet——— [*Aside.*

D. Phi. You seem concerned.

Oct. Undone for ever, unless dear Philip's still my friend.

D. Phi. What's the matter?

Oct. Be generous, and tell me, have I ever yet deserved your friendship?

D. Phi. I hope my actions have confessed it.

Oct. Forgive my fears, and, since 'tis impossible you can feel the pain of loving her you are engaged to marry, not having (as you own) yet ever seen her, let me conjure you, by all the ties of honour, friendship, and pity, never to attempt her more.

D. Phi. You amaze me!

Oct. 'Tis the same dear creature I so passionately dote on.

D. Phi. Is it possible? Nay, then, be easy in thy thoughts, Octavio; and now I dare confess the folly of my own: I'm not sorry thou art my rival here. In spite of all my weak philosophy, I must own, the secret wishes of my soul are still Hypolita's. I know not why; but yet, methinks, the unaccountable repulses I have met with here, look like an omen of some new, though far distant, hope of her. I can't help thinking, that my fortune still resolves, spite of her cruelty, to make me one day happy.

Oct. Quit but Rosara, I'll engage she shall be yours.

D. Phi. Not only that, but will assist you, with my life, to gain her: I shall easily excuse myself to my father for not marrying the mistress of my dearest friend.

Oct. Dear Philip, let me embrace you! But how shall we manage the rascal of an impostor? Suppose you run immediately, and swear the robbery against him?

D. Phi. I was just going about it; but, accidentally meeting with this fellow, has luckily prevented me, who, you must know, has been chief engineer in the contrivance against me; but, between threats, bribes, and promises, has confessed the whole roguery, and is now ready to swear it against him: so, because I understand the spark is very near his marriage, I thought this would be the best and soonest way to detect him.

Oct. That's right; the least delay might have lost all: besides, I am here to strengthen his evidence; for I can swear that you are the true Don Philip.

D. Phi. Right.

Trap. Sir, with humble submission, that will be quite wrong.

Oct. Why so?

Trap. Because, sir, the old gentleman is substantially convinced, that 'tis you who have put Don Philip upon laying this pretended claim to his daughter, purely to defer the marriage, that, in the mean time, you might get an opportunity to run away with her; for which reason, sir, you'll find your evidence will but fly in your face, and hasten the match with your rival.

D. Phi. Ha! There's reason in that. All your endeavours will but confirm his jealousy of me.

Oct. What would you have me do?

Trap. Don't appear at the trial, sir.

D. Phi. By no means! rather wait a little in the street: be within call, and leave the management to me.

Oct. Be careful, dear Philip.

D. Phi. I always used to be more fortunate in serving my friend than myself.

Oct. But, hark ye, here lives an Alguazil at the next house; suppose I should send him to you to secure the spark in the mean time?

D. Phi. Do so: we must not lose a moment.

Oct. I won't stir from the door.

D. Phi. You'll soon hear of me: away.

[*Exit* OCT.

Trap. So, now I have divided the enemy, there can be no great danger if it should come to a battle—Basta! here comes our party.

D. Phi. Stand aside till I call for you.

[TRAP. *retires.*

Enter DON MANUEL.

D. Man. Well, sir, what service have you to command me now, pray?

D. Phi. Now, sir, I hope my credit will stand a little fairer with you: all I beg is but your patient hearing.

D. Man. Well, sir, you shall have it. But, then, I must beg one favour of you, too, which is, to make the business as short as you can; for to tell you the truth, I am not very willing to have any farther trouble about it.

D. Phi. Sir, if I don't now convince you of your error, believe and use me like a villain; in the mean time, sir, I hope you'll think of a proper punishment for the merry gentleman that hath imposed upon you.

D. Man. With all my heart; I'll leave him to thy mercy. Here he comes; bring him to trial as soon as you please.

Enter FLORA *and* HYPOLITA.

Flo. So! Trippanti has succeeded; he's come without the officers. [*To* HYP.

Hyp. Hearing, sir, you were below, I did not care to disturb the family, by putting the officers to the trouble of a needless search: let me see your warrant; I'm ready to obey it.

D. Man. Ay, where's your officer?

Flo. I thought to have seen him march in state, with an Alguazil before him.

D. Phi. I was afraid, sir, upon second thoughts, your business would not stay for a warrant, though 'tis possible I may provide for you, for I think this gentleman's a magistrate: in the mean time——O! here, I have prevailed with an alguazil to wait upon ye.

Enter Alguazil.

Alg. Did you send for me, sir?

D. Phi. Ay, secure that gentleman.

D. Man. Hold, hold, sir! all things in order: this gentleman is yet my guest; let me be first acquainted with his crime, and then I shall better know how he deserves to be treated; and that we may have no hard words upon one another, if you please, sir, let me first talk with you in private. [*They whisper.*

Hyp. Undone! that fool Trappanti, or that villain, I know not which, has at least mistaken or betrayed me! Ruined past redemption!

Flo. Our affairs, methinks, begin to look with a very indifferent face. Ha! the old Don seems surprised—I don't like that—What shall we do?

Hyp. I am at my wit's end. [*Aside.*

Flo. Then we must either confess, or to gaol, that's positive.

Hyp. I'll rather starve there than be discovered. Should he at last marry with Rosara, the very shame of this attempt would kill me.

Flo. Death! what d'ye mean? that hanging look were enough to confirm a suspicion: bear up, for shame!

Hyp. Impossible! I am dashed, confounded: if thou hast any courage left, shew it quickly. Go, speak before my fears betray me. [*Aside.*

D. Man. If you can make this appear by any witness, sir, I confess 'twill surprize me indeed.

Flo. Ay, sir, if you have any witnesses, we desire you'd produce them.

D. Phi. Sir, I have a witness at your service, and a substantial one.——Hey! Trappanti!

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Now, sir, what think ye?

Hyp. Ha! the rogue winks—then there's life again. [*Aside.*] Is this your witness, sir?

D. Phi. Yes, sir; this poor fellow, at last, it seems, happens to be honest enough to confess himself a rogue, and your accomplice.

Hyp. Ha, ha!

D. Phi. Ha, ha! you are very merry, sir.

D. Man. Nay, there's a jest between ye, that's certain—But, come, friend, what say you to the business? have ye any proof to offer upon oath, that this gentleman is the true Don Philip, and consequently, this other an impostor?

D. Phi. Speak boldly.

Trap. Ay, sir; but shall I come to no harm, if I do speak?

D. Man. Let it be the truth, and I'll protect thee.

Trap. Are you sure I shall be safe, sir?

D. Man. I'll give you my word of honour: speak boldly to the question.

Trap. Well, sir, since I must speak, then, in the first place, I desire your honour would be pleased to command the officer to secure that gentleman.

D. Man. How, friend!

D. Phi. Secure me, rascal!

Trap. Sir, if I can't be protected, I shall never be able to speak.

D. Man. I warrant thee—What is it you say, friend?

Trap. Sir, as I was just now crossing the street,

this gentleman, with a sneer in his face, takes me by the hands, claps five pistoles in my palm, (here they are) shuts my fist close upon them; my dear friend, says he, you must do me a piece of service; upon which, sir, I bows me to the ground, and desired him to open his case.

D. Phi. What means the rascal?

D. Man. Sir, I am as much amazed as you; but pray let's hear him, that we may know his meaning.

Trap. So, sir, upon this he runs me over a long story of a sham and a flam he had just contrived, he said, to defer my master's marriage only for two days.

D. Phi. Confusion!

Flo. Nay, pray, sir, let's hear the evidence.

Trap. Upon the close of the matter, sir, I found, at last, by his eloquence, that the whole business depended upon my bearing a little false witness against my master.

Hyp. Oh, ho!

Trap. Upon this, sir, I began to demur: sir, says I, this business will never hold water; don't let me undertake it; I must beg your pardon; gave him the negative shrug, and was for sneaking off with the fees in my pocket.

D. Man. Very Well!

D. Phi. Villain!

Flo. and Hyp. Ha, ha, ha!

Trap. Upon this, sir, he catches me fast hold by the collar, whips out his poker, claps it within half an inch of my guts; now, dog! says he, you shall do it, or, within two hours, stink upon the dunghill you came from.

D. Phi. Sir, if there be any faith in mortal man—

D. Man. Nay, nay, nay, one at a time; you shall be heard presently. Go on, friend.

Trap. Having me at this advantage, sir, I began to think my wit would do me more service than my courage; so, prudently pretended, out of fear, to comply with his threats, and swallow the perjury; but, now, sir, being under protection, and at liberty of conscience, I have honesty enough, you see, to tell you the whole truth of the matter.

D. Man. Ay, this is evidence, indeed!

Omn. Ha, ha, ha!

D. Phi. Dog! villain! did not you confess to me that this gentleman picked you up, not three hours ago, at the same inn where I alighted? that he had owned his stealing my portmanteau at Toledo? that, if he succeeded to marry the lady, you were to have a considerable sum for your pains; and these two were to share the rest of her fortune between them?

Trap. O lud! O lud! Sir, as I hope to die in my bed, these are the very words he threatened to stab me if I would not swear against my master——I told him at first, sir, I was not fit for his business; I was never good at a lie in my life.

Alg. Nay, sir, I saw this gentleman's sword at his breast, out of my window.

Trap. Look ye there, sir!

D. Phi. Damnation!

Omn. Ha, ha, ha!

D. Man. Really, my friend, thou art almost turned fool in this business: if thou hadst prevailed upon this wretch to perjure himself, couldst thou think I should not have detected him? But, poor man! you were a little hard put to it, indeed; any shift was better than none, it seems: you knew 'twould not be long to the wedding. You may go, friend. [*Exit* ALGUAZIL.

Flo. Ha, ha!

D. Phi. Sir, by my eternal hopes of peace and happiness, you're imposed on! If you proceed thus rashly, your daughter is inevitably ruined. If what I have said be not true in fact, as hell or he is false, may Heaven brand me with the severest marks of perjury! Defer the marriage but an hour.

D. Man. Ay, and in half that time, I suppose, you are in hopes to defer it for altogether.

D. Phi. Perdition seize me, if I have any hope or thought but that of serving you!

D. Man. Nay, now, thou art a downright distracted man—Dost thou expect I should take thy bare word, when here were two honest fellows that have just proved thee in a lie to thy face?

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, the priest is come.

D. Man. Is he so? then, sir, if you please, since you see you can do me no farther service, I believe it may be time for you to go.—Come, son, now let's wait upon the bride, and put an end to this gentleman's trouble altogether.

[*Exit* DON MANUEL.

Hyp. Sir, I'll wait on ye.

D. Phi. Confusion! I've undone my friend.

[*Walks about.*

Flo. [*Aside.*] Trappanti! rogue, this was a master-piece.

Trap. [*Aside.*] Sir, I believe it won't be mended in haste. [*Exeunt* FLO. *and* TRAP.

Hyp. Sir.

D. Phi. Ha! alone! If I were not prevented now——Well, sir.

Hyp. I suppose you don't think the favours you have designed me are to be put up without satisfaction; therefore, I shall expect to see you early to-morrow, near the Prado, with your sword in your hand; in the mean time, sir, I'm a little more in haste to be the lady's humble servant than your's. [*Going.*

D. Phi. Hold, sir!—you and I can't part upon such easy terms.

Hyp. Sir!

D. Phi. You are not so near the lady, sir, perhaps, as you imagine. [D. PHI. *locks the door.*

Hyp. What d'ye mean?

D. Phi. Speak softly.

Hyp. Ha!

D. Phi. Come, sir—draw.

Hyp. My ruin has now caught me: my plots are yet unripe for execution; I must not, dare not, let him know me till I am sure at least he cannot be another's——This was the very spite of fortune. [*Aside.*

D. Phi. Come, sir, my time's but short.

Hyp. And mine's too precious to be lost on any thing but love; besides, this is no proper place.

D. Phi. O! we'll make shift with it.

Hyp. To-morrow, sir, I shall find a better.

D. Phi. No, now, sir, if you please—Draw, villain! or expect such usage as I'm sure Don Philip would not bear.

Hyp. A lover, sir, may bear any thing to make sure of his mistress—You know it is not fear that——

D. Phi. No evasions, sir; either this moment confess your villany, your name and fortune, or expect no mercy.

Hyp. Nay, then—within there!

D. Phi. Move but a step, or dare to raise thy voice beyond a whisper, this minute is thy last. [*Seizes her, and holds his sword to her breast.*

Hyp. Sir! [*Trembling.*

D. Phi. Villain! be quick, confess, or——

Hyp. Hold, sir!——I own I dare not fight with you.

D. Phi. No, I see thou art too poor a villain—therefore, be speedy, as thou hopest I'll spare thy life.

Hyp. Give me but a moment's respite, sir.

D. Phi. Dog! do you trifle?

Hyp. Nay, then, sir——Mercy, mercy! [*Throws herself at his feet.*

And, since I must confess, have pity on my youth, have pity on my love!

D. Phi. Thy love! what art thou, speak?

Hyp. Unless your generous compassion spares me, sure the most wretched youth, that ever felt the pangs and torments of a successless passion.

D. Phi. Art thou indeed a lover, then?—tell me thy condition?

Hyp. Sir, I confess my fortune's much inferior to my pretences in this lady, though, indeed, I'm born a gentleman; and, bating this attempt against you, which even the last extremities of a ruined love have forced me to, ne'er yet was guilty of a deed, or thought, that could debase my birth: but, if you knew the torments I have borne from her disdainful pride, the anxious days, the long-watched winter nights I have endured, to gain of her, perhaps, at last a cold relentless look, indeed, you'd pity me. My heart was so entirely subdued, the more she slighted me, the more I loved; and, as my pains increased, grew farther from cure. Her beauty struck me with that submissive awe, that, when I dared to speak, my words and looks were softer than an infant's blushes; but, all these pangs of my persisting passion still were vain; nor showers of tears, nor storms of sighs, could melt or move the frozen hardness of her dead compassion!

D. Phi. How very near my condition! [*Aside.*

Hyp. But yet so subtle is the flame of love, spite of her cruelty, I nourished still a secret living hope, till hearing, sir, at last she was designed your bride, despair compelled me to this bold attempt of personating you. Her father knew not me, or my unhappy love; I knew, too, you ne'er had seen her face; and, therefore, hoped, when I should offer to repair, with twice the worth, the value, sir, I robbed you of, begging thus low for your forgiveness; I say, I hoped, at least, your generous heart, if ever it was touched like mine, would pity my distress, and pardon the necessitated wrong.

D. Phi. Is't possible? hast thou then loved to this unfortunate degree?

Hyp. Unfortunate, indeed, if you are still my rival, sir; but, were you not, I'm sure you'd pity me.

D. Phi. Nay, then, I must forgive thee; [*Raising her.*] for I have known too well the misery, not to pity—any thing in love.

Hyp. Have you, sir, been unhappy there?

D. Phi. Oh! thou hast probed a wound that time or art can never heal.

Hyp. O joyful sound!—[*Aside.*] Cherish that generous thought, and hope, from my success, your mistress, or your fate, may make you blest like me.

D. Phi. Yet, hold—nor flatter thy fond hopes too far; for, though I pity and forgive thee, yet I am bound in honour to assist thy love no farther than the justice of thy cause permits.

Hyp. What mean you, sir?

D. Phi. You must defer your marriage with this lady.

Hyp. Defer it, sir! I hope it is not her you love!

D. Phi. I have a nearest friend that is beloved, and loves her with an equal flame to yours; to him, my friendship will oblige me to be just; and, yet, in pity of thy fortune, thus far I'll be a friend to thee; give up thy title to the lady, and if her choice pronounces thee the man, I here assure thee, on my honour, to resign my claim, and, not more partial to my friend than thee, promote thy happiness.

Hyp. Alas, sir! this is no relief, but certain ruin. I am too well assured she loves your friend.

D. Phi. Then, you confess his claim the fairer: her loving him is a proof that he deserves her; if so, you are bound in honour to resign her.

Hyp. Alas, sir! women have fantastic tastes, that love they know not what, and hate they know not why; else, sir, why are you unfortunate?

D. Phi. I am unfortunate, but would rather

die so, than owe my happiness to any help but an enduring love.

Hyp. But, sir, I have endured, you see, in vain—

D. Phi. If thoud'st not have me think thy story false, thy soft pretence of love a cheat, to melt me into pity, and invade my justice, yield; submit thy passion to its merit, and own I have proposed thee like a friend.

Hyp. Sir, on my knees———

D. Phi. Expect no more from me; either comply this moment, or my sword shall force thee.

Hyp. Consider, sir———

D. Phi. Nay, then, discover quick; tell me thy name and family.

Hyp. Hold, sir.

D. Phi. Speak, or thou diest.

[*A noise at the door.*

Hyp. Sir, I will—Ha! they are entering—O, for a moment's courage! Come on, sir!

[*She breaks from him, and draws, retiring, till* DON MANUEL, FLORA, *and* TRAPPANTI, *with servants, rush in, and part them.*]

D. Man. Knock him down.

Flo. Part them.

Hyp. Away, rascal! [*To* TRAP. *who holds her.*

Trap. Hold, sir! dear sir! hold; you have given him enough.

Hyp. Dog! let me go; or I'll cut away thy hold.

D. Man. Nay, dear son! hold, we'll find a better way to punish him.

Hyp. Pray, sir, give me way—a villain, to assault me in the very moment of my happiness!

[*Struggling.*

D. Phi. By heaven, sir, he this moment has confessed his villany, and begged my pardon upon his knees.

Hyp. D'ye hear him, sir! I beg you let me go; this is beyond bearing.

D. Phi. Thou liest, villain! 'tis thy fear that holds thee.

Hyp. Ah! let me go, I say.

Trap. Help, ho! I'm not able to hold him.

D. Man. Force him out of the room there; call an officer; in the mean time, secure him in the cellar.

D. Phi. Hear me but one word, sir.

D. Man. Stop his mouth——Out with him.

[*They hurry him off.*

Come, dear son! be pacified.

Hyp. A villain! [*Walking in a heat.*

Flo. Why should he be concerned, now he's secure? such a rascal would but contaminate the sword of a man of honour.

D. Man. Ay, son, leave him to me and the law.

Hyp. I am sorry, sir, such a fellow should have it in his power to disturb me——But———

Enter ROSARA.

D. Man. Look; here's my daughter in a fright to see for you.

Hyp. Then, I'm composed again.

[*Runs to* ROSARA.

Ros. I heard fighting here; I hope you are not wounded, sir?

Hyp. I have no wound but what the priest can heal!

D. Man. Ay! well said, my little champion!

Hyp. Oh, madam, I have such a terrible escape to tell you! [*Aside.*

Ros. Truly, I began to be afraid I should lose my little husband! [*Aside.*

Hyp. Husband, quotha! Get me but once safe out of these breeches, if ever I wear them again——— [*Aside.*

D. Man. Come, come, children, the priest stays for us.

Hyp. Sir, we wait on you. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter TRAPPANTI.

Trap. WHAT, in the name of roguery, can this new master of mine be? he's either a fool or bewitched, that's positive.—First, he gives me fifty pieces for helping him to marry the lady, and, as soon as the wedding is over, claps me twenty more into the other hand, to help him to get rid of her—Nay, not only that, but gives me a strict charge to observe his directions in being evidence against him as an impostor, to refund all the lies I have told in his service; to sweep him clear out of my conscience; and, now, to swear the robbery against him. What the bottom of this can be, I must confess, does a little puzzle my wit——There's but one way in the world I can solve it——He must certainly have some reason to hang himself, that he's ashamed to own; and so was resolved first to be married, that his friends might not wonder at the occasion! But, here he comes, with his noose in his hand.

Enter HYPOLITA *and* ROSARA.

Hyp. Trappanti, go to Don Pedro; he has business with you.

Trap. Yes, sir. [*Exit* TRAP.

Ros. Who's Don Pedro, pray?

Hyp. Flora, madam; he knows her yet by no other name.

Ros. Well, if Don Philip does not think you deserve him, I'm afraid he won't find another

woman that will have him in haste. But this last escape of yours was such a master-piece!

Hyp. Nay, I confess, between fear and shame, I would have given my life for a ducat.

Ros. Though I wonder, when you perceived him so sensibly touched with his old passion, how you had patience to conceal yourself any longer.

Hyp. Indeed, I could not easily have resisted it, but that I knew, if I had been discovered before my marriage with you, your father, to be sure, would have insisted then upon his contract with him, which I did not know how far Don Philip might be carried in point of honour to keep; I knew, too, his refusing it would but the more incense the old gentleman against my brother's happiness with you; and I found myself obliged, in gratitude, not to build my own upon the ruin of yours.

Ros. This is an obligation I never could deserve.

Hyp. Your assistance, madam, in my affair has overpaid it.

Ros. What's become of Don Philip? I hope you have not kept him prisoner all this while?

Hyp. Oh, he'll be released presently; Flora has her orders. Where's your father, madam?

Ros. I saw him go towards his closet; I believe he's gone to fetch you part of my fortune; he seemed in mighty good humour.

Hyp. We must be sure to keep it up as high as we can, that he may be the more stunned when he falls.

Ros. With all my heart: methinks, I am possessed with the spirit of disobedience——Now, could I, in the humour I am in, consent to any mischief that would but heartily plague my old gentleman, for daring to be better than his word to Octavio.

Hyp. And if we don't plague him——But here he comes.

Enter DON MANUEL.

D. Man. Ah, my little conqueror! let me embrace thee!——That ever I should see this day! this most triumphant day! this day of all days in my life!

Hyp. Aye, and of my life, too, sir.

[*Embracing him.*

D. Man. Aye, and my cares are over—now, I have nothing to do but to think of the other world, for I've done all my business in this; got as many children as I could; and, now I'm grown old, have set a young couple to work that will do it better.

Hyp. I warrant ye, sir, you'll soon see whether your daughter has married a man or no.

D. Man. Ah, well said! and that you may never be out of humour with your business, look you here, children, I have brought you some baubles that will make you merry as long as you live; twelve thousand pistoles are the least value of them; the rest of your fortune shall be paid in the best Barbary gold to-morrow morning.

Hyp. Aye, sir, this is speaking like a father! this is encouragement, indeed!

D. Man. Much good may do thy heart and soul with them—and Heaven bless you together! I have had a great deal of care and trouble to bring it about, children; but thank my stars 'tis over—'tis over now—now, I may sleep with my doors open, and never have my slumbers broken with the fear of rogues and rivals.

Ros. Don't interrupt him, and see how far his humour will carry him.

[*To* HYPOLITA.

D. Man. But there is no joy lasting in this world; we must all die, when we have done our best, sooner or later; old or young, prince or peasant, high or low, kings, lords, and—common whores must die! nothing certain; we are forced to buy one comfort with the loss of another. Now I have married my child, I have lost my companion—I have parted with my girl—her heart's gone another way now—She'll forget her old father—I shall never have her wake me more, like a cheerful lark, with her pretty songs in a morning——I shall have nobody to chat at dinner with me now, or take up a godly book, and read me to sleep in an afternoon. Ah! these comforters are all gone now! [*Weeps.*

Hyp. How very near the extreme of one passion is to another! Now he is tired with joy, till he is downright melancholy.

Ros. What's the matter, sir?

D. Man. Ay, my child! now it comes to the test, methinks, I don't know how to part with thee.

Ros. Oh, sir! we shall be better friends than ever.

D. Man. Uh, uh! shall we? wilt thou come and see the old man, now and then? Well, Heaven bless thee! give me a kiss—I must kiss thee at parting: be a good girl, use thy husband well, make an obedient wife, and I shall die contented.

Hyp. Die, sir! Come, come, you have a great while to live—Hang these melancholy thoughts! they are the worst company in the world at a wedding—Consider, sir, we are young; if you would oblige us, let us have a little life and mirth, a jubilee to-day at least; stir your servants; call in your neighbours; let me see your whole family mad for joy, sir.

D. Man. Ha! shall we! shall we be merry, then?

Hyp. Merry, sir! aye, as beggars at a feast. What! shall a dull Spanish custom tell me, when I am the happiest man in the kingdom, I shan't be as mad as I have a mind to? Let me see the face of nothing to-day but revels, friends, feasts, and music, sir.

D. Man. Ah! thou shalt have thy humour—thou shalt have thy humour! Hey, within there!

rogues! dogs! slaves! where are my rascals? Ah, my joy flows again——I can't bear it.

Enter several Servants.

Serv. Did you call, sir?

D. Man. Call, sir! aye, sir. What's the reason you are not all out of your wits, sir! don't you know that your young mistress is married, scoundrels?

1*st Ser.* Yes, sir; and we are all ready to be mad as soon as your honour will please to give any distracted orders.

Hyp. You see, sir, they only want a little encouragement.

D. Man. Ah, there shall be nothing wanting this day, if I were sure to beg for it all my life after——Here, sirrah, cook! look into the Roman history; see what Mark Antony had for supper when Cleopatra first treated him *cher entire*: rogue, let me have a repast that will be six times as expensive and provoking—Go.

2*d Ser.* It shall be done, sir.

D. Man. And d'ye hear? one of you step to Monsieur Vendevin, the king's butler, for the same wine that his majesty reserves for his own drinking; tell him he shall have his price for it.

1*st Ser.* How much will you please to have, sir?

D. Man. Too much, sir: I'll have every thing on the outside of enough to day. Go you, sirrah, run to the theatre, and detach me a regiment of fiddlers, and singers, and dancers; and you, sir, to my nephew, Don Lewis; give my service, and bring all his family along with him.

Hyp. Aye, sir, this is as it should be; now, it begins to look like a wedding.

D. Man. Ah, we'll make all the hair in the world stand an end at our joy.

Hyp. Here comes Flora——Now, madam, observe your cue.

Enter FLORA.

Flo. Your servant, gentlemen—I need not wish you joy—You have it, I see—Don Philip, I must needs speak with you.

Hyp. Pshaw! Prithee, don't plague me with business at such a time as this.

Flo. My business won't be deferred, sir.

Hyp. Sir?

Flo. I suppose you guess it, sir; and I must tell you, I take it ill it was not done before.

Hyp. What d'ye mean?

Flo. Your ear, sir. [*They whisper.*

D. Man. What's the matter now, trow?

Ros. The gentleman seems very free, methinks.

D. Man. Troth, I don't like it.

Ros. Don't disturb them, sir—We shall know all presently.

Hyp. But what have you done with Don Philip?

Flo. I drew the servants out of the way, while he made his escape; I saw him very busy in the street with Octavio and another gentleman; Trappanti dogged them, and brings me word they just now went into the Corrigidore's in the next street—therefore, what we do, we must do quickly. Come, come, put on your fighting face, and I'll be with them presently. [*Aside.*

Hyp. [*Aloud.*] Sir, I have offered you very fair; if you don't think so, I have married the lady, and take your course.

Flo. Sir, our contract was a full third; a third part's my right, and I'll have it, sir.

D. Man. Hey!

Hyp. Then, I must tell you, sir, since you are pleased to call it your right, you shall not have it.

Flo. Not, sir!

Hyp. No, sir! Look ye, don't put on your pert airs to me—'egad I shall use you very scurvily.

Flo. Use me! You little son of a whore, draw.

Hyp. Oh, sir, I am for you.

[*They fight,* DON MANUEL *interposes.*

Ros. Ah, help! murder! [*Runs out.*

D. Man. Within there! help! murder!——Why, gentlemen, are ye mad? pray, put up.

Hyp. A rascal!

D. Man. Friends, and quarrel? for shame!

Flo. Friends! I scorn his friendship; and since he does not know how to use a gentleman; I'll do a public piece of justice, and use him like a villain.

Hyp. Let me go.

D. Man. Better words, sir. [*To* FLORA.

Flo. Why, sir, d'ye take this fellow for Don Philip?

D. Man. What do you mean, sir?

Flo. That he has cheated me as well as you—but I'll have my revenge immediately.

[*Exit* FLORA.

[HYPOLITA *walks about, and* DON MANUEL *stares.*]

D. Man. Hey! what's all this? what is it——my heart misgives me.

Hyp. Hey! who waits there? Here you!——[*To a servant.*] bid my servant run, and hire me a coach and four horses immediately.

Ser. Yes, sir. [*Exit Servant.*

D. Man. A coach!

Enter VILETTA.

Vil. Sir, sir! bless me! what's the matter, sir? are you not well?

D. Man. Yes, yes—I am—that is—ha!

Vil. I have brought you a letter, sir.

D. Man. What business can he have for a coach?

Vil. I have brought you a letter, sir, from Octavio.

D. Man. To me?

Vil. No, sir, to my mistress——he charged me to deliver it immediately, for he said it concerned her life and fortune.

D. Man. How! let's see it—There's what I

promised thee—begone. What can this be now! [*Reads.*] 'The person whom your father ignorantly designs you to marry, is a known cheat, 'and an impostor; the true Don Philip, who is 'my intimate friend, will immediately appear 'with the Corrigidore, and fresh evidence against him. I thought this advice, though from 'one you hate, would be well received, if it came 'time enough to prevent your ruin.

'OCTAVIO.'

Oh, my heart! this letter was not designed to fall into my hands—I am affrighted—I dare not think on't.

Re-enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, your man is not within.

Hyp. Careless rascal! to be out of the way when my life's at stake—Prithee, do thou go and see if thou canst get me any post-horses.

D. Man. Post horses!

Enter ROSARA.

Ros. Oh, dear sir, what was the matter?

D. Man. Hey!——

Ros. What made them quarrel, sir?

D. Man. Child!——

Ros. What was it about, sir? You look concerned.

D. Man. Concerned!

Ros. I hope you are not hurt, sir. [*To* HYP. *who minds her not.*] What's the matter with him, sir? he won't speak to me. [*To* D. MAN.

D. Man. A—speak!—a—go to him again—try what fair words will do, and see if you can pick out the meaning of all this.

Ros. Dear sir! what's the matter? [*To* HYP.

D. Man. Ay, sir, pray what's the matter?

Hyp. I'm a little vexed at my servant's being out of the way, and the insolence of this other rascal.

D. Man. But what occasion have you for post-horses, sir?

Hyp. Something happens a little cross, sir.

D. Man. Pray, what is it?

Hyp. I'll tell you another time, sir.

D. Man. Another time, sir!——pray, satisfy me now.

Hyp. Lord, sir! when you see a man out of humour.

D. Man. Sir, it may be I'm as much out of humour as you; and I must tell ye, I don't like your behaviour, and I'm resolved to be satisfied.

Hyp. Sir, what is it you'd have? [*Peevishly.*

D. Man. Look ye, sir——in short—I—I have received a letter.

Hyp. Well, sir.

D. Man. I wish it may be well, sir.

Hyp. Bless me, sir! what's the matter with you?

D. Man. Matter, sir! In troth, I'm almost afraid and ashamed to tell ye—but if you must needs know—there's the matter, sir.

[*Gives the letter.*

Enter DON LOUIS.

D. Lou. Uncle, I am your humble servant.

D. Man. I am glad to see you, nephew.

D. Lou. I received your invitation, and am come to pay my duty: but here I met with the most surprizing news.

D. Man. Pray what is it?

D. Lou. Why, first your servant told me my young cousin was to be married to-day to Don Philip de las Torres; and, just as I was entering your doors, who should I meet but Don Philip, with the Corrigidore and several witnesses, to prove, it seems, that the person whom you were just going to marry my cousin to, has usurped his name, betrayed you, robbed him, and is, in short, a rank impostor!

Hyp. So, now, its come home to him.

D. Man. Dear nephew! don't torture me. Are you sure you know Don Philip when you see him?

D. Lou. Know him, sir! were we not schoolfellows, fellow-collegians, and fellow-travellers?

D. Man. But are you sure you may not have forgot him, neither?

D. Lou. You might as well ask me if I had not forgot you, sir.

D. Man. But one question more, and I am dumb for ever——is that he?

D. Lou. That, sir! no, nor in the least like him—But, pray, why this concern? I hope we are not come too late to prevent the marriage?

D. Man. Oh, oh, oh, oh! my poor child!

Ros. Oh! [*Seems to faint.*

Enter VILETTA.

Vil. What's the matter, sir!

D. Man. Ah! look to my child.

D. Lou. Is this the villain, then, that has imposed on you?

Hyp. Sir, I'm this lady's husband, and, while I'm sure that name can't be taken from me, I shall be contented with laughing at any other you or your party dare give me.

D. Man. Oh!

D. Lou. Nay, then, within there—such a villain ought to be made an example.

Enter Corrigidore and Officers, with DON PHILIP, OCTAVIO, FLORA, *and* TRAPPANTI.

Oh, gentlemen, we're undone! all comes too late! my poor cousin's married to the impostor!

D. Phi. How!

Oct. Confusion!

D. Man. Oh, oh!

D. Phi. That's the person, sir, and I demand your justice.

Oct. And I.

Flo. And all of us.

D. Man. Will my cares never be over!

Cor. Well, gentlemen, let me rightly understand what 'tis you charge him with, and I'll commit him immediately—First, sir, you say these gentlemen all know you to be the true Don Philip?

D. Lou. That, sir, I presume, my oath will prove.

Oct. Or mine,

Flo. And mine.

Trap. Ay, and mine, too, sir.

D. Man. Where shall I hide this shameful head?

Flo. And for the robbery, that I can prove upon him; he confessed to me at Toledo he stole this gentleman's portmanteau there to carry on his design upon this lady, and agreed to give me a third part of her fortune, for my assistance, which he refusing to pay as soon as the marriage was over, I thought myself obliged, in honour, to discover him.

Hyp. Well, gentlemen, you may insult me if you please; but, I presume, you'll hardly be able to prove that I'm not married to the lady, or have not the best part of her fortune in my pocket: so, do your worst; I own my ingenuity, and am proud on't.

D. Man. Ingenuity, abandoned villain!—But, sir, before you send him to gaol, I desire he may return the jewels I gave him as part of my daughter's portion.

Cor. That can't be, sir—since he has married the lady, her fortune is lawfully his. All we can do, is to prosecute him for robbing this gentleman.

D. Man. Oh, that ever I was born!

Hyp. Return the jewels, sir! If you don't pay me the rest of her fortune to-morrow morning, you may chance to go to gaol before me.

D. Man. Oh, that I were buried! will my cares never be over?

Hyp. They are pretty near it, sir; you can't have much more to trouble you.

Cor. Come, sir, if you please, I must desire to take your affidavit in writing.

[*Goes to the table with* FLORA.

D. Phi. Now, sir, you see what your own rashness has brought ye to. How shall I be stared at when I give an account of this to my father, or your friends in Seville! you'll be the public jest; your understanding, or your folly, will be the mirth of every table.

D. Man. Pray forbear, sir.

Hyp. Keep it up, madam. [*Aside to* ROSARA.

Ros. Oh, sir! how wretched have you made me! Is this the care you have taken of me, for my blind obedience to your commands? this my reward for filial duty?

D. Man. Ah, my poor child!

Ros. But I deserve it all for ever listening to your barbarous proposal, when my conscience might have told me my vows and person, in justice and honour, were the wronged Octavio's.

D. Man. Oh, oh!

Oct. Can she repent her falsehood then, at last! Is't possible! then I'm wounded, too! Oh, my poor, undone Rosara! [*Goes to her.*] Ungrateful! cruel! perjured man! how canst thou bear to see the light, after this heap of ruin thou hast raised, by tearing thus asunder the most solemn vows of plighted love!

D. Man. Oh, don't insult me; I deserve the worst you can say—I'm a miserable wretch, and I repent me.

Oct. Repent! canst thou believe whole years of sorrow will atone thy crime? No; groan on; sigh and weep away thy life to come, and, when the stings and horrors of thy conscience have laid thy tortured body in the grave—then, then—as thou dost me, when it is too late, I'll pity thee.

Vil. So! here's the lady in tears, the lover in rage, the old gentleman out of his senses, most of the company distracted, and the bridegroom in a fair way to be hanged—the merriest wedding that ever I saw in my life!

Cor. Well, sir, have you any thing to say, before I make your warrant? [*To* HYPOLITA.

Hyp. A word or two, and I obey ye, sir—Gentlemen, I have reflected on the folly of my action, and foresee the disquiets I am like to undergo in being this lady's husband; therefore, as I own myself the author of all this seeming ruin and confusion, so I am willing (desiring first the officers may withdraw), to offer something to the general quiet.

Oct. What can this mean?

D. Phi. Psha! some new contrivance—Let's be gone.

D. Lou. Stay a moment; it can be no harm to hear him—Sir, will you oblige us?

Cor. Wait without—— [*Exeunt Officers.*

Vil. What's to be done now, trow?

Trap. Some smart thing, I warrant ye: the little gentleman hath a notable head, faith!

Flo. Nay, gentlemen, thus much I know of him, that if you can but persuade him to be honest, 'tis still in his power to make you all amends, and, in my opinion, 'tis high time he should propose it.

D. Man. Ay, 'tis time he were hanged, indeed, for I know no other amends he can make us.

Hyp. Then, I must tell you, sir, I owe you no reparation; the injuries which you complain of, your sordid avarice, and breach of promise here, have justly brought upon you—Had you, as you were obliged, in conscience and in nature, first given your daughter with your heart, she had now been honourably happy; and, if any, I the only miserable person here.

D. Lou. He talks reason.

D. Phi. I don't think him in the wrong there, indeed.

Hyp. Therefore, sir, if you are injured, you may thank yourself for it.

D. Man. Nay, dear sir—I do confess my blindness, and could heartily wish your eyes, or mine, had dropped out of our heads before ever we saw one another.

Hyp. Well, sir, (however little you have de-

served it) yet, for your daughter's sake, if you'll oblige yourself, by signing this paper, to keep your first promise, and give her, with her full fortune, to this gentleman, I'm still content, on that condition, to disannul my own pretences, and resign her.

Oct. Ha! what says he?

D. Lou. This is strange!

D. Man. Sir, I don't know how to answer you; for I can never believe you'll have good-nature enough to hang yourself out of the way, to make room for him.

Hyp. Then, sir, to let you see I have not only an honest meaning, but an immediate power, to make good my word, I first renounce all title to her fortune; these jewels, which I received from you, I give him free possession of; and now, sir, the rest of her fortune you owe him with her person.

Oct. I am all amazement!

D. Lou. What can this end in?

D. Phi. I am surprized, indeed!

D. Man. This is unaccountable, I must confess——But still, sir, if you disannul your pretences, how you'll persuade that gentleman, to whom I am obliged by contract, to part with his——

D. Phi. That, sir, shall be no let; I am too well acquainted with the virtue of my friend's title, to entertain a thought that can disturb it.

Hyp. Then my fears are over.—[*Aside.*]——Now, sir, it only stops at you.

D. Man. Well, sir, I see the paper is only conditional, and, since the general welfare is concerned, I won't refuse to lend you my helping hand to it; but, if you should not make your words good, sir, I hope you won't take it ill if a man should poison you?

D. Phi. And, sir, let me, too, warn you how you execute this promise; your flattery and dissembled penitence have deceived me once already, which makes me, I confess, a little slow in my belief; therefore, take heed! expect no second mercy; for, be assured of this, I never can forgive a villain.

Hyp. If I am proved one, spare me not——I ask but this—Use me as you find me.

D. Phi. That you may depend on.

D. Man. There, sir.

[*Gives* HYPOLITA *the writing signed.*

Ros. Now, I tremble for her.

[*Aside.*

Hyp. And now, Don Philip, I confess you are the only injured person here.

D. Phi. I know not that—do my friend right, and I shall easily forgive thee.

Hyp. His pardon, with his thanks, I am sure I shall deserve; but how shall I forgive myself? Is there, in nature, left a means that can repair the shameful slights, the insults, and the long disquiet you have known from love?

D. Phi. Let me understand thee!

Hyp. Examine well your heart; and, if the fierce resentment of its wrongs has not extinguished quite the usual soft compassion there, revive at least one spark, in pity of my woman's weakness.

D. Man. How! a woman!

D. Phi. Whither wouldst thou carry me?

Hyp. Not but I know you generous as the heart of love; yet let me doubt if even this low submission can deserve your pardon—don't look on me: I cannot bear that you should know me yet. The extravagant attempt I have this day run through, to meet you thus, justly may subject me to your contempt and scorn, unless the same forgiving goodness that used to overlook the failings of Hypolita prove still my friend, and soften all with the excuse of love.

Oct. My sister! Oh, Rosara! Philip!

[*All seem amazed.*

D. Phi. Oh, stop this vast effusion of my transported thoughts! ere my offending wishes break their prison through my eyes, and surfeit on forbidden hopes again: or, if my tears are false, if your relenting heart is touched at last in pity of my enduring love, be kind at once, speak on, and awake me to the joy, while I have sense to hear you.

Hyp. Nay, then I am subdued indeed! Is it possible, spite of my follies, still your generous heart can love? 'Tis so! Your eyes confess it, and my fears are dead. Why, then, should I blush, to let at once the honest fulness of my heart gush forth?

Oh, Philip! Hypolita is—yours for ever!

[*They advance slowly, and at last rush into one another's arms.*]

D. Phi. Oh, ecstasy! Distracting joy! Do I then live to call you mine? Is there an end, at last, of my repeated pangs, my sighs, my torments, and my rejected vows? Is it possible—is it she? Oh, let me view thee thus with aching eyes, and feed my eager sense upon the transport of thy love confessed! What, kind! and yet—it is, it is Hypolita! and yet 'tis she! I know her by the busy pulses at my heart, which only love like mine can feel, and she alone can give. [*Eagerly embracing her.*

Hyp. Now, Philip, you may insult our sex's pride, for I confess you have subdued it all in me; I plead no merit but my knowing yours; I own the weakness of my boasted power, and now am only proud of my humility.

D. Phi. Oh, never! never shall thy empire cease! 'Tis not in thy power to give thy power away: this last surprise of generous love has bound me to thy heart, a poor indebted wretch, for ever.

Hyp. No more; the rest the priest should say—but now our joys grow rude—here are our friends, that must be happy, too.

D. Phi. Louis! Octavio! my brother now! oh, forgive the hurry of a transported heart!

D. Man. A woman! and Octavio's sister!

Oct. That heart that does not feel, as 'twere its own, a joy like this, ne'er yet confessed the power of friendship nor of love.

[*Embracing him.*

D. Man. Have I then been pleased, and plagued, and frighted out of my wits by a woman all this while? Odsbud, she is a notable contriver! Stand clear, ho! for if I have not a fair brush at her lips—nay, if she does not give me the hearty smack, too, odswinds and thunder! she is not the good-humoured girl I took her for.

Hyp. Come, sir, I won't baulk your good humour.—[*He kisses her.*]—And now I have a favour to beg of you: you remember your promise; only your blessing here, sir.

[OCTAVIO *and* ROSARA *kneel.*

D. Man. Ah! I can deny thee nothing; and, since I find thou art not fit for my girl's business thyself, odzooks! it shall never be done out of the family—and so, children, Heaven bless you together! Come, I'll give you her hand myself, you know the way to her heart; and, as soon as the priest has said grace, he shall toss you the rest of her body into the bargain. And now my cares are over again.

Oct. We'll study to deserve your love, sir.—Oh, Rosara!

Ros. Now, Octavio, do you believe I loved you better than the person I was to marry?

Oct. Kind creature! you were in her secret, then?

Ros. I was, and she in mine.

Oct. Sister! what words can thank you?

Hyp. Any that tell me of Octavio's happiness.

D. Phi. My friend successful too! Then, my joys are double. But how this generous attempt was started first; how it has been pursued, and carried with this kind surprise at last, gives me wonder equal to my joy.

Hyp. Here is one, that, at more leisure, shall inform you all: she was ever a friend to your love, has had a hearty share in the fatigue, and now I am bound in honour to give her part of the garland, too.

D. Phi. How! she?

Flo. Trusty Flora, sir, at your service. I have had many a battle with my lady upon your account; but I always told her we should do her business at last.

D. Man. Another metamorphosis! Brave girls, faith! Odzooks, we shall have them make campaigns shortly!

D. Phi. Take this as an earnest of my thanks; in Seville, I'll provide for thee.

Hyp. Nay, here's another accomplice, too—confederate I cannot say; for honest Trappanti did not know but that I was as great a rogue as himself.

Trap. 'Tis a folly to lie; I did not indeed, madam—But the world cannot say I have been a rogue to your ladyship—and, if you had not parted with your money——

Hyp. Thou hadst not parted with thy honesty.

Trap. Right, madam; but how should a poor naked fellow resist, when he had so many pistoles held against him?

[*Shews money.*

D. Man. Aye, aye; well said, lad.

Vil. La! a tempting bait, indeed! let him offer to marry me again, if he dares.

[*Aside.*

D. Phi. Well, Trappanti, thou hast been serviceable, however, and I'll think of thee.

Oct. Nay, I am his debtor, too.

Trap. Ah, there's a very easy way, gentlemen, to reward me; and, since you partly owe your happiness to my roguery, I should be very proud to owe mine only to your generosity.

Oct. As how, pray?

Trap. Why, sir, I find, by my constitution, that it is as natural to be in love as an hungry, and that I ha'nt a jot less stomach than the best of my betters; and, though I have often thought a wife but dining every day upon the same dish, yet, methinks, it's better than no dinner at all: and, for my part, I had rather have no stomach to my meat, than no meat to my stomach: upon which consideration, gentlemen and ladies, I desire you'll use your interest with Madona here—to let me dine at her ordinary.

D. Man. A pleasant rogue, faith! Odzooks! the jade shall have him. Come, hussy, he's an ingenious person.

Vil. Sir, I don't understand his stuff; when he speaks plain, I know what to say to him.

Trap. Why, then, in plain terms, let me a lease of your tenement—marry me.

Vil. Aye, now you say something——I was afraid, by what you said in the garden, you had only a mind to be a wicked tenant at will.

Trap. No, no, child; I have no mind to be turned out at a quarter's warning.

Vil. Well, there's my hand——and now meet me as soon as you will with a canonical lawyer, and I'll give you possession of the rest of the premises.

D. Man. Odzooks! and well thought of! I'll send for one presently. Hear you, sirrah! run to Father Benedict again, tell him his work don't hold here; his last marriage is broke to pieces: but now we have got better tackle, he must come and stitch two or three fresh couple together, as fast as he can.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, the music's come.

D. Man. Ah, they could never take us in a better time—let them enter—Ladies, and sons and daughters, for I think you are all akin to me now, will you be pleased to sit?

[*After the entertainment*

D. Man. Come, gentlemen, now our collation waits.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, the priest's come.

D. Man. That's well; we'll dispatch him presently.

D. Phi. Now, my Hypolita,
Let our example teach mankind to love,
From thine the fair their favours may improve;
To the quick pains you give our joys we owe,
Till those we feel, these we can never know.
But warned with honest hope from my success,
Even in the height of all its miseries,
Oh, never let a virtuous mind despair,
For constant hearts are love's peculiar care.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

CARELESS HUSBAND.

BY

CIBBER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

LORD MORELOVE, *attached to* LADY BETTY.
LORD FOPPINGTON, *a coxcomb of fashion.*
SIR CHARLES EASY, *the Careless Husband.*

Servant.

WOMEN.

LADY BETTY MODISH, *attached to* LORD MORELOVE.
LADY EASY, *wife to* SIR CHARLES.
LADY GRAVEAIRS, *a woman of intrigue.*
MRS EDGING, *woman to* LADY EASY.

Scene—Windsor.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—SIR CHARLES EASY'S *lodgings.*

Enter LADY EASY.

Lady Easy. WAS ever woman's spirit, by an injurious husband, broke like mine? A vile licentious man! must he bring home his follies, too? Wrong me with my very servant! O! how tedious a relief is patience! and yet, in my condition, 'tis the only remedy: for to reproach him with my wrongs, is taking on myself the means of a redress, bidding defiance to his falsehood, and naturally but provokes him to undo me. The uneasy thought of my continual jealousy may teaze him to a fixed aversion; and hitherto, though he neglects, I cannot think he hates me. It must be so: since I want power to please him, he never shall upbraid me with an attempt of making him uneasy—My eyes and tongue shall yet be blind and silent to my wrongs; nor would I have him think my virtue could suspect him, till, by some gross, apparent proof of his misdoing, he forces me to see—and to forgive it.

Enter EDGING, *hastily.*

Edg. O madam!

Lady Easy. What's the matter?

Edg. I have the strangest thing to shew your ladyship——such a discovery———

Lady Easy. You are resolved to make it without much ceremony, I find. What's the business, pray?

Edg. The business, madam! I have not patience to tell you; I am out of breath at the very thoughts on't; I shall not be able to speak this half hour.

Lady Easy. Not to the purpose, I believe! but, methinks, you talk impertinently with a great deal of ease.

Edg. Nay, madam, perhaps not so impertinent as your ladyship thinks; there is that will speak to the purpose, I am sure—A base man—

[*Gives a letter.*

Lady Easy. What is this? An open letter! Whence comes it?

Edg. Nay, read it, madam; you will soon

guess—If these are the tricks of husbands, keep me a maid still, say I.

Lady Easy. [*Looking on the superscription.*] To Sir Charles Easy! Ha! Too well I know this hateful hand. O my heart! but I must veil my jealousy, which 'tis not fit this creature should suppose I am acquainted with. [*Aside.*] This direction is to your master; how came you by it?

Edg. Why, madam, as my master was lying down, after he came in from hunting, he sent me into his dressing-room, to fetch his snuff-box out of his waistcoat pocket; and so, as I was searching for the box, madam, there I found this wicked letter from a mistress; which I had no sooner read, but, I declare it, my very blood rose at him again; methought I could have torn him and her to pieces.

Lady Easy. Intolerable! This odious thing's jealous of him herself, and wants me to join with her in a revenge upon him—Sure I am fallen, indeed! But 'twere to make me lower yet, to let her think I understand her. [*Aside.*

Edg. Nay, pray, madam, read it; you will be out of patience at it.

Lady Easy. You are bold, mistress; has my indulgence, or your master's good humour, flattered you into the assurance of reading his letters? a liberty I never gave myself—Here—lay it where you had it immediately—Should he know of your sauciness, 'twould not be my favour could protect you. [*Exit* LADY EASY.

Edg. Your favour! marry come up! sure I don't depend upon your favour! It's not come to that, I hope. Poor creature!—don't you think I am my master's mistress for nothing—You shall find, madam, I won't be snapt up as I have been—Not but it vexes me to think she should not be as uneasy as I. I am sure he is a base man to me, and I could cry my eyes out that she should not think him as bad to her every jot. If I am wronged, sure she may very well expect it, that is but his wife—A conceited thing—she need not be so easy, neither—I am as handsome as she, I hope—Here's my master—I'll try whether I am to be huffed by her or no. [*Walks behind.*

Enter SIR CHARLES EASY.

Sir Cha. So! The day is come again!—Life but rises to another stage, and the same dull journey is before us. How like children do we judge of happiness! When I was stinted in my fortune, almost every thing was a pleasure to me, because most things then being out of my reach, I had always the pleasure of hoping for them; now, fortune's in my hand, she is as insipid as an old acquaintance—It is mighty silly faith! Just the same thing by my wife, too; I am told she is extremely handsome—nay, and have heard a great many people say, she is certainly the best woman in the world—Why, I don't know but she may; yet I could never find that her person or good qualities gave me any concern. In my eye, the woman has no more charms than my mother.

Edg. Hum! he takes no notice of me yet—I'll let him see I can take as little notice of him. [*She walks by him gravely; he turns her about and holds her; she struggles.*] Pray, sir!

Sir Cha. A pretty pert air, that—I'll humour it—What's the matter, child? Are not you well? Kiss me, hussy.

Edg. No, the deuce fetch me if I do!

Sir Cha. Has any thing put thee out of humour, love?

Edg. No, sir, 'tis not worth my being out of humour at—though, if ever you have any thing to say to me again, I'll be burned.

Sir Cha. Somebody has belied me to thee.

Edg. No, sir, 'tis you have belied yourself to me—Did not I ask you, when you first made a fool of me, if you would be always constant to me? and did not you say, I might be sure you would? And here, instead of that, you are going on in your old intrigue with my lady Gravcairs.

Sir Cha. So———

Edg. Beside, don't you suffer my lady to huff me every day as if I were her dog, or had no more concern with you—I declare I won't bear it, and she shan't think to huff me—for aught I know, I am as agreeable as she: and though she dares not take any notice of your baseness to her, you shan't think to use me so—and so, pray, take your nasty letter—I know the hand well enough—for my part, I won't stay in the family to be abused at this rate: I that have refused lords and dukes for your sake. I'd have you to know, sir, I have had as many blue and green ribbons after me, for aught I know, as would have made me a falbala apron.

Sir Cha. My lady Graveairs! my nasty letter! and I won't stay in the family! Death! I'm in a pretty condition!—What an unlimited privilege has this jade got from being a whore!

Edg. I suppose, sir, you think to use every body as you do your wife.

Sir Cha. My wife! hah! Come hither, Mrs Edging; hark you, drab.

[*Seizing her by the shoulder.*

Edg. Oh!

Sir Cha. When you speak of my wife, you are to say your lady, and you are never to speak of your lady to me in any regard of her being my wife—for, look you, child, you are not her strumpet, but mine; therefore, I only give you leave to be saucy with me. In the next place, you are never to suppose there is any such person as my lady Graveairs; and lastly, my pretty one, how came you by this letter?

Edg. It's no matter, perhaps.

Sir Cha. Aye, but if you should not tell me quickly, how are you sure I won't take a great piece of flesh out of your shoulder?—My dear.

[*Shakes her.*

Edg. O lud! O lud! I will tell you, sir.

Sir Cha. Quickly then.

Edg. Oh! I took it out of your pocket, sir.

Sir Cha. When?

Edg. Oh! this morning, when you sent me for your snuff-box.

Sir Cha. And your ladyship's pretty curiosity has looked it over, I presume—ha?

[*Shakes her again.*

Edg. O lud! dear sir, don't be angry—indeed I'll never touch one again.

Sir Cha. I don't believe you will, and I'll tell you how you shall be sure you never will.

Edg. Yes, sir.

Sir Cha. By stedfastly believing, that the next time you offer it, you will have your pretty white neck twisted behind you.

Edg. Yes, sir. [*Curt'sying.*

Sir Cha. And you will be sure to remember every thing I have said to you?

Edg. Yes, sir.

Sir Cha. And now, child, I was not angry with your person, but your follies; which, since I find you are a little sensible of—don't be wholly discouraged—for I believe I—I shall have occasion for you again——

Edg. Yes, sir.

Sir Cha. In the mean time, let me hear no more of your lady, child.

Edg. No, sir.

Sir Cha. Here she comes: begone!

Edg. Yes, sir—Oh! I was never so frightened in my life. [*Exit.*

Sir Cha. So! good discipline makes good soldiers——It often puzzles me to think, from my own carelessness, and my wife's continual good humour, whether she really knows any thing of the strength of my forces—I'll sift her a little.

Enter LADY EASY.

My dear, how do you do? You are dressed very early to-day: are you going out?

Lady Easy. Only to church, my dear.

Sir Cha. Is it so late, then?

Lady Easy. The bell has just rung.

Sir Cha. Well, child, how does Windsor air agree with you? Do you find yourself any better yet? or have you a mind to go to London again?

Lady Easy. No, indeed, my dear; the air is so very pleasant, that if it were a place of less company, I could be content to end my days here.

Sir Cha. Prithee, my dear, what sort of company would most please you?

Lady Easy. When business would permit it, yours; and, in your absence, a sincere freind, that were truly happy in an honest husband, to sit a cheerful hour, and talk in mutual praise of our condition.

Sir Cha. Are you then really very happy, my dear?

Lady Easy. Why should you question it?

[*Smiling on him.*

Sir Cha. Because I fancy I am not so good to you as I should be.

Lady Easy. Pshaw!

Sir Cha. Nay, the deuce take me if I don't really confess myself so bad, that I have often wondered how any woman of your sense, rank, and person, could think it worth her while to have so many useless good qualities.

Lady Easy. Fie, my dear!

Sir Cha. By my soul, I am serious!

Lady Easy. I cannot boast of my good qualities, nor, if I could, do I believe you think them useless.

Sir Cha. Nay, I submit to you—Don't you find them so? Do you perceive that I am one tittle the better husband for your being so good a wife?

Lady Easy. Pshaw! you jest with me.

Sir Cha. Upon my life I don't——Tell me truly, was you never jealous of me?

Lady Easy. Did I ever give you any sign of it?

Sir Cha. Um—that's true—but do you really think I never gave you occasion?

Lady Easy. That's an odd question—but suppose you had?

Sir Cha. Why then, what good has your virtue done you, since all the good qualities of it could not keep me to yourself?

Lady Easy. What occasion have you given me to suppose I have not kept you to myself?

Sir Cha. I given you occasion—Fie! My dear—you may be sure—I—look you, that is not the thing, but still a—(death! what a blunder have I made?)—a—still, I say, madam, you shan't make me believe you have never been jealous of me; not that you ever had any real cause, but I know women of your principles have more pride than those that have no principles at all; and where there is pride, there must be some jealousy——so that, if you are jealous, my dear, you know you wrong me, and—

Lady Easy. Why, then, upon my word, my dear, I don't know that ever I wronged you that way in my life.

Sir Cha. But suppose I had given a real cause to be jealous, how would you do then?

Lady Easy. It must be a very substantial one that makes me jealous.

Sir Cha. Say it were a substantial one; suppose, now, I were well with a woman of your own acquaintance, that, under pretence of frequent visits to you, should only come to carry on an affair with me—suppose, now, my lady Gravecairs and I were great?

Lady Easy. Would I could not suppose it!

[*Aside.*

Sir Cha. If I come off here, I believe I am pretty safe. [*Aside.*]—Suppose, I say, my lady

Graveairs and I were so very familiar, that not only yourself, but half the town should see it?

Lady Easy. Then I should cry myself sick in some dark closet, and forget my tears when you spoke kindly to me.

Sir Cha. The most convenient piece of virtue, sure, that ever wife was mistress of. [*Aside.*

Lady Easy. But pray, my dear, did you ever think that I had any ill thoughts of my lady Graveairs?

Sir Cha. O fie, child! only you know she and I used to be a little free sometimes; so I had a mind to see if you thought there was any harm in it; but since I find you very easy, I think myself obliged to tell you, that, upon my soul, my dear, I have so little regard to her person, that the deuce take me, if I would not as soon have an affair with thy woman.

Lady Easy. Indeed, my dear, I should as soon suspect you with one as t'other.

Sir Cha. Poor dear—should'st thou—give me a kiss.

Lady Easy. Pshaw! you don't care to kiss me.

Sir Cha. By my soul, I do!————I wish I may die, if I don't think you a very fine woman!

Lady Easy. I only wish you would think me a good wife. [*Kisses her.*] But pray, my dear, what has made you so strangely inquisitive?

Sir Cha. Inquisitive!—Why--a--I don't know, one is always saying one foolish thing or another—Toll le roll! [*Sings and talks.*] My dear, what! are we never to have any ball here! Toll le roll! I fancy I could recover my dancing again, if I would but practise. Toll loll loll!

Lady Easy. This excess of carelessness to me excuses half his vices. If I can make him once think seriously—Time yet may be my friend.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, lord Morelove gives his service—

Sir Cha. Lord Morelove? where is he?——

Ser. At the Chocolate-house; he called me to him as I went by, and bid me tell your honour he'll wait upon you presently.

Lady Easy. I thought you had not expected him here again this season, my dear.

Sir Cha. I thought so, too; but you see there's no depending upon the resolution of a man that's in love.

Lady Easy. Is there a chair?

Ser. Yes, madam. [*Exit Servant.*

Lady Easy. I suppose lady Betty Modish has drawn him hither.

Sir Cha. Aye, poor soul, for all his bravery, I am afraid so.

Lady Easy. Well, my dear, I believe time to ask my lord how he does now: you'll excuse me to him, but I hope you'll make him dine with us.

Sir Cha. I'll ask him. If you see lady Betty at prayers, make her dine, too; but don't take any notice of my lord's being in town.

Lady Easy. Very well! if I should not meet her there, I'll call at her lodgings.

Sir Cha. Do so.

Lady Easy. My dear, your servant.

[*Exit* LADY EASY.

Sir Cha. My dear, I'm yours.———Well! one way or other, this woman will certainly bring about her business with me at last; for though she cannot make me happy in her own person, she lets me be so intolerably easy with the women that can, that she has at least brought me into a fair way of being as weary of them, too.

Enter Servant and LORD MORELOVE.

Ser. Sir, my lord's come.

Lord Mor. Dear Charles!

Sir Cha. My dear lord! this is an happiness undreamt of; I little thought to have seen you at Windsor again this season! I concluded, of course, that books and solitude had secured you 'till winter.

Lord Mor. Nay, I did not think of coming myself, but I found myself not very well in London; so I thought—a—little hunting, and this air——

Sir Cha. Ha! ha! ha!

Lord Mor. What do you laugh at?

Sir Cha. Only because you should not go on with your story: if you did but see how silly a man fumbles for an excuse, when he is a little ashamed of being in love, you would not wonder what I laugh at; ha, ha, ha!

Lord Mor. Thou art a very happy fellow——nothing touches thee—always easy—Then you conclude I follow lady Betty again?

Sir Cha. Yes, faith do I: and, to make you easy, my lord, I cannot see why a man, that can ride fifty miles after a poor stag, should be ashamed of running twenty in chase of a fine woman, that, in all probability, will show him so much the better sport, too. [*Embracing.*

Lord Mor. Dear Charles, don't flatter my distemper; I own I still follow her: do you think her charms have power to excuse me to the world?

Sir Cha. Aye! aye! a fine woman's an excuse for any thing, and the scandal of our being in jest, is a jest itself; we are all forced to be their fools, before we can be their favourites.

Lord Mor. You are willing to give me hope; but I can't believe she has the least degree of inclination for me.

Sir Cha. I don't know that—I am sure her pride likes you, and that's generally your fine ladies' darling passion.

Lord Mor. Do you suppose, if I could grow indifferent, it would touch her?

Sir Cha. Sting her to the heart——Will you take my advice?

Lord Mor. I have no relief but that. Had I not thee now and then to talk an hour, my life were insupportable.

Sir Cha. I am sorry for that, my lord;—but mind what I say to you——but hold, first let me know the particulars of your quarrel with her.

Lord Mor. Why——about three weeks ago, when I was last here at Windsor, she had for some days treated me with a little more reserve, and another with more freedom, than I found myself easy at.

Sir Cha. Who was that other?

Lord Mor. One of my lord Foppington's gang——the pert coxcomb that's just come to a small estate and a great periwig—he that sings himself among the women——What do you call him?——He won't speak to a commoner when a lord is in company——you always see him with a cane dangling at his button, his breast open, no gloves, one eye tucked under his hat, and a tooth-pick———Startup, that's his name.

Sir Cha. O! I have met him in a visit——but pray go on.

Lord Mor. So, disputing with her about the conduct of women, I took the liberty to tell her how far I thought she erred in hers. She told me I was rude, and that she would never believe any man could love a woman, that thought her in the wrong in any thing she had a mind to, at least if he dared to tell her so. This provoked me into her whole character, with so much spirit and civil malice, as I have seen her bestow upon a woman of true beauty, when the men first toasted her; so, in the middle of my wisdom, she told me, she desired to be alone, that I would take my odious proud heart along with me, and trouble her no more——I——bowed very low, and, as I left the room, vowed I never would, and that my proud heart should never be humbled by the outside of a fine woman—About an hour after, I whipped into my chaise for London, and have never seen her since.

Sir Cha. Very well; and how did you find your proud heart by that time you got to Hounslow?

Lord Mor. I am almost ashamed to tell you—I found her so much in the right, that I cursed my pride for contradicting her at all, and began to think, according to her maxim, that no woman could be in the wrong to a man that she had in her power.

Sir Cha. Ha, ha! Well, I'll tell you what you shall do. You can see her without trembling, I hope?

Lord Mor. Not if she receives me well.

Sir Cha. If she receives you well, you will have no occasion for what I am going to say to you——first you shall dine with her.

Lord Mor. How! where! when!

Sir Cha. Here! here! at two o'clock.

Lord Mor. Dear Charles!

Sir Cha. My wife is gone to invite her; when you see her first, be neither too humble, nor too stubborn; let her see, by the ease in your behaviour, you are still pleased in being near her, while she is upon reasonable terms with you. This will either open the door of an *eclaircissement*, or quite shut it against you——and if she is still resolved to keep you out———

Lord Mor. Nay, if she insults me, then, perhaps, I may recover pride enough to rally her by an overacted submission.

Sir Cha. Why, you improve, my lord! this is the very thing I was going to propose to you.

Lord Mor. Was it, faith! hark you, dare you stand by me?

Sir Cha. Dare I! aye, to my last drop of assurance, against all the insolent airs of the proudest beauty in Christendom.

Lord Mor. Nay, then, defiance to her—We two—Thou hast inspired me—I find myself as valiant as a flattered coward.

Sir Cha. Courage, my lord; I'll warrant we beat her.

Lord Mor. My blood stirs at the very thought on't: I long to be engaged.

Sir Cha. She will certainly give ground, when she once sees you are thoroughly provoked.

Lord Mor. Dear Charles, thou art a friend, indeed!

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, my lord Foppington gives his service, and, if your honour's at leisure, he'll wait on you as soon as he is dressed.

Lord Mor. Lord Foppington! Is he in town?

Sir Cha. Yes; I heard last night he was come. Give my service to his lordship, and tell him I should be glad he will do me the honour of his company here at dinner. [*Exit Servant.*] We may have occasion for him in our design upon Lady Betty.

Lord Mor. What use can we make of him?

Sir Cha. We'll see when he comes; at least, there is no danger in him; but I suppose you know he is your rival.

Lord Mor. Pshaw! a coxcomb.

Sir Cha. Nay, don't despise him neither——he is able to give you advice; for, though he is in love with the same woman, yet, to him, she has not charms enough to give a minute's pain.

Lord Mor. Prithee, what sense has he of love?

Sir Cha. Faith, very near as much as a man of sense ought to have; I grant you he knows not how to value a woman truly deserving, but he has a pretty just esteem for most ladies about town.

Lord Mor. That he follows, I grant you——for he seldom visits any of extraordinary reputation.

Sir Cha. Have a care! I have seen him at lady Betty Modish's.

Lord Mor. To be laughed at.

Sir Cha. Don't be too confident of that; the women now begin to laugh with him, not at him: for he really sometimes rallies his own humour with so much ease and pleasantry, that a great many women begin to think he has no follies at all, and those he has, have been as much owing to his youth, and a great estate, as want of natural wit: 'tis true, he often is a bubble to his pleasures, but he has always been wisely vain enough to keep himself from being too much the ladies' humble servant in love.

Lord Mor. There, indeed, I almost envy him.

Sir Cha. The easiness of his opinion upon the sex, will go near to pique him—We must have him.

Lord Mor. As you please—but what shall we do with ourselves till dinner?

Sir Cha. What think you of a party at picquet?

Lord Mor. O! you are too hard for me.

Sir Cha. Fie! fie! when you play with his grace?

Lord Mor. Upon my honour, he gives me three points.

Sir Cha. Does he? Why, then, you shall give me but two—Here, fellow, get cards. *Allons!*

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—LADY BETTY MODISH'S *lodgings.*

Enter LADY BETTY, *and* LADY EASY, *meeting.*

Lady Bet. Oh, my dear! I am overjoyed to see you! I am strangely happy to-day! I have just received my new scarf from London, and you are most critically come to give me your opinion of it.

Lady Easy. Oh, your servant, madam; I am a very indifferent judge, you know. What, is it with sleeves?

Lady Bet. Oh, 'tis impossible to tell you what it is!——'Tis all extravagance, both in mode and fancy, my dear. I believe there's six thousand yards of edging in it—Then, such an enchanting slope from the elbow—something so new, so lively, so noble, so coquette and charming——but you shall see it, my dear———

Lady Easy. Indeed, I won't, my dear; I am resolved to mortify you for being so wrongfully fond of a trifle.

Lady Bet. Nay, now, my dear, you are ill-natured.

Lady Easy. Why, truly, I'm half angry to see a woman of your sense so warmly concerned in the care of her outside; for, when we have taken our best pains about it, 'tis the beauty of the mind alone that gives us lasting virtue.

Lady Bet. Ah, my dear! my dear! you have been a married woman to a fine purpose, indeed, that know so little of the taste of mankind. Take my word, a new fashion upon a fine woman is often a greater proof of her value, than you are aware of.

Lady Easy. That I can't comprehend; for you see among the men, nothing's more ridiculous than a new fashion. Those of the first sense are always the last that come into them.

Lady Bet. That is, because the only merit of a man is his sense; but, doubtless, the greatest value of woman is her beauty. An homely woman, at the head of a fashion, would not be allowed in it by the men, and consequently not followed by the women: so that, to be successful in one's fancy, is an evident sign of one's being admired; and I always take admiration for the best proof of beauty, and beauty certainly is the source of power, as power, in all creatures, is the height of happiness.

Lady Easy. At this rate, you would rather be thought beautiful than good?

Lady Bet. As I had rather command, than obey: the wisest homely woman can't make a man of sense of a fool; but the veriest fool of a beauty shall make an ass of a statesman; so that, in short, I can't see a woman of spirit has any business in this world but to dress—and make the men like her.

Lady Easy. Do you suppose this is a principle the men of sense will admire you for?

Lady Bet. I do suppose, that when I suffer any man to like my person, he shan't dare to find fault with my principle.

Lady Easy. But men of sense are not so easily humbled.

Lady Bet. The easiest of any; one has ten thousand times the trouble with a coxcomb.

Lady Easy. Nay, that may be; for I have seen you throw away more good humour, in hopes of a *tendresse* from my lord Foppington, who loves all women alike, than would have made my lord Morelove perfectly happy, who loves only you.

Lady Bet. The men of sense, my dear, make the best fools in the world: their sincerity and good breeding throws them so entirely into one's power, and gives one such an agreeable thirst of using them ill, to shew that power—'tis impossible not to quench it.

Lady Easy. But, methinks, my lord Morelove's manner to you might move any woman to a kinder sense of his merit.

Lady Bet. Aye, but would it not be hard, my dear, for a poor weak woman to have a man of his quality and reputation in her power, and not to let the world see him there? Would any creature sit new dressed all day in her closet? Could

you bear to have a sweet-fancied suit, and never shew it at the play, or the drawing-room?

Lady Easy. But one would not ride in it, methinks, or harass it out, when there's no occasion.

Lady Bet. Pooh! my lord Morelove's a mere Indian damask, one can't wear him out; o' my conscience, I must give him to my woman at last; I begin to be known by him: had not I best leave him off, my dear? for, poor soul, I believe I have a little fretted him of late.

Lady Easy. Now, 'tis to me amazing, how a man of his spirit can bear to be used like a dog for four or five years together—but nothing's a wonder in love; yet pray, when you found you could not like him at first, why did you ever encourage him?

Lady Bet. Why, what would you have one do? for my part, I could no more choose a man by my eye, than a shoe; one must draw them on a little, to see if they are right to one's foot.

Lady Easy. But I'd no more fool on with a man I could not like, than I'd wear a shoe that pinched me.

Lady Bet. Aye, but then a poor wretch tells one, he'll widen them, or do any thing, and is so civil and silly, that one does not know how to turn such a trifle, as a pair of shoes, or an heart, upon a fellow's hands again.

Lady Easy. Well; I confess you are very happily distinguished among most women of fortune, to have a man of my lord Morelove's sense and quality so long and honourably in love with you; for, now-a-days, one hardly ever hears of such a thing as a man of quality in love with the woman he would marry. To be in love, now, is only to have a design upon a woman, a modish way of declaring war against her virtue, which they generally attack first, by toasting up her vanity.

Lady Bet. Aye, but the world knows, that is not the case between my lord and me.

Lady Easy. Therefore, I think you happy.

Lady Bet. Now, I don't see it; I'll swear I'm better pleased to know there are a great many foolish fellows of quality that take occasion to toast me frequently.

Lady Easy. I vow I should not thank any gentleman for toasting me, and I have often wondered how a woman of your spirit could bear a great many other freedoms I have seen some men take with you.

Lady Bet. As how, my dear? Come, prithee, be free with me, for, you must know, I love dearly to hear my faults—Who is't you have observed to be too free with me?

Lady Easy. Why, there's my lord Foppington; could any woman but you bear to see him with a respectful fleer stare full in her face, draw up his breath, and cry—Gad, you're handsome?

Lady Bet. My dear, fine fruit will have flies about it; but, poor things, they do it no harm: for, if you observe, people are generally most apt to choose that the flies have been busy with, ha, ha, ha!

Lady Easy. Thou art a strange giddy creature!

Lady Bet. That may be from so much circulation of thought, my dear.

Lady Easy. But my lord Foppington's married, and one would not fool with him, for his lady's sake; it may make her uneasy, and——

Lady Bet. Poor creature! Her pride, indeed, makes her carry it off without taking any notice of it to me; though I know she hates me in her heart, and I cannot endure malicious people; so I used to dine with her once a week, purely to give her disorder; if you had but seen when my lord and I fooled a little, the creature looked so ugly!

Lady Easy. But I should not think my reputation safe; my lord Foppington's a man that talks often of his amours, but seldom speaks of favours that are refused him.

Lady Bet. Pshaw! will any thing a man says make a woman less agreeable? Will his talking spoil one's complexion, or put one's hair out of order? and for reputation—look you, my dear, take it for a rule, that, as amongst the lower rank of people, no woman wants beauty that has fortune; so, among people of fortune, no woman wants virtue, that has beauty: but an estate and beauty joined, are of an unlimited, nay, a power pontifical, make one not only absolute, but infallible——A fine woman's never in the wrong; or, if we were, 'tis not the strength of a poor creature's reason that can unfetter him. Oh, how I love to hear a wretch curse himself for loving on, or now and then coming out with a——

Yet for the plague of human race,
This devil has an angel's face.

Lady Easy. At this rate, I don't see you allow reputation to be at all essential to a fine woman?

Lady Bet. Just as much as honour to a great man. Power is always above scandal. Don't you hear people say the king of France owes most of his conquests to breaking his word, and would not the confederates have a fine time on't, if they were only to go to war with reproaches? Indeed, my dear, that jewel reputation is a very fanciful business! One shall not see a homely creature in town, but wears it in her mouth as monstrously as the Indians do bobs at their lips, and it really becomes them just alike.

Lady Easy. Have a care, my dear, of trusting too far to power alone: for nothing is more ridiculous than the fall of pride; and woman's pride, at best, may be suspected to be more a distrust, than a real contempt of mankind: for, when we have said all we can, a deserving husband is certainly our best happiness; and I don't question but my lord Morelove's merit, in a little time, will make you think so, too; for, whatever airs

you give yourself to the world, I'm sure your heart don't want good-nature.

Lady Bet. You are mistaken; I am very ill-natured, though your good-humour won't let you see it.

Lady Easy. Then, to give me a proof on't, let me see you refuse to go immediately and dine with me, after I have promised sir Charles to bring you.

Lady Bet. Pray, don't ask me.

Lady Easy. Why?

Lady Bet. Because, to let you see I hate good-nature, I'll go without asking, that you mayn't have the malice to say I did you a favour.

Lady Easy. Thou art a mad creature.

[*Exeunt arm in arm.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* SIR CHARLES'S *lodgings.* LORD MORELOVE *and* SIR CHARLES *at picquet.*

Sir Cha. Come, my lord, one single game for the tout, and so have done.

Lord More. No, hang them, I have enough of them! ill cards are the dullest company in the world—How much is it?

Sir Cha. Three parties.

Lord More. Fifteen pounds—very well.

[*While* LORD MORELOVE *counts out his money, a servant gives* SIR CHARLES *a letter, which he reads to himself.*]

Sir Cha. [*To the Servant.*]—Give my service; say I have company dines with me; if I have time I'll call there in the afternoon—ha, ha, ha!

[*Exit Servant.*

Lord More. What's the matter? there—

[*Paying the money.*

Sir Cha. The old affair—my lady Gravecairs.

Lord More. Oh! Prithee, how does that go on?

Sir Cha. As agreeably as a chancery suit: for now it comes to the intolerable plague of my not being able to get rid on't; as you may see—

[*Giving the letter.*

Lord More. [*Reads.*]—'Your behaviour, since 'I came to Windsor, has convinced me of your 'villainy, without my being surprised, or angry at 'it. I desire you would let me see you at my 'lodgings immediately, where I shall have a bet-'ter opportunity to convince you, that I never 'can, or positively will, be as I have been.—'Yours,' &c. A very whimsical letter! Faith, I think she has hard luck with you: if a man were obliged to have a mistress, her person and condition seem to be cut out for the ease of a lover: for she's a young, handsome, wild, well-jointured widow—But what's your quarrel?

Sir Cha. Nothing—She sees the coolness happens to be first on my side, and her business with me now, I suppose, is to convince me how heartily she's vexed that she was not before-hand with me.

Lord More. Her pride, and your indifference, must occasion a pleasant scene, sure; what do you intend to do?

Sir Cha. Treat her with a cold familiar air, till I pique her to forbid me her sight, and then take her at her word.

Lord More. Very gallant and provoking.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, my lord Foppington—

[*Exit Servant.*

Sir Cha. Oh—now, my lord, if you have a mind to be let into the mystery of making love without pain, here's one that's a master of the art, and shall declaim to you———

Enter LORD FOPPINGTON.

My dear lord Foppington!

Lord Fop. My dear agreeable! Que je t'embrasse! Pardi! Il y a cent ans que je ne t'ai vu—my lord, I am your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

Lord More. My lord, I kiss your hands—I hope we shall have you here some time; you seem to have laid in a stock of health to be in at the diversions of the place—You look extremely well.

Lord Fop. To see one's friends look so, my lord, may easily give a vermeille to one's complexion.

Sir Cha. Lovers in hope, my lord, always have a visible brilliant in their eyes and air.

Lord Fop. What dost thou mean, Charles?

Sir Cha. Come, come, confess what really brought you to Windsor, now you have no business there?

Lord Fop. Why, two hours, and six of the best nags in Christendom, or the devil drive me!

Lord More. You make haste, my lord.

Lord Fop. My lord, I always fly when I pursue—But they are all well kept, indeed—I love to have creatures go as I bid them. You have seen them, Charles; but so has all the world; Foppington's long tails are known on every road in England.

Sir Cha. Well, my lord, but how came they to bring you this road? You don't use to take these irregular jaunts, without some design in your head, of having more than nothing to do.

Lord Fop. Pshaw! Pox! Prithee, Charles, thou knowest I am a fellow sans consequence, be where I will.

Sir Cha. Nay, nay, this is too much among friends, my lord; come, come, we must have it; your real business here?

Lord Fop. Why, then, entre nous, there is a certain fille de joye about the court, here, that loves winning at cards better than all the things I have been able to say to her,——so I have brought an odd thousand bill in my pocket, that I design, tete-a-tete, to play off with her at picquet, or so; and now the business is out.

Sir Cha. Ah, and a very good business, too, my lord.

Lord Fop. If it be well done, Charles—

Sir Cha. That's as you manage your cards, my lord.

Lord More. This must be a woman of consequence, by the value you set upon her favours.

Sir Cha. Oh, nothing's above the price of a fine woman.

Lord Fop. Nay, look you, gentlemen, the price may not happen to be altogether so high, neither——For I fancy I know enough of the game, to make it an even bet, I get her for nothing.

Lord More. How so, my lord?

Lord Fop. Because, if she happen to lose a good sum to me, I shall buy her with her own money.

Lord More. That's new, I confess.

Lord Fop. You know, Charles, 'tis not impossible but I may be five hundred pounds deep with her—then, bills may fall short, and the devil's in't if I want assurance to ask her to pay some way or other.

Sir Cha. And a man must be a churl, indeed, that won't take a lady's personal security; ha, ha, ha!

Lord Fop. He, he, he! Thou art a devil, Charles!

Lord More. Death! How happy is this coxcomb? [*Aside.*

Lord Fop. But, to tell you the truth, gentlemen, I had another pressing temptation that brought me hither, which was—my wife.

Lord More. That's kind, indeed; my lady has been here this month: she'll be glad to see you.

Lord Fop. That I don't know; for I design this afternoon to send her to London.

Lord More. What! the same day you come, my lord? that would be cruel.

Lord Fop. Aye, but it will be mighty convenient; for she is positively of no manner of use in my amours.

Lord More. That's your fault; the town thinks her a very deserving woman.

Lord Fop. If she were a woman of the town, perhaps I should think so, too; but she happens to be my wife, and, when a wife is once given to deserve more than her husband's inclinations can pay, in my mind she has no merit at all.

Lord More. She's extremely well-bred, and of a very prudent conduct.

Lord Fop. Um——aye——the woman's proud enough.

Lord More. Add to this, all the world allows her handsome.

Lord Fop. The world's extremely civil, my lord; and I should take it as a favour done me, if they could find an expedient to unmarry the poor woman from the only man in the world that cannot think her handsome.

Lord More. I believe there are a great many in the world that are sorry 'tis not in their power to unmarry her.

Lord Fop. I am a great many in the world's very humble servant; and, whenever they find it is in their power, their high and mighty wisdoms may command me at a quarter of an hour's warning.

Lord More. Pray, my lord, what did you marry for?

Lord Fop. To pay my debts at play, and disinherit my younger brother.

Lord More. But there are some things due to a wife.

Lord Fop. And there are some debts I don't care to pay——to both which I plead—husband, and—my lord.

Lord More. If I should do so, I should expect to have my own coach stopt in the street, and to meet my wife with the windows up in a hackney.

Lord Fop. Then would I put in bail, and order a separate maintenance.

Lord More. So, pay the double the sum of the debt, and be married for nothing.

Lord Fop. Now, I think deferring a dun, and getting rid of one's wife, are two the most agreeable sweets in the liberties of an English subject.

Lord More. If I were married, I would as soon part from my estate as my wife.

Lord Fop. Now, I would not; sun-burn me if I would!

Lord More. Death! but, since you are so indifferent, my lord, why would you needs marry a woman of so much merit? Could not you have laid out your spleen upon some ill-natured shrew, that wanted the plague of an ill husband, and have let her alone to some plain, honest man of quality, that would have deserved her?

Lord Fop. Why, faith, my lord, that might have been considered; but I really grew so passionately fond of her fortune, that, curse catch me, I was quite blind to the rest of her good qualities: for, to tell you the truth, if it had been possible the old put of a peer could have tossed me in t'other five thousand for them, by my consent, she should have relinquished her merit and virtues to any of her other sisters.

Sir Cha. Aye, aye, my lord; virtues in a wife are good for nothing but to make her proud, and put the world in mind of her husband's faults.

Lord Fop. Right, Charles: and, strike me blind, but the women of virtue are now grown such idiots in love, that they expect of a man, just as they do of a coach-horse, that's one appetite, like t'other's flesh, should increase by feeding.

Sir Cha. Right, my lord; and don't consider, that toujours chapons bouillis will never do with an English stomach.

Lord Fop. Ha, ha, ha! To tell you the truth,

Charles, I have known so much of that sort of eating, that I now think, for an hearty meal, no wild fowl in Europe is comparable to a joint of Banstead mutton.

Lord Mor. How do you mean?

Lord Fop. Why that, for my part, I had rather have a plain slice of my wife's woman, than my guts full of e'er an Ortolan dutchess in Christendom.

Lord Mor. But, I thought, my lord, your chief business now at Windsor had been your design upon a woman of quality.

Lord Fop. That's true, my lord; though I don't think your fine lady the best dish myself, yet a man of quality can't be without such things at his table.

Lord Mor. Oh, then, you only desire the reputation of an affair with her?

Lord Fop. I think the reputation is the most inviting part of an amour with most women of quality.

Lord Mor. Why so, my lord?

Lord Fop. Why, who the devil would run through all the degrees of form and ceremony, that lead one up to the last favour, if it were not for the reputation of understanding the nearest way to get over the difficulty?

Lord Mor. But, my lord, does not the reputation of your being so general an undertaker frighten the women from engaging with you? For, they say, no man can love but one at a time.

Lord Fop. That's just one more than ever I came up to: for, stop my breath, if ever I loved in my life!

Lord Mor. How do you get them, then?

Lord Fop. Why, sometimes, as they get other people: I dress, and let them get me; or, if that won't do, as I got my title, I buy them.

Lord Mor. But, how can you, that profess indifference, think it worth your while to come so often up to the price of a woman of quality?

Lord Fop. Because, you must know, my lord, that most of them begin, now, to come down to reason; I mean those that are to be had; for some die fools: but, with the wiser sort, 'tis not, of late, so very expensive; now and then, a *partie quarré*, a jaunt or two in a hack to an Indian house, a little china, an odd thing for a gown, or so; and, in three days after, you meet her at the conveniency of trying it *chez Mademoiselle d' Epingle*.

Sir Cha. Aye, aye, my lord; and when you are there, you know, what between a little chat, a dish of tea, mademoiselle's good humour, and a *petit chanson* or two, the devil's in't if a man can't fool away the time, 'till he sees how it looks upon her by candle-light.

Lord Fop. Heh! heh! well said, Charles; egad, I fancy thee and I have unlaced many a reputation there!——Your great lady is as soon undressed as her woman

Lord Mor. I could never find it so—the shame or scandal of a repulse always made me afraid of attempting women of condition.

Sir Cha. Ha, ha! egad, my lord, you deserve to be ill used; your modesty's enough to spoil any woman in the world. But my lord and I understand the sex a little better; we see plainly, that women are only cold, as some men are brave, from the modesty or fear of those that attack them.

Lord Fop. Right, Charles—a man should no more give up his heart to a woman, than his sword to a bully; they are both as insolent as the devil after it.

Sir Cha. How do you like that, my lord?

[*Aside to* LORD MORELOVE.

Lord Mor. Faith, I envy him!—But, my lord, suppose your inclination should stumble upon a woman truly virtuous, would not a severe repulse from such an one put you strangely out of countenance?

Lord Fop. Not at all, my lord—for, if a man don't mind a box o' the ear in a fair struggle with a fresh country girl, why the deuce should he be concerned at an impertinent frown for an attack upon a woman of quality?

Lord Mor. Then, you have no notion of a lady's cruelty?

Lord Fop. Ha, ha! let me blood, if I think there's a greater jest in nature! I am ready to crack my guts with laughing, to see a senseless flirt, because the creature happens to have a little pride, that she calls virtue, about her, give herself all the insolent airs of resentment and disdain to an honest fellow, that, all the while, does not care three pinches of snuff if she and her virtue were to run, with their last favours, through the first regiment of guards!—Ha, ha! it puts me in mind of an affair of mine, so impertinent!——

Lord Mor. Oh, that's impossible, my lord!—Pray, let's hear it.

Lord Fop. Why, I happened once to be very well in a certain man of quality's family, and his wife liked me!

Lord Mor. How do you know she liked you?

Lord Fop. Why, from the very moment I told her I liked her, she never durst trust herself at the end of a room with me.

Lord Mor. That might be her not liking you.

Lord Fop. My lord—Women of quality don't use to speak the thing plain—but, to satisfy you I did not want encouragement, I never came there in my life, but she did immediately smile, and borrow my snuff-box.

Lord Mor. She liked your snuff, at least—Well, but how did she use you?

Lord Fop. By all that's infamous, she jilted me!

Lord Mor. How! Jilt you?

Lord Fop. Ay, death's curse, she jilted me!

Lord Mor. Pray, let's hear.

Lord Fop. For, when I was pretty well convinced she had a mind to me, I one day made her a hint of an appointment: upon which, with an insolent frown in her face (that made her look as ugly as the devil,) she told me, that, if ever I came thither again, her lord should know that she had forbidden me the house before.—Did you ever hear of such a slut?

Sir Cha. Intolerable!

Lord Mor. But, how did her answer agree with you?

Lord Fop. Oh, passionately well! for I stared full in her face, and burst out a laughing; at which, she turned upon her heel, and gave a crack with her fan, like a coach-whip, and bridled out of the room with the air and complexion of an incensed Turkey-cock.

[*A servant whispers* SIR CHARLES.

Lord Mor. What did you, then?

Lord Fop. I—looked after her, gaped, threw up the sash, and fell a singing out of the window ——so that, you see, my lord, while a man is not in love, there's no great affliction in missing one's way to a woman.

Sir Cha. Aye, aye, you talk this very well, my lord; but, now, let's see how you dare behave yourself upon action—dinner's served, and the ladies stay for us—There's one within, has been too hard for as brisk a man as yourself.

Lord Mor. I guess who you mean—Have a care, my lord; she'll prove your courage for you.

Lord Fop. Will she? then she's an undone creature. For, let me tell you, gentlemen, courage is the whole mystery of making love, and of more use than conduct is in war; for the bravest fellow in Europe may beat his brains out against the stubborn walls of a town—But

——Women, born to be controlled,
Stoop to the forward, and the bold. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter LORD MORELOVE, *and* SIR CHARLES.

Lord Mor. So! Did not I bear up bravely?

Sir Cha. Admirably! with the best bred insolence in nature; you insulted like a woman of quality, when her country-bred husband's jealous of her in the wrong place.

Lord Mor. Ha, ha! Did you observe, when I first came into the room, how carelessly she brushed her eyes over me; and, when the company saluted me, stood all the while with her face to the window? ha, ha!

Sir Cha. What astonished airs she gave herself, when you asked her, what made her so grave upon her old friends!

Lord Mor. And, whenever I offered any thing in talk, what affected care she took to direct her observations of it to a third person!

Sir Cha. I observed she did not eat above the rump of a pigeon all dinner time.

Lord Mor. And how she coloured when I told her her ladyship had lost her stomach!

Sir Cha. If you keep your temper, she's undone.

Lord Mor. Provided she sticks to her pride, I believe I may.

Sir Cha. Aye! never fear her; I warrant, in the humour she is in, she would as soon part with her sense of feeling.

Lord Mor. Well, what's to be done next?

Sir Cha. Only observe her motions: for, by her behaviour at dinner, I am sure she designs to gall you with my lord Foppington: if so, you must even stand her fire, and then play my lady Graveairs upon her, whom I'll immediately pique, and prepare for your purpose.

Lord Mor. I understand you——the properest woman in the world, too: for, she'll certainly encourage the least offer from me, in hopes of revenging her slights upon you.

Sir Cha. Right; and the very encouragement she gives you, at the same time, will give me a pretence to widen the breach of my quarrel with her.

Lord Mor. Besides, Charles, I own I am fond of any attempt that will forward a misunderstanding there, for your lady's sake. A woman, so truly good in her nature, ought to have something more from a man, than bare occasions to prove her goodness.

Sir Cha. Why, then, upon honour, my lord, to give you proof that I am positively the best husband in the world, my wife never yet found me out.

Lord Mor. That may be, by her being the best wife in the world: she, may be, won't find you out.

Sir Cha. Nay, if she won't tell a man of his faults, when she sees them, how the deuce should he mend them? But, however, you see I am going to leave them off as fast as I can.

Lord Mor. Being tired of a woman, is, indeed, a pretty tolerable assurance of a man's not designing to fool on with her——Here she comes; and, if I don't mistake, brimful of reproaches—You can't take her in a better time——I'll leave you.

Enter LADY GRAVEAIRS.

Your ladyship's most humble servant. Is the company broke up, pray?

Lady Grave. No, my lord, they are talking of basset; my lord Foppington has a mind to tally, if your lordship would encourage the table.

Lord Mor. Oh, madam, with all my heart!

But, sir Charles, I know, is hard to be got to it: I'll leave your ladyship to prevail with him.

[*Exit* LORD MORELOVE.

[SIR CHARLES *and* LADY GRAVEAIRS *salute coldly, and trifle some time before they speak.*]

Lady Grave. Sir Charles, I sent you a note this morning.

Sir Cha. Yes, madam; but there were some passages I did not expect from your ladyship. You seem to tax me with things that——

Lady Grave. Look you, sir, 'tis not at all material whether I taxed you with any thing or no; I don't desire you to clear yourself; upon my word, you may be very easy as to that matter; for my part, I am mighty well satisfied things are as they are; all I have to say to you is, that you need not give yourself the trouble to call at my lodgings this afternoon, if you should have time, as you were pleased to send me word—and so, your servant, sir, that's all—— [*Going.*

Sir Cha. Hold, madam.

Lady Grave. Look you, sir Charles, 'tis not your calling me back that will signify any thing, I can assure you.

Sir Cha. Why this extraordinary haste, madam?

Lady Grave. In short, sir Charles, I have taken a great many things from you of late, that, you know, I have often told you, I would positively bear no longer. But, I see things are in vain, and the more people strive to oblige people, the less they are thanked for it: and, since there must be an end of one's ridiculousness one time or other, I don't see any time so proper as the present; and, therefore, sir, I desire you would think of things accordingly. Your servant.

[*Going, he holds her.*

Sir Cha. Nay, madam, let us start fair, however; you ought, at least, to stay till I am as ready as your ladyship; and, then, if we must part,

Adieu, ye silent grots, and shady groves;
Ye soft amusements of our growing loves;
Adieu, ye whispered sighs, that fanned the fire,
And all the thrilling joys of young desire!

[*Affectedly.*

Lady Grave. Oh, mighty well, sir! I am very glad we are at last come to a right understanding, the only way I have long wished for; not but I'd have you to know I see your design through all your painted ease of resignation: I know you'd give your soul to make me uneasy now.

Sir Cha. Oh, fie, madam! upon my word, I would not make you uneasy, if it were in my power.

Lady Grave. Oh, dear sir, you need not take such care, upon my word; you'll find I can part with you without the least disorder; I'll try, at least; and so, once more, and for ever, sir, your servant: not but you must give me leave to tell you, as my last thought of you, too, that I do think——you are a villain. [*Exit hastily.*

Sir Cha. Oh, your very humble servant, madam! [*Bowing low.*] What a charming quality is a woman's pride, that is strong enough to refuse a man her favours, when he's weary of them—— Ah!

Re-enter LADY GRAVEAIRS.

Lady Grave. Look you, sir Charles; don't presume upon the easiness of my temper; for, to convince you that I am positively in earnest in this matter, I desire you would let me have what letters you have had of mine since you came to Windsor; and I expect you'll return the rest, as I will yours, as soon as we come to London.

Sir Cha. Upon my faith, madam, I never keep any; I always put snuff in them, and so they wear out.

Lady Grave. Sir Charles, I must have them; for, positively, I won't stir without them.

Sir Cha. Ha! then, I must be civil, I see. [*Aside.*] Perhaps, madam, I have no mind to part with them——or you.

Lady Grave. Look you, sir, all those sort of things are in vain, now there's an end of every thing between us—If you say you won't give them, I must e'en get them as well as I can.

Sir Cha. Ha! that won't do then, I find.

[*Aside.*

Lady Grave. Who's there? Mrs Edging—Your keeping a letter, sir, won't keep me, I'll assure you.

Enter EDGING.

Edg. Did your ladyship call me, madam?

Lady Grave. Ay, child: pray, do me the favour to fetch my cloak out of the dining-room?

Edg. Yes, madam.

Sir Cha. Oh, then there's hope again. [*Aside.*

Edg. Ha! she looks as if my master had quarrelled with her; I hope she's going away in a huff—she shan't stay for her cloak, I warrant her——This is pure. [*Aside. Exit smiling.*

Lady Grave. Pray, sir Charles, before I go, give me leave now, after all, to ask you—why you have used me thus?

Sir Cha. What is it you call usage, madam?

Lady Grave. Why, then, since you will have it, how comes it you have been so grossly careless and neglectful of me of late? Only tell me, seriously, wherein I have deserved this?

Sir Cha. Why, then, seriously, madam——

Re-enter EDGING, *with a cloak.*

We are interrupted——

Edg. Here is your ladyship's cloak, madam.

Lady Grave. Thank you, Mrs Edging—Oh, la! pray will you let somebody get me a chair to the door?

Edg. Humph—She might have told me that before, if she had been in such haste to go.

[*Aside. Exit.*

Lady Grave. Now, sir.

Sir Cha. Then, seriously, I say I am of late grown so very lazy in my pleasures, that I had rather lose a woman, than go through the plague

and trouble of having or keeping her; and, to be free, I have found so much, even in my acquaintance with you, whom I confess to be a mistress in the art of pleasing, that I am, from henceforth, resolved to follow no pleasure that rises above the degree of amusement—And that woman that expects I should make her my business, why—like my business, is then in a fair way of being forgot. When once she comes to reproach me with vows, and usage, and stuff—I had as lief hear her talk of bills, bonds, and ejectments: her passion becomes as troublesome as a law-suit, and I would as soon converse with my solicitor. In short, I shall never care sixpence for any woman that won't be obedient.

Lady Grave. I'll swear, sir, you have a very free way of treating people; I am glad I am so well acquainted with your principles, however—And you would have me obedient?

Sir Cha. Why not? My wife's so; and, I think, she has as much pretence to be proud as your ladyship.

Lady Grave. Lard! is there no chair to be had, I wonder?

Enter EDGING.

Edg. Here's a chair, madam.

Lady Grave. 'Tis very well, Mrs Edging:—pray, will you let somebody get me a glass of fair water?

Edg. Humph—her huff is almost over, I suppose—I see he's a villain still. [*Aside. Exit.*

Lady Grave. Well, that was the prettiest fancy about obedience, sure, that ever was. Certainly, a woman of condition must be infinitely happy under the dominion of so generous a lover. But how came you to forget kicking and whipping all this while? Methinks, you should not have left so fashionable an article out of your scheme of government.

Sir Cha. Um——No, there is too much trouble in that; though I have known them of admirable use in reformation of some humoursome gentlewomen.

Lady Grave. But one thing more, and I have done——Pray, what degree of spirit must the lady have, that is to make herself happy under so much freedom, order, and tranquillity?

Sir Cha. Oh, she must at least have as much spirit as your ladyship, or she'd give me no pleasure in breaking it.

Lady Grave. No, that would be troublesome. You had better take one that's broken to your hand: there are such souls to be hired, I believe; things that will rub your temples in an evening, till you fall fast asleep in their laps; creatures, too, that think their wages their reward. I fancy, at last, that will be the best method for the lazy passion of a married man, that has outlived his any other sense of gratification.

Sir Cha. Look you, madam; I have loved you very well a great while; now you would have me love you better and longer, which is not in my power to do; and I don't think there is any plague upon earth, like a dun that comes for more money than one is ever likely to be able to pay.

Lady Grave. A dun! Do you take me for a dun, sir? Do I come a dunning to you?

[*Walks in a heat.*

Sir Cha. Hist! don't expose yourself—here's company——

Lady Grave. I care not—A dun! you shall see, sir, I can revenge an affront, though I despise the wretch that offers it——A dun! Oh, I could die with laughing at the fancy! [*Exit.*

Sir Cha. So—she's in admirable order—Here comes my lord; and, I'm afraid, in the very nick of his occasion for her.

Enter LORD MORELOVE.

Lord Mor. Oh, Charles, undone again! all is lost and ruined.

Sir Cha. What's the matter now?

Lord Mor. I have been playing the fool yonder, even to contempt; my senseless jealousy has confessed a weakness I never shall forgive myself. She has insulted on it to that degree, too—I can't bear the thought——Oh, Charles, this devil is mistress of my heart! and I could dash my brains out to think how grossly too I have let her know it.

Sir Cha. Ah, how it would tickle her if she saw you in this condition! ha, ha, ha!

Lord Mor. Prithee don't torture me: think of some present ease, or I shall burst.

Sir Cha. Well, well; let's hear, pray—What has she done to you? Ha, ha!

Lord Mor. Why, ever since I left you, she has treated me with so much coolness and ill nature, and that thing of a lord, with so much laughing ease, such an acquainted, such a spiteful familiarity, that, at the last, she saw and triumphed in my uneasiness.

Sir Cha. Well, and so you left the room in a pet? Ha!

Lord Mor. Oh, worse, worse still! for, at last, with half shame and anger in my looks, I thrust myself between my lord and her, pressed her by the hand, and, in a whisper, trembling, begged her, in pity of herself and me, to shew her good humour, only where she knew it was truly valued: at which, she broke from me, with a cold smile, sat her down by the peer, whispered him, and burst into a loud laughter in my face.

Sir Cha. Ha, ha! then would I have given fifty pounds to have seen your face. Why, what in the name of common sense had you to do with humility? Will you never have enough on't? Death! 'twas setting a lighted match to gunpowder, to blow yourself up.

Lord Mor. I see my folly now, Charles. But what shall I do with the remains of life that she has left me?

Sir Cha. Oh, throw it at her feet, by all means! put on your tragedy-face, catch fast hold of her petticoat, whip out your handkerchief, and, in point blank verse, desire her, one way or other, to make an end of the business.

[*In a whining tone.*

Lord Mor. What a fool dost thou make me!

Sir Cha. I only can shew you as you came out of her hands, my lord.

Lord Mor. How contemptibly have I behaved myself!

Sir Cha. That's according as you bear her behaviour.

Lord Mor. Bear it! no—I thank thee, Charles; thou hast waked me now: and, if I bear it—— What have you done with my lady Gravecairs?

Sir Cha. Your business, I believe——She's ready for you; she's just gone down stairs, and, if you don't make haste after her, I expect her back again, with a knife or a pistol presently.

Lord Mor. I'll go this minute.

Sir Cha. No, stay a little: here comes my lord; we'll see what we can get out of him first.

Lord Mor. Methinks, now, I could laugh at her.

Enter LORD FOPPINGTON.

Lord Fop. Nay, prithee, Sir Charles, let's have a little of thee——We have been so *chagrin* without thee, that, stop my breath, the ladies are gone half asleep to church for want of thy company.

Sir Cha. That's hard, indeed, while your lordship was among them. Is lady Betty gone, too?

Lord Fop. She was just upon the wing; but I caught her by the snuff-box, and she pretends to stay, to see if I'll give it her again, or no.

Lord Mor. Death! 'tis that I gave her, and the only present she would ever receive from me ——Ask him how he came by it.

[*Aside to* SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. Prithee don't be uneasy——Did she give it you, my lord?

Lord Fop. Faith, Charles, I can't say she did, or she did not; but we were playing the fool, and I took it——à la—Pshaw! I can't tell thee in French neither; but Horace touches it to a nicety—'twas *pignus direptum malè pertinaci.*

Lord Mor. So—but I must bear it——If your lordship has a mind to the box, I'll stand by you in keeping of it.

Lord Fop. My lord, I am passionately obliged to you; but I am afraid I cannot answer your hazarding so much of the lady's favour.

Lord Mor. Not at all, my lord: 'tis possible I may not have the same regard to her frown that your lordship has.

Lord Fop. That's a bite, I am sure—he'd give a joint of his little finger to be as well with her as I am. [*Aside.*] But here she comes—Charles, stand by me——Must not a man be a vain coxcomb, now, to think this creature followed one?

Sir Cha. Nothing so plain, my lord.

Lord Fop. Flattering devil!

Enter LADY BETTY.

Lady Bet. Pshaw, my lord Foppington! prithee, don't play the fool now, but give me my snuff-box—Sir Charles, help me to take it from him.

Sir Cha. You know I hate trouble, madam.

Lady Bet. Pooh! you'll make me stay till prayers are half over now.

Lord Fop. If you'll promise me not to go to church, I'll give it you.

Lady Bet. I'll promise nothing at all; for positively, I will have it. [*Struggling with him.*

Lord Fop. Then, comparatively, I won't part with it. Ha, ha! [*Struggles with her.*

Lady Bet. Oh, you devil, you have killed my arm! Oh!—— Well, if you'll let me have it, I'll give you a better.

Lord Mor. Oh, Charles! that has a view of distant kindness in it. [*Aside to* SIR CHARLES.

Lord Fop. Nay, now, I keep it superlatively—I find there's a secret value in it.

Lady Bet. Oh, dismal! Upon my word, I am only ashamed to give it to you. Do you think I would offer such an odious fancied thing to any body I had the least value for?

Sir Cha. Now it comes a little nearer, methinks it does not seem to be any kindness at all.

[*Aside to* LORD MORELOVE.

Lord Fop. Why, really, madam, upon second view, it has not extremely the mode of a lady's utensil. Are you sure it never held any thing but snuff?

Lady Bet. Oh, you monster!

Lord Fop. Nay, I only ask, because it seems to me to have very much the air and fancy of Monsieur Smoakandsot's tobacco-box.

Lord More. I can bear no more.

Sir Cha. Why, don't, then; I'll step in to the company, and return to your relief immediately.

[*Exit* SIR CHA.

Lord More. [*To* LADY BET.] Come, madam, will your ladyship give me leave to end the difference? Since the slightness of the thing may let you bestow it without any mark of favour, shall I beg it of your ladyship.

Lady Bet. Oh, my lord, nobody sooner——I beg you give it, my lord. [*Looking earnestly on* LORD FOP. *who, smiling, gives it to* LORD MORE. *and then bows gravely to her.*]

Lord More. Only to have the honour of restoring it to your lordship; and if there be any other trifle of mine your lordship has a fancy to, though it were a mistrsss, I don't know any person in the world that has so good a claim to my resignation.

Lord Fop. Oh, my lord, this generosity will distract me!

Lord More. My lord, I do you but common justice. But, from your conversation, I had ne-

ver known the true value of the sex. You positively understand them the best of any man breathing; therefore, I think every one of common prudence ought to resign to you.

Lord Fop. Then, positively, your lordship is the most obliging person in the world; for I'm sure your judgment can never like any woman that is not the finest creature in the universe.

[*Bowing to* LADY BET.

Lord More. Oh, your lordship does me too much honour! I have the worst judgment in the world; no man has been more deceived in it.

Lord Fop. Then your lordship, I presume, has been apt to chuse in a mask, or by candle-light?

Lord More. In a mask, indeed, my lord, and, of all masks, the most dangerous.

Lord Fop. Pray, what's that, my lord?

Lord More. A bare face.

Lord Fop. Your lordship will pardon me, if I don't so readily comprehend how a woman's bare face can hide her face.

Lord More. It often hides her heart, my lord; and therefore I think it sometimes a more dangerous mask than a piece of velvet: that's rather a mark, than a disguise, of an ill woman. But the mischiefs skulking behind a beauteous form give no warning; they are always sure, fatal, and innumerable.

Lady Bet. Oh, barbarous aspersion! My lord Foppington, have you nothing to say for the poor women?

Lord Fop. I must confess, madam, nothing of this nature ever happened in my course of amours. I always judge the beauteous part of a woman to be the most agreeable part of her composition; and when once a lady does me the honour to toss that into my arms, I think myself obliged, in good nature, not to quarrel about the rest of her equipage.

Lady Bet. Why, ay, my lord, there's some good humour in that, now.

Lord More. He's happy in a plain English stomach, madam; I could recommend a dish that's perfectly to your lordship's *goût*, where beauty is the only sauce to it.

Lady Bet. So——

Lord Fop. My lord, when my wine's right, I never care it should be zested.

Lord More. I know some ladies would thank you for that opinion.

Lady Bet. My lord Morelove is really grown such a churl to the women, I don't only think he is not, but can't conceive how he ever could be, in love.

Lord More. Upon my word, madam, I once thought I was. [*Smiling.*

Lady Bet. Fie, fie! how could you think so? I fancy now you had only a mind to domineer over some poor creature, and so you thought you were in love, ha, ha!

Lord More. The lady I loved, madam, grew so unfortunate in her conduct, that, at last, she brought me to treat her with the same indifference and civility as I now pay your ladyship.

Lady Bet. And, ten to one, just at that time she never thought you such tolerable company.

Lord More. That I can't say, madam; for, at that time, she grew so affected, there was no judging of her thoughts at all.

[*Mimicking her.*

Lady Bet. What, and so you left the poor lady! Oh, you inconstant creature!

Lord More. No, madam, to have loved her on had been inconstancy; for she was never two hours together the same woman.

[LADY BET. *and* LORD MORE. *seem to talk.*

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Ha, ha, ha! I see he has a mind to abuse her; so I'll even give him an opportunity of doing his business with her at once for ever—My lord, I perceive your lordship is going to be good company to the lady; and, for her sake, I don't think it good manners in me to disturb you——

Enter SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. My lord Foppington——

Lord Fop. Oh, Charles! I was just wanting thee——Hark thee—I have three thousand secrets for thee—I have made such discoveries! to tell thee all in one word, Morelove's as jealous of me as the devil, he, he, he!

Sir Cha. Is it possible? Has she given him any occasion?

Lord Fop. Only rallied him to death upon my account; she told me, within, just now, she'd use him like a dog, and begged me to draw off for an opportunity.

Sir Cha. Oh, keep in, while the scent lies, and she is your own, my lord.

Lord Fop. I can't tell that, Charles; but I am sure she is fairly unharboured; and when once I throw off my inclinations, I usually follow them till the game has enough on't: and, between thee and I, she is pretty well blown, too; she can't stand long, I believe; for, curse catch me, if I have not rid down half a thousand pounds after her already.

Sir Cha. What do you mean?

Lord Fop. I have lost five hundred to her at piquet since dinner.

Sir Cha. You are a fortunate man, faith! you are resolved not to be thrown out, I see.

Lord Fop. Hang it, what should a man come out for, if he does not keep up to the sport?

Sir Cha. Well pushed, my lord.

Lord Fop. Tayo! have at her——

Sir Cha. Down, down, my lord——ah! 'ware haunches!

Lord Fop. Ah, Charles! [*Embracing him.*] Prithee, let's observe a little: there's a foolish cur, now I have run her to a stand, has a mind to be at her by himself, and thou shalt see, she won't sir out of her way for him.

[*They stand aside.*

Lord More. Ha, ha! your ladyship is very grave of a sudden; you look as if your lover had insolently recovered his common sense.

Lady Bet. And your lordship is so very gay, and unlike yourself, one would swear you were just come from the pleasure of making your mistress afraid of you.

Lord More. No, faith, quite contrary; for, do you know, madam, I have just found out, that, upon your account, I have made myself one of the most ridiculous puppies upon the face of the earth——I have, upon my faith—nay, and so extravagantly such, ha, ha, ha! that it is at last become a jest even to myself; and I can't help laughing at it for the soul of me, ha, ha, ha!

Lady Bet. I want to cure him of that laugh, now. [*Aside.*] My lord, since you are so generous, I'll tell you another secret—Do you know, too, that I still find, (spite of all your great wisdom, and my contemptible qualities, as you are pleased, now and then, to call them) do you know, I say, that I see, under all this, that you still love me with the same helpless passion? and can your vast foresight imagine I won't use you accordingly for these extraordinary airs you are pleased to give yourself?

Lord More. Oh, by all means, madam! 'tis fit you should; and I expect it, whenever it is in your power—Confusion! [*Aside.*

Lady Bet. My lord, you have talked to me this half hour, without confessing pain. [*Pauses, and affects to gape.*] Only remember it.

Lord More. Hell and tortures!

Lady Bet. What did you say, my lord?

Lord More. Fire and furies!

Lady Bet. Ha, ha! he's disordered—Now I am easy—My lord Foppington, have you a mind to your revenge at piquet?

Lord Fop. I have always a mind to an opportunity of entertaining your ladyship, madam.

[LADY BET. *coquettes with* LORD FOP.

Lord More. Oh, Charles! the insolence of woman might furnish out a thousand devils.

Sir Cha. And your temper is enough to furnish out a thousand such women. Come away; I have business for you upon the terrace.

Lord More. Let me but speak one word to her.

Sir Cha. Not a syllable. The tongue's a weapon you'll always have the worst at; for I see you have no guard, and she carries a devilish edge.

Lady Bet. My lord, don't let any thing I have said frighten you away; for, if you have the least inclination to stay and rail, you know the old conditions; 'tis but your asking me pardon the next day, and you may give your passion any liberty you think fit.

Lord More. Daggers and death!

Sir Cha. Is the man distracted?

Lord More. Let me speak to her now, or I shall burst.

Sir Cha. Upon condition you'll speak no more of her to me; my lord, do as you please.

Lord More. Prithee, pardon me——I know not what to do.

Sir Cha. Come along; I'll set you to work, I warrant you—Nay, nay, none of your parting ogles——Will you go?

Lord More. Yes——and I hope for ever——

[*Exit* SIR CHA. *pulling away* LORD MORE.

Lord Fop. Ha, ha, ha! Did ever mortal monster set up for a lover with such unfortunate qualifications?

Lady Bet. Indeed, my lord Morelove has something strangely singular in his manner.

Lord Fop. I thought I should have burst to see the creature pretend to rally, and give himself the airs of one of us—But, run me through, madam, your ladyship pushed like a fencing master! that last thrust was a *coup de grace*, I believe: I'm afraid his honour will hardly meet your ladyship in haste again.

Lady Bet. Not unless his second, sir Charles, keeps him better in practice, perhaps——Well, the humour of this creature has done me signal service to-day. I must keep it up, for fear of a second engagement. [*Aside.*

Lord Fop. Never was poor wit so foiled at his own weapon, sure!

Lady Bet. Wit! had he ever any pretence to it?

Lord Fop. Ha, ha! he has not much in love, I think, though he wears the reputation of a very pretty young fellow among some sort of people; but strike me stupid if ever I could discover common sense in all the progress of his amours: he expects a woman should like him for endeavouring to convince her, that she has not one good quality belonging to the whole composition of her soul and body.

Lady Bet. That, I suppose, is only in a modest hope, that she'll mend her faults, to qualify herself for his vast merit, ha, ha!

Lord Fop. Poor Morelove! I see she can't endure him. [*Aside.*

Lady Bet. Or if one really had all those faults, he does not consider, that sincerity in love is as much out of fashion as sweet snuff; nobody takes it now.

Lord Fop. Oh, no mortal, madam, unless it be here and there a squire, that's making his lawful court to the cherry-cheek charms of my lord bishop's great fat daughter in the country.

Lady Bet. O what a surfeiting couple has he put together!——

[*Throwing her hand carelessly upon his.*

Lord Fop. Lord! of me, by all that's tender!—Poor fool! I'll give these coxcombs immediately. [*Aside.*] But, madam, you were pleased just now to offer me my revenge at piquet——Now, here's nobody within, and I think we can't make use of a better opportunity.

Lady Bet. O! no: not now, my lord!——I have a favour I would fain beg of you first.

Lord Fop. But time, madam, is very precious in this place, and I shall not easily forgive myself if I don't take him by the forelock.

Lady Bet. But I have a great mind to have a little more sport with my lord Morelove first, and would fain beg your assistance.

Lord Fop. O! with all my heart; and, upon second thoughts, I don't know but piquing a rival in public may be as good sport as being well with a mistress in private: for, after all, the pleasure of a fine woman is like that of her virtue, not so much in the thing, as the reputation of having it. [*Aside.*] Well, madam, but how can I serve you in this affair?

Lady Bet. Why, methought, as my lord Morelove went out, he shewed a stern resentment in his look, that seemed to threaten me with rebellion, and downright defiance. Now, I have a great fancy that you and I should follow him to the Terrace, and laugh at his resolution before he has time to put it in practice.

Lord Fop. And so punish his fault before he commits it! ha, ha, ha!

Lady Bet. Nay, we won't give him time, if his courage should fail, to repent it.

Lord Fop. Ha, ha, ha! let me blood, if I don't long to be at it, ha, ha!

Lady Bet. O! 'twill be such diversion to see him bite his lips, and broil within, only with seeing us ready to split our sides in laughing at nothing! ha, ha!

Lord Fop. Ha, ha! I see the creature does really like me. [*Aside.*] And, then, madam, to hear him hum a broken piece of a tune, in affectation of his not minding us—'twill be so foolish, when we know he loves us to death all the while, ha, ha!

Lady Bet. And if, at last, his sage mouth should open in surly contradiction of our humour, then will we, in pure opposition to his, immediately fall foul upon every thing that is not gallant and fashionable: constancy shall be the mark of age and ugliness, virtue a jest, we'll rally discretion out of doors, lay gravity at our feet, and only love, free love, disorder, liberty, and pleasure, be our standing principles.

Lord Fop. Madam, you transport me! for if ever I was obliged to nature for any one tolerable qualification, 'twas positively the talent of being exuberantly pleasant upon this subject—I am impatient—my fancy's upon the wing already—let's fly to him.

Lady Bet. No, no; stay till I am just got out; our going together won't be so proper.

Lord Fop. As your ladyship pleases, madam; but, when this affair is over, you won't forget that I have a certain revenge due.

Lady Bet. Aye, aye! after supper I am for you—Nay, you shan't stir a step, my lord!—— [*Seeing her to the door.*

Lord Fop. Only to tell you, you have fixed me yours to the last existence of my soul's eternal entity.———

Lady Bet. O, your servant. [*Exit.*

Lord Fop. Ha, ha! stark mad for me, by all that's handsome! Poor Morelove! That a fellow, who has ever been abroad, should think a woman of her spirit is to be taken by a regular siege, as the confederates do towns, when so many of the French successes might have shewn him, the surest way is to whisper the governor. How can a coxcomb give himself the fatigue of bombarding a woman's understanding, when he may with so much ease make a friend of her constitution. I'll see if I can shew him a little French play with lady Betty—let me see—aye, I'll make an end of it the old way, get her into piquet at her own lodgings—not mind one tittle of my play—give her every game before she's half up, that she may judge of the strength of my inclination by my haste of losing up to her price; then, of a sudden, with a familiar leer, cry—rat piquet—sweep counters, cards, and money all upon the floor, and done—l'affaire est faite. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Castle Terrace.*

Enter LADY BETTY, *and* LADY EASY.

Lady Easy. My dear, you really talk to me as if I were your lover and not your friend: or else I am so dull, that by all you've said I can't make the least guess at your real thoughts—Can you be serious for a moment?

Lady Bet. Not easily; but I would do more to oblige you.

Lady Easy. Then, pray, deal ingenuously, and tell me, without reserve, are you sure you don't love my lord Morelove?

Lady Bet. Then seriously—I think not—But because I won't be positive, you shall judge by the worst of my symptoms—First, I own I like his conversation—his person has neither fault, nor beauty—well enough—I don't remember I ever secretly wished myself married to him, or—that I ever seriously resolved against it.

Lady Easy. Well, so far you are tolerably safe: But come; as to his manner of addressing you, what effect has that had?

Lady Bet. I am not a little pleased to observe few men follow a woman with the same fatigue and spirit that he does me——am more pleased when he lets me use him ill; and if ever I have a favourable thought of him, 'tis when I see he can't bear that usage.

Lady Easy. Have a care; that last is a dangerous symptom—he pleases your pride. I find

Lady Bet. Oh! perfectly: in that, I own no mortal ever can come up to him.

Lady Easy. But now, my dear! now comes the main point—jealousy! Are you sure you have never been touched with it? Tell me that, with a safe conscience, and then I pronounce you clear.

Lady Bet. Nay, then, I defy him; for, positively, I was never jealous in my life.

Lady Easy. How, madam! you have never been stirred enough, to think a woman strangely forward for being a little familiar in talk with him? Or, are you sure his gallantry to another never gave you the least disorder? Were you never, upon no accident, in an apprehension of losing him?

Lady Bet. Ha! Why, madam—Bless me! wh—wh—why sure you don't call this jealousy, my dear?

Lady Easy. Nay, nay, that is not the business—Have you ever felt any thing of this nature, madam?

Lady Bet. Lord! don't be so hasty, my dear—any thing of this nature—O Lud! I swear I don't like it: dear creature, bring me off here; for I am half frighted out of my wits!

Lady Easy. Nay, if you can rally upon it, your wound is not over deep, I'm afraid.

Lady Bet. Well, that's comfortably said, however.

Lady Easy. But come to the point—How far have you been jealous?

Lady Bet. Why, O, bless me! He gave the music one night to my lady Languish here upon the terrace: and (though she and I were very great friends) I remember I could not speak to her in a week for't———Oh!

Lady Easy. Nay, now, you may laugh if you can: for, take my word, the marks are upon you ——— But come, what else?

Lady Bet. O, nothing else, upon my word, my dear!

Lady Easy. Well, one word more, and then I give sentence: suppose you were heartily convinced, that he actually followed another woman?

Lady Bet. But, pray, my dear, what occasion is there to suppose any such a thing at all?

Lady Easy. Guilty, upon my honour!

Lady Bet. Pshaw! I defy him to say, that ever I owned any inclination for him.

Lady Easy. No, but you have given him terrible leave to guess it.

Lady Bet. If ever you see us meet again, you'll have but little reason to think so, I can assure you.

Lady Easy. That I shall see presently; for here comes Sir Charles, and I'm sure my lord cannot be far off.

Enter SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. Servant, lady Betty———my dear, how do you do?

Lady Easy. At your service, my dear—But, pray, what have you done with my lord Morelove?

Lady Bet. Aye, sir Charles; pray, how does your pupil do? Have you any hopes of him? Is he docible?

Sir Cha. Well, madam, to confess your triumph over me, as well as him, I own my hopes of him are lost. I offered what I could to his instruction, but he is incorrigibly yours, and undone—and the news, I presume, does not displease your ladyship.

Lady Bet. Fye, fye, sir Charles, you disparage your friend; I am afraid you don't take pains with him.

Sir Cha. Ha! I fancy, lady Betty, your goodnature won't let you sleep a nights: don't you love dearly to hurt people?

Lady Bet. O! your servant: then, without a jest, the man is so unfortunate in his want of patience, that, let me die, if I don't often pity him.

Sir Cha. Ha! Strange goodness—O that I were your lover for a month or two!

Lady Bet. What then?

Sir Cha. I would make that pretty heart's blood of yours ache in a fortnight.

Lady Bet. Huh! I should hate you: your assurance would make your address intolerable.

Sir Cha. I believe it would, for I'd never address you at all.

Lady Betty. O! you clown you!

[*Hitting him with her fan.*

Sir Cha. Why, what to do? to feed a diseased pride, that's eternally breaking out in the affectation of an ill-nature, that—in my conscience I believe is but affectation.

Lady Bet. You, or your friend, have no great reason to complain of my fondness, I believe.—Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Cha. [*looking earnestly at her.*] Thou insolent creature! How can you make a jest of a man, whose whole life's but one continued torment, from your want of common gratitude?

Lady Bet. Torment! for my part I really believe him as easy as you are.

Sir Cha. Poor intolerable affectation! You know the contrary; you know him blindly yours; you know your power, and the whole pleasure of your life's the poor and low abuse of it.

Lady Bet. Pray, how do I abuse it———if I have any power.

Sir Cha. You drive him to extremes that make him mad, then punish him for acting against his reason: you've almost turned his brain, his common judgment fails him; he is now, at this very moment, driven by his despair upon a project, in hopes to free him from your power, that I am sensible, and so must every one be that has his sense, of course must ruin him with you for ever. I almost blush to think of it; yet your unreasonable disdain has forced him to do it; and should

he now suspect I offered but a hint of it to you, and in contempt of his design, I know he'd call my life to answer it: but I have no regard to men in madness; I rather choose, for once, to trust in your good-nature, in hopes the man, whom your unwary beauty had made miserable, your generosity would scorn to make ridiculous.

Lady Bet. Sir Charles, you charge me very home; I never had it in my inclination to make any thing ridiculous that did not deserve it.—— Pray, what is this business you think so extravagant in him?

Sir Cha. Something so absurdly rash and bold, you'll hardly forgive even me that tell it you.

Lady Bet. O fie! If it be a fault, sir Charles, I shall consider it as his, not yours. Pray, what is it?

Lady Easy. I long to know, methinks.

Sir Cha. You may be sure he did not want my dissuasions from it.

Lady Bet. Let us hear it.

Sir Cha. Why this man, whom I have known to love you with such excess of generous desire, whom I have heard, in his ecstatic praises of your beauty, talk, till, from the soft heat of his distilling thoughts, the tears have fallen——

Lady Bet. O! sir Charles—— [*Blushing.*

Sir Cha. Nay, grudge not, since 'tis past, to hear what was (though you contemned it) once his merit: but now, I own, that merit ought to be forgotten.

Lady Bet. Pray, sir, be plain.

Sir Cha. This man, I say, whose unhappy passion has so ill succeeded with you, at last has forfeited all his hopes (into which, pardon me, I confess my friendship had lately flattered him) his hopes of even deserving now your lowest pity or regard.

Lady Bet. You amaze me! For I can't suppose his utmost malice dares assault my reputation—and what—

Sir Cha. No, but he maliciously presumes the world will do it for him; and, indeed, he has taken no unlikely means to make them busy with their tongues; for he is this moment upon the open terrace, in the highest public gallantry with my lady Graveairs. And to convince the world and me, he said, he was not the tame lover we fancied him, he'd venture to give her music to-night: nay, I heard him, before my face, speak to one of the hautboys to engage the rest, and desired they would all take their directions only from my lady Graveairs.

Lady Bet. My lady Graveairs! truly I think my lord's very much in the right on't—for my part, sir Charles, I don't see any thing in this that's so very ridiculous, nor indeed that ought to make me think either the better or the worse of him for't.

Sir Cha. Pshaw! pshaw! madam, you and I know 'tis not in his power to renounce you; this is but the poor disguise of a resenting passion, vainly ruffled to a storm, which the least gentle look from you can reconcile at will, and laugh into a calm again.

Lady Bet. Indeed, Sir Charles, I shan't give myself that trouble, I believe.

Sir Cha. So I told him, madam: are not all your complaints, said I, already owing to her pride? and can you suppose this public defiance of it (which you know you can't make good, too) won't incense her more against you?—That's what I'd have, said he, staring wildly; I care not what becomes of me, so I but live to see her piqued at it.

Lady Bet. Upon my word! I fancy my lord will find himself mistaken—I shan't be piqued, I believe—I must first have a value for the thing I lose, before it piques me: piqued! ha, ha, ha! [*Disordered.*

Sir Cha. Madam, you've said the very thing I urged to him. I know her temper so well, said I, that though she doated on you, if you once stood out against her, she'd sooner burst, than shew the least motion of uneasiness.

Lady Bet. I can assure you, sir Charles, my lord won't find himself deceived in your opinion—piqued!

Sir Cha. She has it. [*Aside.*

Lady Easy. Alas, poor woman! how little do our passions make us!

Lady Bet. Not but I would advise him to have a little regard to my reputation in this business; I would have him take heed of publicly affronting me.

Sir Cha. Right, madam; that's what I strictly warned him of; for, among friends, whenever the world sees him follow another woman, the malicious tea-tables will be very apt to be free with your ladyship.

Lady Bet. I'd have him consider that, methinks.

Sir Cha. But, alas! madam, 'tis not in his power to think with reason; his mad resentment has destroyed even his principles of common honesty: he considers nothing but a senseless proud revenge, which, in his fit of lunacy, 'tis impossible that either threats or danger can dissuade him from.

Lady Bet. What! does he defy me, threaten me! then he shall see, that I have passions, too, and know, as well as he, to stir my heart against any pride that dares insult me. Does he suppose I fear him? Fear the little malice of a slighted passion, that my own scorn has stung into a despised resentment! Fear him! O! it provokes me to think he dare have such a thought!

Lady Easy. Dear creature, don't disorder yourself so.

Lady Bet. Let me but live to see him once more within my power, and I'll forgive the rest of fortune.

Lady Easy. Well, I am certainly very ill-natu-

red; for though I see this news has disturbed my friend, I can't help being pleased with my hopes of my lady Gravairs being otherwise disposed of. [*Aside.*] My dear, I am afraid you have provoked her a little too far.

Sir Cha. Oh! not at all——You shall see—I'll sweeten her, and she'll cool like a dish of tea.

Lady Bet. I may see him with his complaining face again—

Sir Cha. I am sorry, madam, you so wrongly judge of what I've told you; I was in hopes to have stirred your pity, not your anger: I little thought your generosity would punish him for faults, which you yourself resolved he should commit————Yonder he comes, and all the world with him: might I advise you, madam, you should not resent the thing at all——— I would not so much as stay to see him in his fault; nay, I'd be the last that heard of it: nothing can sting him more, or so justly punish his folly, as your utter neglect of it.

Lady Easy. Come, dear creature, be persuaded, and go home with me? Indeed it will shew more indifference to avoid him.

Lady Bet. No, madam, I'll oblige his vanity for once, and stay to let him see how strongly he has piqued me.

Sir Cha. [*Aside.*] O not at all to speak of; you had as good part with a little of that pride of yours, or I shall yet make it a very troublesome companion to you.

[*Goes from them, and whispers* LORD MORELOVE.

Enter LORD FOPPINGTON; *a little after,* LORD MORELOVE, *and* LADY GRAVEAIRS.

Lord Fop. Ladies, your servant——O! we have wanted you beyond reparation——such diversion!

Lady Bet. Well! my lord! have you seen my lord Morelove?

Lord Fop. Seen him! ha, ha, ha!—O! I have such things to tell you, madam——you'll die—

Lady Bet. O, pray let's hear them! I was never in a better humour to receive them.

Lord Fop. Hark you. [*They whisper.*

Lord Mor. So, she's engaged already.

[*To* SIR CHA.

Sir Cha. So much the better; make but a just advantage of my success, and she's undone.

Lord Fop. } Ha, ha, ha!
Lady Bet. }

Sir Cha. You see already what ridiculous pains she is taking to stir your jealousy, and cover her own.

Lord Fop. } Ha, ha, ha!
Lady Bet. }

Lord Mor. O, never fear me: for, upon my word, it now appears ridiculous even to me.

Sir Cha. And, hark you—

[*Whispers* LORD MOR.

Lady Bet. And so the widow was as full of airs as his lordship?

Sir Cha. Only observe that, and it is impossible you can fail. [*Aside.*

Lord Mor. Dear Charles, you have convinced me, and I thank you.

Lady Grave. My lord Morelove! What, do you leave us?

Lord Mor. Ten thousand pardons, madam! I was but just—

Lady Grave. Nay, nay, no excuses, my lord, so you will but let us have you again.

Sir Cha. [*Aside to* LADY GRAVEAIRS.]—I see you have good humour, madam, when you like your company.

Lady Grave. And you, I see, for all your mighty thirst of dominion, could stoop to be obedient, if one thought it worth one's while to make you so.

Sir Cha. Ha! power would make her an admirable tyrant.

[*Aside.*

Lady Easy. [*Observing* SIR CHARLES *and* LADY GRAVEAIRS.]—So! there's another couple have quarrelled, too, I find—Those airs to my lord Morelove look as if designed to recover sir Charles into jealousy: I'll endeavour to join the company, and, it may be, that will let me into the secret.—[*Aside.*]—My lord Foppington, I vow this is very uncomplaisant, to engross so agreeable a part of the company to yourself.

Sir Cha. Nay, my lord, this is not fair, indeed, to enter into secrets among friends! Ladies, what say you? I think we ought to declare against it.

Lady Bet. Well, ladies, I ought only to ask your pardon: my lord's excuseable, for I would haul him into a corner.

Lord Fop. I swear 'tis very hard; ho! I observe, two people of extreme condition can no sooner grow particular, but the multitude of both sexes are immediately up, and think their properties invaded——

Lady Bet. Odious multitude!——

Lord Fop. Perish the canaille!

Lady Grave. Oh, my lord, we women have all reason to be jealous of lady Betty Modish's power.

Lord More. [*To* LADY BETTY.]—As the men, madam, all have of my lord Foppington; besides, favourites of great merit discourage those of an inferior class for their prince's service; he has already lost you one of your retinue, madam.

Lady Bet. Not at all, my lord; he has only made room for another: one must sometimes make vacancies, or there could be no preferments.

Lady Easy. Ha, ha, ha! Ladies' favours, my lord, like places at court, are not always held for life, you know.

Lady Bet. No, indeed! if they were, the poor

fine women would be always used like their wives, and no more minded than the business of the nation.

Lady Easy. Have a care, madam: an undeserving favourite has been the ruin of many a prince's empire.

Lord Fop. Ha, ha, ha! Upon my soul, lady Betty, we must grow more discreet; for, positively, if we go on at this rate, we shall have the world throw you under the scandal of constancy; and I shall have all the swords of condition at my throat for a monopolist.

Lord More. Oh! there's no great fear of that, my lord; though the men of sense give it over, there will be always some idle fellows vain enough to believe their merit may succeed as well as your lordship's.

Lady Bet. Or, if they should not, my lord, cast-lovers, you know, need not fear being long out of employment, while there are so many well-disposed people in the world—There are generally neglected wives, stale maids, or charitable widows, always ready to relieve the necessities of a disappointed passion——And, by the way, hark you, sir Charles——

Lord More. [*Aside.*]—So! she's stirred, I see; for all her pains to hide it——She would hardly have glanced an affront at a woman she was not piqued at.

Lady Grave. [*Aside.*]—That wit was thrown at me, I suppose; but I'll return it.

Lady Bet. [*Softly to* SIR CHARLES.]—Pray, how come you all this while to trust your mistress so easily?

Sir Cha. One is not so apt, madam, to be alarmed at the liberties of an old acquaintance, as perhaps your ladyship ought to be at the resentment of an hard-used, honourable lover.

Lady Bet. Suppose I were alarmed, how does that make you easy?

Sir Cha. Come, come, be wise at last; my trusting them together may easily convince you, that (as I told you before) I know his addresses to her are only outward, and it will be your fault now, if you let him go on till the world thinks him in earnest; and a thousand busy tongues are set upon malicious enquiries into your reputation.

Lady Bet. Why, sir Charles, do you suppose, while he behaves himself as he does, that I won't convince him of my indifference?

Sir Cha. But hear me, madam——

Lady Grave. [*Aside.*]—The air of that whisper looks as if the lady had a mind to be making her peace again: and, 'tis possible, his worship's being so busy in the matter, too, may proceed as much from his jealousy of my lord with me, as friendship to her; at least I fancy so; therefore, I'm resolved to keep her still piqued, and prevent it, though it be only to gall him———Sir Charles, that is not fair to take a privilege you just now declared against in my lord Foppington.

Lord More. Well observed, madam.

Lady Grave. Besides, it looks so affected to whisper, when every body guesses the secret.

Lord More. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Bet. Oh! madam, your pardon in particular: but it is possible you may be mistaken: the secrets of people, that have any regard to their actions, are not so soon guessed, as theirs that have made a confidant of the whole town.

Lord Fop. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Grave. A coquette, in her affected airs of disdain to a revolted lover, I'm afraid, must exceed your ladyship in prudence, not to let the world see, at the same time, she'd give her eyes to make her peace with him: ha, ha, ha!

Lord More. Ha. ha, ha!

Lady Bet. 'Twould be a mortification, indeed, if it were in the power of a fading widow's charms to prevent it; and the man must be miserably reduced, sure, that could bear to live buried in woollen, or take up with the motherly comforts of a swan-skin petticoat. Ha, ha, ha!

Lord Fop. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Grave. Widows, it seems, are not so squeamish to their interest; they know their own minds, and take the man they like, though it happens to be one that a froward, vain girl has disobliged, and is pining to be friends with.

Lord More. Nay, though it happens to be one that confesses he once was fond of a piece of folly, and afterwards ashamed on't.

Lady Bet. Nay, my lord, there's no standing against two of you.

Lord Fop. No, faith, that's odds at tennis, my lord: not but, if your ladyship pleases, I'll endeavour to keep your back-hand a little; though, upon my soul, you may safely set me up at the line: for, knock me down if ever I saw a rest of wit better played, than that last, in my life. What say you, madam? shall we engage?

Lady Bet. As you please, my lord.

Lord Fop. Ha, ha, ha! Allons! tout de bon jouer, milor.

Lord More. Oh, pardon me, sir, I shall never think myself in any thing a match for the lady.

Lord Fop. To you, madam.

Lady Bet. That's much, my lord, when the world knows you have been so many years teasing me to play the fool with you.

Lord Fop. Ah, bien-joué—Ha, ha, ha!

Lord More. At that game, I confess, your ladyship has chosen a much properer person to improve your hand with.

Lord Fop. To me, madam—My lord, I presume, whoever the lady thinks fit to play the fool with, will at least be able to give as much envy as the wise person that had not wit enough to keep well with her when he was so.

Lady Grave. O! my lord! Both parties must needs be greatly happy; for, I dare swear, neither will have any rivals to disturb them.

Lord More. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Bet. None that will disturb them, I dare swear.

Lord Fop. Ha, ha, ha!

Lord More.
Lady Grave.
Lady Bet. } Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Cha. I don't know, gentlefolks—but you are all in extreme good-humour, methinks; I hope there's none of it affected.

Lady Easy. I should be loth to answer for any but my lord Foppington.

[*Aside.*

Lady Bet. Mine is not, I'll swear.

Lord More. Nor mine, I'm sure.

Lady Grave. Mine's sincere, depend upon't.

Lord Fop. And may the eternal frowns of the whole sex doubly demine, if mine is not.

Lady Easy. Well, good people, I am mighty glad to hear it. You have all performed extremely well: but, if you please, you shall even give over your wit now, while it is well.

Lady Bet. [*To herself.*]—Now, I see his humour, I'll stand it out, if I were sure to die for't.

Sir Cha. You should not have proceeded so far with my lord Foppington, after what I had told you.

[*Aside to* LADY BETTY.

Lady Bet. Pray, sir Charles, give me leave to understand myself a little.

Sir Cha. Your pardon, madam. I thought a right understanding would have been for both your interest and reputation.

Lady Bet. For his, perhaps.

Sir Cha. Nay, then, madam, its time for me to take care of my friend.

Lady Bet. I never, in the least, doubted your friendship to him, in any thing that was to shew yourself my enemy.

Sir Cha. Since I see, madam, you have so ungrateful a sense of my lord Morelove's merit, and my service, I shall never be ashamed of using my power henceforth to keep him entirely out of your ladyship's.

Lady Bet. Was ever any thing so insolent! I could find in my heart to run the hazard of a downright compliance, if it were only to convince him, that my power, perhaps, is not inferior to his. [*To herself.*

Lady Easy. My lord Foppington, I think you generally lead the company upon these occasions. Pray, will you think of some prettier sort of diversion for us than parties and whispers?

Lord Fop. What say you, ladies? shall we step and see what's done at the basset-table?

Lady Bet. With all my heart; lady Easy——

Lady Easy. I think 'tis the best thing we can do, and, because we won't part to-night, you shall all sup where you dined—What say you, my lord?

Lord Mor. Your ladyship may be sure of me, madam.

Lord Fop. Aye! aye! we'll all come.

Lady Easy. Then, pray, let's change parties a little. My lord Foppington, you shall 'squire me.

Lord Fop. O! you do me honour, madam.

Lady Bet. My lord Morelove, pray let me speak with you?

Lord Mor. Me, madam?

Lady Bet. If you please, my lord.

Lord Mor. Ha! that look shot through me. What can this mean? [*Aside.*

Lady Bet. This is no proper place to tell you what it is, but there is one thing I'd fain be truly answered in: I suppose you'll be at my lady Easy's by and by, and if you'll give me leave there——

Lord Mor. If you please to do me that honour, madam, I shall certainly be there.

Lady Bet. That's all, my lord.

Lord Mor. Is not your ladyship for walking?

Lady Bet. If your lordship dares venture with me.

Lord Mor. O! madam! [*Taking her hand.*] How my heart dances! what heavenly music's in her voice, when softened into kindness.

[*Aside.*

Lady Bet. Ha! his hand trembles——Sir Charles may be mistaken.

Lord Fop. My lady Graveairs, you won't let sir Charles leave us? [*Exeunt.*

[*Manent* SIR CHARLES *and* LADY GRAVEAIRS.

Lady Grave. No, my lord, we'll follow you—stay a little.

[*To* SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. I thought your ladyship designed to follow them.

Lady Grave. Perhaps I'd speak with you.

Sir Cha. But, madam, consider; we shall certainly be observed.

Lady Grave. Lord, sir, if you think it such a favour. [*Exit hastily.*

Sir Cha. Is she gone? let her go, &c.

[*Exit singing.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter SIR CHARLES *and* LORD MORELOVE.

Sir Cha. Come a little this way——My lady Graveairs had an eye upon me, as I stole off, and, I'm apprehensive, will make use of any opportunity to talk with me.

Lord More. O! we are pretty safe here——Well, you were speaking of lady Betty.

Sir Cha. Ay, my lord——I say, notwithstanding all this sudden change of her behaviour, I would not have you yet be too secure of her: for, between you and I, since I told you, I have professed myself an open enemy to her power with you—'tis not impossible but this new air of good humour may very much proceed from a little woman's pride, of convincing me you are not yet out of her power.

Lord More. Not unlikely. But still, can we make no advantage of it?

Sir Cha. That's what I have been thinking of—look you——Death! my lady Graveairs!

Lord More. Ha! she will have audience, I find.

Sir Cha. There's no avoiding her——the truth is, I have owed her a little good nature a great while——I see there's but one way of getting rid of her——I must even appoint her a day of payment at last. If you'll step into my lodgings, my lord, I'll just give her an answer, and be with you in a moment.

Lord More. Very well, I'll stay there for you.

[*Exit* LORD MORELOVE.

Enter LADY GRAVEAIRS *on the other side.*

Lady Grave. Sir Charles!

Sir Cha. Come, come, no more of these reproachful looks; you'll find, madam, I have deserved better of you than your jealousy imagines—Is it a fault to be tender of your reputation?——fy, fy——This must be a proper time to rail, and of my contriving, too——you see I just now shook off my Lord Morelove on purpose.

Lady Grave. May I believe you?

Sir Cha. Still doubting my fidelity, and mistaking my discretion for want of good nature!

Lady Grave. Don't think me troublesome—For I confess 'tis death to think of parting with you: since the world sees for you I have neglected friends and reputation, have shown the little insults of disdainful prudes, that envied me perhaps your friendship; have borne the frowning looks of near and general acquaintance—Since this is so—don't let them ridicule me, too, and say my foolish vanity ended me! Don't let them point at me as a cast mistress!

Sir Cha. You wrong me, to suppose the thought: you'll have better of me when we meet: When shall you be at leisure?

Lady Grave. I confess I would see you once again; if what I have more to say prove ineffectual, perhaps it may convince me then, 'tis my interest to part with you——Can you come to-night?

Sir Cha. You know we have company, and I'm afraid they'll stay too late——Can't it be before supper?——What's o'clock now?

Lady Grave. It's almost six.

Sir Cha. At seven, then, be sure of me: till when, I'd have you go back to the ladies, to avoid suspicion, and about that time have the vapours.

Lady Grave. May I depend upon you? [*Exit.*

Sir Cha. Depend on every thing——A very troublesome business this—Send me once fairly rid on't——I ever I'm caught in an honourable affair again!——A debt, now, that a little ready civility, and away, would satisfy, a man might bear with; but to have a rent-charge upon one's good-nature, with an unconscionable long scroll of arrears, too, that would eat out the profits of the best estate in Christendom——ah——intolerable! Well! I'll even to my lord, and shake off the thoughts on't. [*Exit.*

Enter LADY BETTY *and* LADY EASY.

Lady Bet. I observe, my dear, you have usually this great fortune at play; it were enough to make one suspect your good luck with a husband.

Lady Easy. Truly, I don't complain of my fortune either way.

Lady Bet. Prithee tell me, you are often advising me to it: are there those real considerable advantages in marriage, that our old aunts and grandmothers would persuade us of?

Lady Easy. Upon my word, if I had the worst husband in the world, I should still think so.

Lady Bet. Ay, but then the hazard of not having a good one, my dear.

Lady Easy. You may have a good one, I dare say, if you don't give airs till you spoil him.

Lady Bet. Can there be the same dear, full delight, in giving ease as pain? Oh, my dear, the thought of parting with one's power is insupportable!

Lady Easy. And the keeping it, till it dwindles into no power at all, is most foolish, foolish.

Lady Bet. But still, to marry before one's heartily in love——

Lady Easy. Is not half so formidable a calamity——but if I have any eyes, my dear, you'll run the great hazard of that in engaging my lord Morelove——You don't know, perhaps, that within this half hour, the tone of your voice is strangely softened to him: ha, ha, ha!

Lady Bet. My dear, you are positively, the most censorious creature in the world.

—and so I see its in vain to talk with you—— Pray, will you go back to the company?

Lady Easy. Ah! poor lady Betty! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* SIR CHARLES'S *lodgings.*

Enter SIR CHARLES *and* LORD MORELOVE.

Lord Mor. Charles, you have transported me! you have made my part in the scene so very easy, too, 'tis impossible I should fail in it.

Sir Cha. That's what I considered; for, now, the more you throw yourself into her power, the more I shall be able to force her into yours.

Lord Mor. After all, (begging the ladies' pardon) your fine women, like bullies, are only stout when they know their men: a man of an honest courage may fright them into any thing! Well, I am fully instructed, and will about it instantly —Won't you go along with me?

Sir Cha. That may not be so proper—besides, I have a little business upon my hands.

Lord Mor. Oh, your servant, sir—Good bye to you—you shan't stir.

Sir Cha. My lord, your servant—[*Exit* LORD MOR.] So! now to dispose myself 'till 'tis time to think of my lady Gravecairs—Umph! I have no great maw to that business, methinks—I don't find myself in humour enough to come up to the civil things that are usually expected in the making up of an old quarrel—[EDGING *crosses the stage.*] There goes a warmer temptation by half ——Ha! into my wife's bed-chamber, too—— I question if the jade has any great business there!——I have a fancy she has only a mind to be taking the opportunity of nobody's being at home, to make her peace with me—let me see —aye, I shall have time enough to go to her ladyship afterwards—Besides, I want a little sleep, I find—Your young fops may talk of their women of quality—but, to me now, there's a strange agreeable convenience in a creature one is not obliged to say much to upon these occasions.

[*Going.*

Enter EDGING.

Edg. Did you call me, sir?

Sir Cha. Ha! all's right—[*Aside.*]—Yes, madam, I did call you. [*Sits down.*

Edg. What would you please to have, sir?

Sir Cha. Have! Why, I would have you grow a good girl, and know when you are well used, hussy.

Edg. Sir, I don't complain of any thing, not I

Sir Cha. Well, don't be uneasy—I am not angry with you now——Come and kiss me.

Edg. Lard, sir!

Sir Cha. Don't be a fool, now—Come hither.

Edg. Pshaw—— [*Goes to him.*

Sir Cha. No wry face—so—sit down. I won't have you look grave neither; let me see you smile, you jade, you.

Edg. Ha, ha! [*Laughs and blushes.*

Sir Cha. Ah, you melting rogue!

Edg. Come, don't you be at your tricks now ——Lard, can't you sit still and talk with one! I am sure there's ten times more love in that, and fifty times the satisfaction, people may say what they will.

Sir Cha. Well! now you're good, you shall have your own way—I am going to lie down in the next room; and, since you love a little chat, come and throw my night-gown over me, and you shall talk me to sleep. [*Exit* SIR CHARLES.

Edg. Yes, sir,——for all his way, I see he likes me still. [*Exit after him.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the Terrace.*

Enter LADY BETTY, LADY EASY, *and* LORD MORELOVE.

Lord Mor. Nay, madam, there you are too severe upon him; for, bating now and then a little vanity, my lord Foppington does not want wit sometimes to make him a very tolerable woman's man.

Lady Bet. But such eternal vanity grows tiresome.

Lady Easy. Come, if he were not so loose in his morals, his vanity, methinks, might be easily excused, considering how much 'tis in fashion: for, pray observe what's half the conversation of most of the fine young people about town, but a perpetual affectation of appearing foremost in the knowledge of manners, new modes, and scandal? and, in that, I don't see any body comes up to him.

Lord Mor. Nor I, indeed——and here he comes——Pray, madam, let's have a little more of him; nobody shews him to more advantage than your ladyship.

Lady Bet. Nay, with all my heart; you'll second me, my lord.

Lord Mor. Upon occasion, madam——

Lady Easy. Engaging upon parties, my lord? [*Aside, and smiling to* LORD MOR.

Enter LORD FOPPINGTON.

Lord Fop. So, ladies! what's the affair now?

Lady Bet. Why, you were, my lord! I was allowing you a great many good qualities; but lady Easy says you are a perfect hypocrite; and that, whatever airs you give yourself to the women, she's confident you value no woman in the world equal to your own lady.

Lord Fop. You see, madam, how I am scandalized upon your account. But, it is so natural for a prude to be malicious, when a man endeavour to be well with any body but herself—did you ever observe she was piqued at that before? ha, ha!

Lady Bet. I'll swear you are a provoking creature.

Lord Fop. Let's be more familiar upon't, and give her disorder! ha, ha!

Lady Bet. Ha, ha, ha!

Lord Fop. Stap my breath, but lady Easy is an admirable discoverer!—Marriage is indeed a prodigious security of one's inclination; a man's likely to take a world of pains in an employment, where he can't be turned out for his idleness.

Lady Bet. I vow, my lord, that's vastly generous to all the fine women; you are for giving them a despotic power in love, I see, to reward and punish as they think fit.

Lord Fop. Ha, ha! Right, madam; what signifies beauty without power? And a fine woman, when she's married, makes as ridiculous a figure, as a beaten general marching out of a garrison.

Lady Easy. I'm afraid, lady Betty, the greatest danger in your use of power, would be from a too heedless liberality; you would more mind the man than his merit.

Lord Fop. Piqued again, by all that's fretful!—Well, certainly, to give envy is a pleasure inexpressible. [*To* LADY BETTY.

Lady Bet. Ha, ha!

Lady Easy. Does not she show him well, my lord? [*Aside to* LORD MOR.

Lord Mor. Perfectly, and me to myself——For now, I almost blush to think I ever was uneasy at him. [*To* LADY EASY.

Lord Fop. Lady Easy, I ask ten thousand pardons; I'm afraid I am rude all this while.

Lady Easy. Oh, not at all, my lord; you are always good company, when you please: not but in some things, indeed, you are apt to be like other fine gentlemen, a little too loose in your principles.

Lord Fop. Oh, madam, never to the offence of the ladies; I agree in any community with them; nobody is a more constant churchman, when the fine women are there.

Lady Easy. Oh fy, my lord! you ought not to go for their sakes at all! And I wonder, you that are for being such a good husband of your virtues, are not afraid of bringing your prudence into a lampoon, or a play.

Lady Bet. Lampoons and plays, madam, are only things to be laughed at.

Lord Fop. Odso! ladies, the court's coming home, I see; shall not we make our bows?

Lady Bet. Oh, by all means!

Lady Easy. Lady Betty, I must leave you; for I am obliged to write letters; and I know you won't give me time after supper.

Lady Bet. Well, my dear, I'll make a short visit, and be with you. [*Exit* LADY EASY.] Pray, what's become of my lady Graveairs?

Lord Mor. Oh, I believe she's gone home, madam; she seemed not to be very well.

Lord Fop. And where's sir Charles, my lord?

Lord Mor. I left him at his own lodgings.

Lady Bet. He's upon some ramble, I'm afraid.

Lord Fop. Nay, as for that matter, a man may ramble at home sometimes—But, here come the chaises; we must make a little more haste, madam. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.——*Changes to* SIR CHARLES'S *lodgings.*

Enter LADY EASY, *and a Servant.*

Lady Easy. Is your master come home?

Ser. Yes, madam.

Lady Easy. Where is he?

Ser. I believe, madam, he's laid down to sleep.

Lady Easy. Where's Edging? Bid her get me some wax and paper——stay, it's no matter, now I think on it—there's some above upon my toilette. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE V.

Opens, and discovers SIR CHARLES *without his periwig, and* EDGING *by him, both asleep, in two easy chairs. Then enters* LADY EASY, *who starts and trembles, some time unable to speak.*

Lady Easy. Ha! protect me, virtue, patience, reason!
Teach me to bear this killing sight, or let
Me think my dreaming senses are deceived!
For sure, a sight like this might raise the arm
Of duty, even to the breast of love! At least,
I'll throw this vizor of my patience off:
Now wake him in his guilt,
And, barefaced, front him with my wrongs.
I'll talk to him till he blushes, nay, till he——
Frowns on me, perhaps—and then
I'm lost again—The ease of a few tears
Is all that's left to me——
And duty, too, forbids me to insult,
When I have vowed obedience—Perhaps
The fault's in me, and nature has not formed
Me with the thousand little requisites
That warm the heart to love——
Somewhere there is a fault——
But Heaven best knows what both of us deserve:
Ha! bare-headed, and in so sound a sleep!
Who knows, while thus exposed to the unwholesome air,
But Heaven offended may o'ertake his crime,
And, in some languishing distemper, leave him
A severe example of its violated laws——
Forbid it mercy, and forbid it love!
This may prevent it.
[*Takes a steinkirk off her neck, and lays it gently on his head.*]
And, if he should wake offended at my too busy care, let my heart-breaking patience, duty, and my fond affection, plead my pardon. [*Exit.*

[*After she has been out some time, a bell rings;* EDGING *wakes, and stirs* SIR CHARLES.]

Edg. Oh!

Sir Cha. How now! what's the matter?

Edg. Oh, bless my soul! my lady's come home.

Sir Cha. Go, go, then. [*Bell rings.*

Edg. Oh, lud! my head's in such a condition, too. [*Runs to the glass.*] I am coming, madam—Oh, lud! here's no powder, neither——Here, madam. [*Exit.*

Sir Cha. How now? [*Feeling the steinkirk upon his head.*] What's this? How came it here? [*Puts on his wig.*] Did not I see my wife wear this to-day?—Death! she can't have been here, sure—It could not be jealousy that brought her home—for my coming was accidental—so, too, I fear, was hers—How careless have I been?—not to secure the door, neither—'Twas foolish—It must be so! She certainly has seen me here sleeping with her woman: if so, how low an hypocrite to her must that sight have proved me! The thought has made me despicable, even to myself—How mean a vice is lying, and how often have these empty pleasures lulled my honour and my conscience to lethargy, while I grossly have abused her, poorly skulking behind a thousand falsehoods!—Now I reflect, this has not been the first of her discoveries——How contemptible a figure must I have made to her! A crowd of recollected circumstances confirms me now, she has been long acquainted with my follies; and yet, with what amazing prudence has she borne the secret pangs of injured love, and wore an everlasting smile to me! This asks a little thinking—something should be done—I'll see her instantly, and be resolved from her behaviour. [*Exit.*

SCENE VI.—*Changes to another room.*

Enter LADY EASY, *and* EDGING.

Lady Easy. Where have you been, Edging?

Edg. Been, madam! I—I—I—I came as soon as I heard you ring, madam.

Lady Easy. How guilt confounds her! but she's below my thought—Fetch my last new sack hither—I have a mind to alter it a little—make haste.

Edg. Yes, madam——I see she does not suspect any thing. [*Exit.*

Lady Easy. Heigh ho! [*Sitting down.*] I had forgot—but I'm unfit for writing now——'Twas an hard conflict——yet it's a joy to think it over: a secret pride, to tell my heart my conduct has been just——How low are vicious minds, that offer injuries! how much superior innocence, that bears them! Still there's a pleasure, even in the melancholy of a quiet conscience—Away, my fears, it is not yet impossible—for, while his human nature is not quite shook off, I ought not to despair.

Re-enter EDGING, *with a Sack.*

Edg. Here's the sack, madam.

Lady Easy. So, sit down there—and, let me see—here——rip off all that silver.

Edg. Indeed, I always thought it would become your ladyship better without it——But, now, suppose, madam, you carried another row of gold round the scollops, and then you take and lay this silver plain all along the gathers, and your ladyship will perfectly see, it will give the thing ten thousand times another air.

Lady Easy. Prithee, don't be impertinent; do as I bid you.

Edg. Nay, madam, with all my heart; your ladyship may do as you please.

Lady Easy. This creature grows so confident; and I dare not part with her, lest he should think it jealousy. [*Aside.*

Enter SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. So, my dear! What, at work! how are you employed, pray?

Lady Easy. I was thinking to alter this sack here.

Sir Cha. What's amiss? Methinks it's very pretty.

Edg. Yes, sir, it's pretty enough for that matter; but my lady has a mind it should be proper, too.

Sir Cha. Indeed!

Lady Easy. I fancy plain gold and black would become me better.

Sir Cha. That's a grave thought, my dear.

Edg. O, dear sir, not at all; my lady's much in the right; I am sure, as it is, it's fit for nothing but a girl.

Sir Cha. Leave the room.

Edg. Lord, sir! I can't stir—I must stay to—

Sir Cha. Go—— [*Angrily.*

Edg. [*Throwing down the work hastily, and crying, aside.*] If ever I speak to him again, I'll be burned! [*Exit* EDGING.

Sir Cha. Sit still, my dear—I came to talk with you——and, which you well may wonder at, what I have to say is of importance, too; but it is in order to my hereafter always talking kindly to you.

Lady Easy. Your words were never disobliging, nor can I charge you with a look that ever had the appearance of being unkind.

Sir Cha. The perpetual spring of your good humour lets me draw no merit from what I have appeared to be, which makes me curious now to know your thoughts of what I really am: and never having asked you this before, it puzzles me: nor can I (my strange negligence considered) reconcile to reason your first thought of venturing upon marriage with me.

Lady Easy. I never thought it such a hazard.

Sir Cha. How could a woman of your restraint in principles, sedateness, sense, and tender disposition, propose to lead an happy life with one (now I reflect) that hardly took an hour's pains, even before marriage, to appear but what I am: a loose, unheeded wretch, absent in all I do, ex-

vil, and as often rude, without design, unseasonably thoughtful, easy to a fault, and, in my best of praise, but carelessly good-natured? How shall I reconcile your temper with having made so strange a choice?

Lady Easy. Your own words may answer you—Your having never seemed to be but what you really were; and, through that carelessness of temper, there still shone forth to me an undesigning honesty, I always doubted of in smoother faces: thus, while I saw you took least pains to win me, you pleased and wooed me most: nay, I have thought, that such a temper could never be deliberately unkind: or, at the worst, I knew that errors, from the want of thinking, might be borne; at least, when, probably, one moment's serious thought might end them: these were my worst of fears; and these, when weighed by growing love, against my solid hopes, were nothing.

Sir Cha. My dear, your understanding startles me, and justly calls my own in question: I blush to think I've worn so bright a jewel in my bosom, and, till this hour, have scarce been curious once to look upon its lustre.

Lady Easy. You set too high a value on the common qualities of an easy wife.

Sir Cha. Virtues, like benefits, are double, when concealed: and, I confess, I yet suspect you of an higher value far than I have spoke you.

Lady Easy. I understand you not.

Sir Cha. I'll speak more plainly to you—be free, and tell me—Where did you leave this handkerchief?

Lady Easy. Ha!

Sir Cha. What is it you start at? You hear the question.

Lady Easy. What shall I say? my fears confound me. [*Aside.*

Sir Cha. Be not concerned, my dear; be easy in the truth, and tell me.

Lady Easy. I cannot speak—and I could wish you'd not oblige me to it—'tis the only thing I ever yet refused you; and, though I want reason for my will, let me not answer you.

Sir Cha. Your will, then, be a reason; and since I see you are so generously tender of reproaching me, it is fit I should be easy in my gratitude, and make, what ought to be my shame, my joy. Let me be therefore pleased to tell you now, your wondrous conduct has waked me to a sense of your disquiet past, and resolution never to disturb it more—And (not that I offer it as a merit, but yet in blind compliance to my will) let me beg you would immediately discharge your woman.

Lady Easy. Alas! I think not of her—O, my dear, distract me not with this excess of goodness. [*Weeping.*

Sir Cha. Nay, praise me not, lest I reflect how little I have deserved it; I see you are in pain to give me this confusion. Come, I will not shock your softness by my untimely blush for what is past, but rather sooth you to a pleasure at my sense of joy for my recovered happiness to come. Give, then, to my new-born love what name you please; it cannot, shall not, be too kind: O! it cannot be too soft for what my soul swells up with emulation to deserve—Receive me, then, entire at last, and take, what yet no woman ever truly had, my conquered heart!

Lady Easy. O, the soft treasure! O, the dear reward of long-deserving love!—Now am I blest indeed, to see you kind without the expence of pain in being so, to make you mine with easiness: thus! thus to have you mine, is something more than happiness; 'tis double life, and madness of abounding joy. But it was a pain intolerable to give you a confusion.

Sir Cha. O thou engaging virtue! But I am too slow in doing justice to thy love: I know thy softness will refuse me; but remember, I insist upon it——let thy woman be discharged this minute.

Lady Easy. No, my dear; think me not so low in faith, to fear, that, after what you have said, it will ever be in her power to do me future injury. When I can conveniently provide for her, I'll think on it: but to discharge her now, might let her guess at the occasion; and methinks I would have our difference, like our endearments, be equally a secret to our servants.

Sir Cha. Still my superior every way!—be it as you have better thought——Well, my dear, now I'll confess a thing that was not in your power to accuse me of; to be short, I own this creature is not the only one I have been to blame with.

Lady Easy. I know she is not, and was always less concerned to find it so; for constancy in errors might have been fatal to me.

Sir Cha. What is it you know, my dear? [*Surprised.*

Lady Easy. Come, I'm not afraid to accuse you now——my lady Graveairs——Your carelessness, my dear, let all the world know it; and it would have been hard indeed, had it been only to me a secret.

Sir Cha. My dear, I will ask no more questions, for fear of being more ridiculous; I do confess, I thought my discretion there had been a master-piece—How contemptible must I have looked all this while!

Lady Easy. You shan't say so.

Sir Cha. Well, to let you see I had some shame, as well as nature in me, I had writ this to my lady Graveairs upon my first discovering that you knew I had wronged you: read it.

Lady Easy. [*Reads.*] 'Something has happened that prevents the visit I intended you: and 'I could gladly wish, you never would reproach 'me if I tell you, 'tis utterly inconvenient that I 'should ever see you more.'

This, indeed, was more than I had merited.

Enter a Servant.

Sir Cha. Who is there? Here—Step with this to lady Graycairs.

[*Seals the letter, and gives it the servant.*

Ser. Yes, sir——Madam, my lady Betty's come.

Lady Easy. I'll wait on her.

Sir Cha. My dear, I am thinking there may be other things my negligence may have wronged you in: but be assured as I discover, all shall be corrected.——Is there any part or circumstance in your fortune that I can change or yet make easier to you?

Lady Easy. None my dear; your good-nature never stinted me in that; and now, methinks, I have less occasion there than ever.

Re-enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, my lord Morelove's come.

Sir Cha. I am coming——I think I told you of the design we had laid against lady Betty

Lady Easy. You did, and I should be pleased to be myself concerned in it.

Sir Cha. I believe we may employ you: I know he waits for me with impatience. But, my dear, won't you think me tasteless to the joy you have given me, to suffer, at this time, any concern but you to employ my thoughts?

Lady Easy. Seasons must be obeyed; and since I know your friend's happiness depending, I could not taste my own, should you neglect it.

Sir Cha. Thou easy sweetness!—O! what a waste of thy neglected love has my unthinking brain committed! but time, and future thrift of tenderness, shall yet repair it all. The hours will come when this soft gliding stream, that swells my heart, uninterrupted shall renew its course—

And, like the ocean after ebb, shall move
With constant force of due returning love.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—*Changes to another room.*

Re-enter LADY EASY *and* LADY BETTY.

Lady Bet. You have been in tears, my dear, and yet you look pleased, too.

Lady Easy. You will pardon me, If I cannot let you into circumstances: but be satisfied, sir Charles has made me happy, even to a pain of joy.

Lady Bet. Indeed, I am truly glad of it; though I am sorry to find, that any one who has generosity enough to do you justice, should, unprovoked, be so great an enemy to me.

Lady Easy. Sir Charles your enemy!

Lady Bet. My dear, you will pardon me if I always thought him so, but now I am convinced of it.

Lady Easy. In what, pray? I cannot think you will find him so.

Lady Bet. O! madam, it has been his whole business, of late, to make an utter breach between my lord Morelove and me.

Lady Easy. That may be owing to your usage of my lord: perhaps, he thought it would not disoblige you. I am confident you are mistaken in him.

Lady Bet. O! I don't use to be out in things of this nature; I can see well enough: but I shall be able to tell you more when I have talked with my lord.

Lady Easy. Here he comes; and because you shall talk with him—No excuses—for positively I will leave you together.

Lady Bet. Indeed, my dear, I desire you will stay, then; for I know you think now, that I have a mind to————

Lady Easy. To——to——ha, ha, ha!

[*Going.*

Lady Bet. Well! I'll remember this.

Enter LORD MORELOVE.

Lord Mor. I hope I don't fright you away, madam?

Lady Easy. Not at all, my lord; but I must beg your pardon for a moment; I will wait upon you immediately. [*Exit.*

Lady Bet. My lady Easy gone?

Lord Mor. Perhaps, madam, in friendship to you; she thinks I may have deserved the coldness you of late have shewn to me, and was willing to give you this opportunity to convince me you have not done it without just grounds and reason.

Lady Bet. How handsomely does he reproach me! but I cannot bear that he should think I know it——[*Aside.*] My lord, whatever has passed between you and me, I dare swear that could not be her thoughts at this time: for, when two people have appeared professed enemies, she cannot but think one will as little care to give, as the other receive, a justification of their actions.

Lord Mor. Passion, indeed, often does repeated injuries on both sides; but I don't remember, in my heat of error, I ever yet professed myself your enemy.

Lady Bet. My lord, I shall be very free with you—I confess, I do not think, now, I have a greater enemy in the world.

Lord Mor. If having loved you to my own disquiet, be injurious, I am contented then to stand the foremost of your enemies.

Lady Bet. O! my lord, there's no great fear of your being my enemy that way, I dare say—

Lord Mor. There is no other way my heart can bear to offend you now; and I foresee in that it will persist to my undoing.

Lady Bet. Fy, fy, my lord! we know where your heart is well enough.

Lord Mor. My conduct has, indeed, deserved this scorn: and therefore, 'tis but just I should

submit to your resentment, and beg (though I am assured in vain) for pardon. [*Kneels.*

Enter SIR CHARLES.

Sir Cha. How, my lord!

[LORD MORELOVE *rises.*

Lady Bet. Ha! He here! This was unlucky. [*Aside.*

Lord Mor. O, pity my confusion!

[*To* LADY BETTY.

Sir Cha. I am sorry to see you can so soon forget yourself: methinks the insults you have borne from that lady, by this time should have warned you into a disgust of her regardless principles.

Lord Mor. Hold, sir Charles, while you and I are friends! I desire you would speak with honour of this lady—'Tis sufficient I have no complaint against her, and—

Lady Bet. My lord, I beg you would resent this thing no farther: an injury like this is better punished with our contempt; apparent malice should only be laughed at.

Sir Cha. Ha, ha! the old resource. Offers of any hopes to delude him from his resentment, and then as the Grand Monarque did with Cavalier: and then you are sure to keep your word with him.

Lady Bet. Sir Charles, to let you know how far I am above your little spleen, my lord, your hand! from this hour———

Sir Cha. Pshaw! pshaw! all design! all pique! mere artifice and disappointed woman.

Lady Bet. Look you, sir, not that I doubt my lord's opinion of me; yet———

Sir Cha. Look you, madam, in short, your word has been too often taken, to let you make up quarrels, as you used to do, with a soft look, and a fair promise you never intended to keep.

Lady Bet. Was ever such insolence! He won't give me leave to speak.

Lord Mor. Sir Charles!

Lady Bet. No, pray, my lord, have patience; and since his malice seems to grow particular, I dare his worst, and urge him to the proof on't: Pray, sir, wherein can you charge me with breach of promise to my lord?

Sir Cha. Death! you won't deny it? How often, to piece up a quarrel, have you appointed him to visit you alone; and, though you have promised to see no other company the whole day, when he was come he has found you among the laugh of noisy fops, coquettes, and coxcombs, dissolutely gay, while your full eyes ran over with transport at their flattery, and your own vain power of pleasing? How often, I say, have you been known to throw away, at least, four hours of your good humour upon such wretches, and, the minute they were gone, grew only dull to him, sunk into a distasteful spleen, complained you had talked yourself into the head-ache, and then indulged upon the dear delight of seeing him in pain, and, by that time you had stretched and gaped him heartily out of patience, of a sudden most importantly remember you had outsat your appointment with my lady Fiddle-faddle, and immediately order your coach to the park?

Lady Bet. Yet, sir, have you done?

Sir Cha. No——though this might serve to shew the nature of your principles: but the noble conquest you have gained at last over defeated sense of reputation, too, has made your fame immortal.

Lord Mor. How, sir?

Lady Bet. My reputation?

Sir Cha. Aye, madam, your reputation—My lord, if I advance a falsehood, then resent it. I say your reputation——It has been your life's whole pride of late to be the common toast of every public table, vain even in the infamous addresses of a married man, my lord Foppington; let that be reconciled with reputation, I will now shake hands with shame, and bow me to the low contempt which you deserve from him; not but I suppose you will yet endeavour to recover him. Now, you find ill usage in danger of losing your conquest, 'tis possible you will stop at nothing to preserve it.

Lady Bet. Sir Charles——

[*Walks disordered, and he after her.*

Sir Cha. I know your vanity is so voracious, it will even wound itself to feed itself; offer him a blank, perhaps, to fill up with hopes of what nature he pleases, and part even with your pride to keep him.

Lady Bet. Sir Charles, I have not deserved this of you. [*Bursting into tears.*

Sir Cha. Ah! true woman! drop him a soft dissembling tear, and then his just resentment must be hushed of course.

Lord Mor. O Charles! I can bear no more; those tears are so reproaching.

Sir Cha. Hist, for your life! [*Aside, and then aloud.*] My lord, if you believe her, you are undone; the very next sight of my lord Foppington would make her yet forswear all that she can promise.

Lady Bet. My lord Foppington! Is that the mighty crime that must condemn me, then? You know I used him but as a tool of my resentment, which you yourself, by a pretended friendship to us both, most artfully provoked me to——

Lord Mor. Hold, I conjure you, madam; I want not this conviction.

Lady Bet. Send for him this minute, and you and he shall both be witnesses of the contempt and detestation I have for any forward hopes his vanity may have given him, or your malice would insinuate.

Sir Cha. Death! you would as soon eat fire—as soon part with your luxurious taste of folly, as dare to own the half of this before his face, or any one, that would make you blush to deny it to—Here comes my wife now, we shall see—

Ha! and my lord Foppington with her—Now! now, we shall see this mighty proof of your sincerity—Now! my lord, you'll have a warning sure, and henceforth know me for your friend, indeed.

Enter LADY EASY, *and* LORD FOPPINGTON.

Lady Easy. In tears, my dear! what's the matter?

Lady Bet. O, my dear, all I told you is true: Sir Charles has shewn himself so inveterately my enemy, that, if I believed I deserved but half his hate, 'twould make me hate myself.

Lord Fop. Hark you, Charles; prithee what is this business?

Sir Cha. Why, yours, my lord, for aught I know—I have made such a breach betwixt them—I cannot promise much for the courage of a woman; but if hers holds, I am sure it is wide enough; you may enter ten abreast, my lord.

Lord Fop. Say'st thou so, Charles? Then, I hold six to four, I am the first man in the town.

Lady Easy. Sure there must be some mistake in this: I hope he has not made my lord your enemy.

Lady Bet. I know not what he has done.

Lord More. Far be that thought! Alas! I am too much in fear myself, that what I have this day committed, advised by his mistaken friendship, may have done my love irreparable prejudice.

Lady Bet. No, my lord; since I perceive his little arts have not prevailed upon your good nature to my prejudice, I am bound in gratitude, in duty to myself, and to the confession you have made, my lord, to acknowledge now, I have been to blame, too.

Lord More. Ha! is it possible? can you own so much? O my transported heart!

Lady Bet. He says I have taken pleasure in seeing you uneasy—I own it—but 'twas when that uneasiness I thought proceeded from your love; and if you did love——'twill not be much to pardon it.

Lord More. O let my soul, thus bending to your power, adore this soft descending goodness!

Lady Bet. And, since the giddy woman's slights I have shewn you too often, have been public, 'tis fit, at last, the amends and reparation should be so: therefore, what I offered to Sir Charles, I now repeat before this company, my utter detestation of any past, or future gallantry, that has, or shall be offered by me, to your uneasiness.

Lord More. Oh! be less generous, or teach me to deserve it——Now blush, sir Charles, at your injurious accusation.

Lord Fop. Ah! Pardi, Voila quelque chose d'extraordinaire!

Lady Bet. As for my lord Foppington, I owe him thanks for having been so friendly an instrument of our reconciliation; for though, in the little outward gallantry I received from him, I did not immediately trust him with my design in it, yet I have a better opinion of his understanding, than to suppose he could mistake it.

Lord Fop. I am struck dumb with the deliberation of her assurance! and do not positively remember, that the *nonchalance* of my temper ever had so bright an occasion to shew itself before.

Lady Bet. My lord, I hope you will pardon the freedom I have taken with you.

Lord Fop. Oh, madam, do not be under the confusion of an apology upon my account; for, in cases of this nature, I am never disappointed, but when I find a lady of the same mind two hours together——Madam, I have lost a thousand fine women in my time; but never had the ill manners to be out of humour with any one for refusing me, since I was born.

Lady Bet. My lord, that's a very prudent temper.

Lord Fop. Madam, to convince you that I am in an universal peace with mankind, since you own I have so far contributed to your happiness, give me leave to have the honour of completing it, by joining your hand, where you have already offered up your inclination.

Lady Bet. My lord, that's a favour I cannot refuse you.

Lord More. Generous, indeed, my lord!

[LORD FOPPINGTON *joins their hands.*

Lord Fop. And, stap my breath, if ever I was better pleased since my first entrance into human nature!

Sir Cha. How now, my lord! what? throw up the cards before you have lost the game?

Lord Fop. Look you, Charles, 'tis true, I did design to have played with her alone: but he that will keep well with the ladies, must sometimes be content to make one at a pool with them; and, since I know I must engage her in my turn, I don't see any great odds in letting him take the first game with her.

Sir Cha. Wisely considered, my lord!

Lady Bet. And now, sir Charles——

Sir Cha. And now, madam, I'll save you the trouble of a long speech; and, in one word, confess that every thing I have done in regard to you this day, was purely artificial—I saw there was no way to secure you to my lord Morelove, but by alarming your pride with the danger of losing him: and, since the success must have by this time convinced you, that in love nothing is more ridiculous than an over-acted aversion, I am sure you won't take it ill, if we at last congratulate your good-nature, by heartily laughing at the fright we had put you in: ha, ha, ha!

Lady Easy. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Bet. Why—Well, I declare it now, I hate you worse than ever.

Sir Cha. Ha, ha, ha! And was it afraid they

would take away it's love from it?——Poor lady Betty! Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Easy. My dear, I beg your pardon; but it is impossible not to laugh when one is so heartily pleased.

Lord Fop. Really, madam, I am afraid the humour of the company will draw me into your displeasure, too; but, if I were to expire this moment, my last breath would positively go out with a laugh. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Bet. Nay, I have deserved it all, that's the truth on't—but I hope, my lord, you were not in this design against me.

Lord More. As a proof, madam, I am inclined never to deceive you more—I do confess I had my share in it.

Lady Bet. You do, my lord—then I declare it was a design, one or other—the best carried on that ever I knew in my life; and (to my shame I own it) for aught I know, the only thing that could have prevailed upon my temper; 'twas a foolish pride that has cost me many a bitten lip to support it—I wish we don't both repent, my lord.

Lord More. Don't you repent with me, and we never shall.

Sir Cha. Well, madam, now the worst that the world can say of your past conduct, is, that my lord had constancy, and you had tried it.

Enter a Servant to LORD MORELOVE.

Ser. My lord, Mr Lefevre's below, and desires to know what time your lordship will please to have the music begin.

Lord More. Sir Charles, what say you? will you give me leave to bring them hither?

Sir Cha. As the ladies think fit, my lord.

Lady Bet. Oh! by all means; 'twill be better here, unless we could have the terrace to ourselves.

Lord More. Then, pray desire them to come hither immediately.

Ser. Yes, my lord.

[*Exit Servant.*

Enter LADY GRAVELAIRS.

Sir Cha. Lady Graveairs!

Lady Grave. Yes, you may well start! But don't suppose I am now come, like a poor tame fool, to upbraid your guilt; but, if I could, to blast you with a look.

Sir Cha. Come, come, you have sense—don't expose yourself—you are unhappy, and I own myself the cause. The only satisfaction I can offer you, is to protest, no new engagement takes me from you; but a sincere reflection of the long neglect, and injuries I have done the best of wives; for whose amends, and only sake, I now must part with you, and all the inconvenient pleasures of my life.

Lady Grave. Have you then fallen into the low contempt of exposing me, and to your wife, too?

Sir Cha. 'Twas impossible; without it, I could never be sincere in my conversion.

Lady Grave. Despicable!

Sir Cha. Do not think so——for my sake I know she'll not reproach you—nor, by her carriage, ever let the world perceive you have wronged her. My dear——

Lady Easy. Lady Graveairs, I hope you will sup with us?

Lady Grave. I cannot refuse so much good company, madam.

Sir Cha. You see the worst of her resentment——In the mean time, don't endeavour to be her friend, and she'll never be your enemy.

Lady Grave. I am unfortunate—'tis what my folly has deserved, and I submit to it.

Lord More. So! here is the music.

Lady Easy. Come, ladies, shall we sit?

SONG.

Sabina, with an angel's face,
By love ordained for joy;
Seems of the siren's cruel race,
To charm and then destroy.
With all the arts of look and dress,
She fans the fatal fire;
Through pride, mistaken oft for grace,
She bids the saviors expire.
The god of love, enraged to see
The nymph defy his flame,
Pronounced his merciless decree
Against the haughty dame.
Let age with double speed o'ertake her,
Let love the room of pride supply;
And, when the lovers all forsake her,
A spotless virgin let her die.

SIR CHARLES *comes forward with* LADY EASY.

Sir Cha. Now, my dear, I find my happiness grow fast upon me; in all my past experience of the sex, I found, even among the better sort, so much of folly, pride, malice, passion, and irresolute desire, that I concluded thee but of the foremost rank, and, therefore, scarce worthy my concern; but thou hast stirred me with so severe a proof of thy exalted virtue, it gives me wonder equal to my love—If, then, the unkindly thought of what I have been, hereafter shall intrude upon thy growing quiet, let this reflection teach thee to be easy:

Thy wrongs, when greatest, most thy virtue proved;
And, from that virtue found, I blushed, and truly loved.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

DOUBLE GALLANT:

OR,

THE SICK LADY'S CURE.

BY

CIBBER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR SOLOMON SADLIFE, *an old city knight.*
CLERIMONT, *attached to* CLARINDA.
CARELESS, *in pursuit of* LADY DAINTY.
ATALL, *the Double Gallant.*
OLD MR WILFUL, *father to* SYLVIA.
SIR HARRY ATALL, *father to* ATALL.
SUPPLE, *servant to* SIR SOLOMON.
DR BLISTER, } *medical attendants of* LADY
RHUBARB, } DAINTY.
FINDER, *servant to* ATALL.

WOMEN.

LADY DAINTY, *an absurd hypochondriac.*
LADY SADLIFE, *wife to* SIR SOLOMON.
CLARINDA, *a coquette.*
SYLVIA, *attached to* ATALL.
WISHWELL, *servant to* LADY SADLIFE.
SITUP, *servant to* LADY DAINTY.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

Enter CLERIMONT *and* ATALL.

Cle. MR ATALL, your very humble servant.

Atall. O, Clerimont, such an adventure! I was just going to your lodgings; such a transporting accident! in short, I am now positively in love for altogether!

Cle. All the sex together, I believe!

Atall. Nay, if thou dost not believe me, and stand my friend, I am ruined past redemption.

Cle. Dear sir, if I stand your friend without believing you, won't that do as well? But, why should you think I don't believe you? I have seen you twice in love within this fortnight; and it would be hard, indeed, to suppose a heart of so much mettle could not hold out a third engagement.

Atall. Then, to be serious, in one word, I am honourably in love; and, if she proves the woman I am sure she must, will positively marry her.

Cle. Marry! O degenerate virtue!

Atall. Now, will you help me?

Cle. Sir, you may depend upon me. Pray, give

me leave first to ask a question or two. What is this honourable lady's name?

Atall. Faith, I don't know.

Cle. What are her parents?

Atall. I can't tell.

Cle. What fortune has she?

Atall. I don't know.

Cle. Where does she live?

Atall. I can't tell.

Cle. A very concise account of the person you design to marry! Pray, sir, what is it you do know of her?

Atall. That I'll tell you. Coming yesterday from Greenwich by water, I overtook a pair of oars, whose lovely freight was one single lady, and a fellow in a handsome livery in the stern. When I came up, I had at first resolved to use the privilege of the element, and bait her with waterman's wit, till I came to the bridge; but, as soon as she saw me, she very prudently prevented my design; and, as I passed, bowed to me with an humble blush, that spoke at once such sense, so just a fear, and modesty, as put the loosest of my thoughts to rout. And, when she found her fears had moved me into manners, the cautious gloom, that sat upon her beauties, disappeared; her sparkling eyes resumed their native fire; she looked, she smiled, she talked, while her diffusive charms new fired my heart, and gave my soul a softness it never felt before. To be brief, her conversation was as charming as her person, both easy, unconstrained, and sprightly; but, then, her limbs! O rapturous thought! The snowy down upon the wings of unfledged love had never half that softness.

Cle. Raptures, indeed! Pray, sir, how came you so well acquainted with her limbs?

Atall. By the most fortunate misfortune sure that ever was: for, as we were shooting the bridge, her boat, by the negligence of the waterman, running against the piles, was overset; out jumps the footman, to take care of a single rogue, and down went the poor lady to the bottom. My boat being before her, the stream drove her, by the help of her clothes, toward me; at sight of her, I plunged in, caught her in my arms, and, with much ado, supported her till my waterman pulled in to save us. But the charming difficulty of her getting into the boat, gave me a transport that all the wide water in the Thames had not power to cool; for, sir, while I was giving her a lift into the boat, I found the floating of her clothes had left her lovely limbs beneath as bare as a new-born Venus rising from the sea.

Cle. What an impudent happiness art thou capable of!

Atall. When she was a little recovered from her fright, she began to enquire my name, abode, and circumstances, that she might know to whom she owed her life and preservation. Now, to tell you the truth, I durst not trust her with my real name, lest she should from thence have discovered that my father was now actually under bonds to marry me to another woman; so, faith, I even told her my name was Freeman, a Gloucestershire gentleman, of a good estate, just come to town about a chancery suit. Besides, I was unwilling any accident should let my father know of my being yet in England, lest he should find me out, and force me to marry the woman I never saw (for which, you know, he commanded me home) before I have time to prevent it.

Cle. Well, but could you not learn the lady's name all this while?

Atall. No, faith, she was inexorable to all intreaties; only told me in general terms, that if what I vowed to her was sincere, she would give me a proof in a few days what hazards she would run to requite my services; so, after having told her where she might hear of me, I saw her into a chair, pressed her by the cold rosy fingers, kissed them warm, and parted.

Cle. What, then, you are quite off with the lady, I suppose, that you made an acquaintance with in the Park last week?

Atall. No, no; not so, neither: one's my Juno, all pride and beauty; but this my Venus, all life, love, and softness. Now, what I beg of thee, dear Clerimont, is this: Mrs Juno, as I told you, having done me the honour of a civil visit or two at my own lodgings, I must needs borrow thine to entertain Mrs Venus in; for, if the rival goddesses should meet and clash, you know there would be the devil to do between them.

Cle. Well, sir, my lodgings are at your service:—but you must be very private and sober, I can tell you; for my landlady's a Presbyterian; if she suspects your design, you're blown up, depend upon it.

Atall. Don't fear: I'll be as careful as a guilty conscience: but, I want immediate possession: for I expect to hear from her every moment, and have already directed her to send thither. Prithee, come with me.

Cle. Faith, you must excuse me; I expect some ladies in the Park that I would not miss for an empire: but yonder's my servant, he shall conduct you.

Atall. Very good! that will do as well, then. I'll send my man along with him to expect her commands, and call me if she sends: and, in the mean time, I'll e'en go home to my own lodgings; for, to tell you the truth, I expect a small message there from my goddess imperial. And I am not so much in love with my new bird in the bush, as to let t'other fly out of my hand for her.

Cle. And, pray, sir, what name does your goddess imperial, as you call her, know you by?

Atall. O, sir, with her I pass for a man of arms, and am called colonel Standfast; with my new face, John Freeman of Flatland-Hall, esq. ——But time flies: I must leave you.

Cle. Well, dear Atall, I'm yours—Good luck

to you! [*Exit* ATALL.]—What a happy fellow is this, that owes his success with the women purely to his inconstancy! Here comes another, too, almost as happy as he, a fellow that's wise enough to be but half in love, and make his whole life a studied idleness.

Enter CARELESS.

So, Careless! you're constant, I see, to your morning's saunter.——Well, how stand matters?—I hear strange things of thee; that, after having railed at marriage all thy life, thou hast resolved to fall into the noose at last.

Care. I don't see any great terror in the noose, as you call it, when a man's weary of liberty: the liberty of playing the fool, when one's turned of thirty, is not of much value.

Cle. Hey-day! Then, you begin to have nothing in your head now, but settlements, children, and the main chance!

Care. Even so, faith! but in hopes to come at them, too, I am forced very often to make my way through pills, elixirs, bolus's, ptisans, and gallipots.

Cle. What, is your mistress an apothecary's widow?

Care. No, but she is an apothecary's shop, and keeps as many drugs in her bed-chamber; she has her physic for every hour of the day and night——for 'tis vulgar, she says, to be a moment in rude and perfect health. Her bed lined with poppies; the black boys at the feet, that the healthy employ to bear flowers in their arms, she loads with diascordium, and other sleepy potions: her sweet bags, instead of the common and offensive smells of musk and amber, breathe nothing but the more modish and salubrious scents of hartshorn, rue, and assafœtida.

Cle. Why, at this rate, she's only fit to be the consort of Hippocrates. But, pray, what other charms has this extraordinary lady?

Care. She has one, Tom, that a man may relish without being so deep a physician.

Cle. What's that?

Care. Why, two thousand pounds a year.

Cle. No vulgar beauty, I confess, sir. But canst thou, for any consideration, throw thyself into this hospital, this box of physic, and lie all night like leaf-gold upon a pill?

Care. O, dear sir, this is not half the evil; her humour is as fantastic as her diet; nothing that is English must come near her; all her delight is in foreign impertinencies: her rooms are all of Japan or Persia, her dress Indian, and her equipage are all monsters: the coachman came over with his horses, both from Russia, Flanders are too common; the rest of her trim are a motley crowd of blacks, tawny, olives, feulamots, and pale blues: in short, she's for any thing that comes from beyond sea; her greatest monsters are those of her own country; and she's in love with nothing o' this side the line, but the apothecaries.

Cle. Apothecaries quotha! why your fine lady, for aught I see, is a perfect dose of folly and physic; in a month's time she'll grow like an antimonial cup, and a kiss will be able to work with you.

Care. But to prevent that, Tom, I design, upon the wedding-day, to break all her gallipots, kick the doctor down stairs, and force her, instead of physic, to take a hearty meal of a swinging rump of boiled beef and carrots; and so 'faith I have told her.

Cle. That's something familiar: are you so near man and wife?

Care. O nearer; for I sometimes plague her till she hates the very sight of me.

Cle. Ha, ha! very good! So, being a very troublesome lover, you pretend to cure her of her physic by a counter poison.

Care. Right; I intend to fee a doctor to prescribe to her an hour of my conversation to be taken every night and morning; and this to be continued till her fever of aversion's over.

Cle. An admirable recipe!

Care. Well, Tom, but how stands thy own affair? Is Clarinda kind yet?

Cle. Faith, I cannot say she's absolutely kind, but she's pretty near it: for she's grown so ridiculously ill-humoured to me of late, that, if she keeps the same airs a week longer, I am in hopes to find as much ease from her folly, as my constancy would from her good-nature.—But to be plain, I'm afraid I have some secret rival in the case; for women's vanity seldom gives them courage enough to use an old lover heartily ill, till they are first sure of a new one, that they intend to use better.

Care. What says sir Solomon? He is your friend, I presume?

Cle. Yes; at least I can make him so when I please. There is an odd five hundred pound in her fortune, that he has a great mind should stick to his fingers, when he pays in the rest on't, which I am afraid I must comply with; for she can't easily marry without his consent.——And yet she's so altered in her behaviour of late, that I scarce know what to do.—Prithee, take a turn and advise me.

Care. With all my heart. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* SIR SOLOMON SADLIFE'S *house.*

Enter SIR SOLOMON, *and* SUPPLE *his man.*

Sir Sol. Supple, dost not thou perceive I put a great confidence in thee?——I trust thee with my bosom secrets.

Sup. Yes, sir.

Sir Sol. Ah, Supple! I begin to hate my wife—but be secret——

Sup. I'll never tell while I live, sir.

Sir Sol. Nay, then, I'll trust thee further. Between thee and I, Supple, I have reason to believe my wife hates me, too.

Sup. Ah, dear sir! I doubt that's no secret; for, to say the truth, my lady's bitter young, and gamesome.

Sir Sol. But can she have the impudence, think'st thou, to make a cuckold of a knight, one that was dubbed by the royal sword?

Sup. Alas, sir, I warrant she has the courage of a countess; if she's once provoked, she cares not what she does in her passion; if you were ten times a knight she'd give you dub for dub, sir.

Sir Sol. Ah! Supple, when her blood's up, I confess she's the devil; and I question if the whole conclave of cardinals could lay her. But suppose she should resolve to give me a sample of her sex, and make me a cuckold in cool blood?

Sup. Why, if she should, sir, don't take it so to heart; cuckolds are no such monsters now-a-days: in the city, you know, sir, it's so many honest men's fortune, that no body minds it there; and, at this end of the town, a cuckold has as much respect as his wife, for aught I see; for gentlemen don't know but it may be their own case another day, and so people are willing to do as they would be done by.

Sir Sol. And yet I do not think but my spouse is honest—and think she is not——would I were satisfied!

Sup. Troth, sir, I don't know what to think; but, in my conscience, I believe good looking after her can do her no harm.

Sir Sol. Right, Supple; and in order to it, I'll first demolish her visiting days. For how do I know but they may be so many private clubs for cuckoldom?

Sup. Ah, sir! your worship knows I was always against your coming to this end of the town.

Sir Sol. Thou wert indeed, my honest Supple: but woman! fair and faithless woman, wormed and worked me to her wishes;—like fond Mark Antony, I let my empire moulder from my hands, and gave up all for love.—I must have a young wife, with a murrain to me—I hate her, too—and yet the devil on't is, I'm still jealous of her.——Stay! let me reckon up all the fashionable virtues she has that can make a man happy. In the first place—I think her very ugly.

Sup. Ah, that's because you are married to her, sir.

Sir Sol. As for her expences, no arithmetic can reach them; she's always longing for something dear and useless; she will certainly ruin me in china, silks, ribbands, fans, laces, perfumes, washes, powder, patches, jessamine, gloves, and ratifia.

Sup. Ah, sir, that's a cruel liquor with them.

Sir Sol. To sum up all would run me mad.—The only way to put a stop to her career, must be to put off my coach, turn away her chairmen, lock out her Swiss porter, bar up the doors, keep out all visitors, and then she'll be less expensive.

Sup. Ay, sir, for few women think it worth their while to dress for their husbands.

Sir Sol. Then we shan't be plagued with my old lady Tittle-tattle's howd'ye's in a morning, nor my lady Dainty's spleen, or the sudden indisposition of that grim beast her horrible Dutch mastiff.

Sup. No, sir, nor the impertinence of that great fat creature, my lady Swill-Tea.

Sir Sol. And her squinting daughter.——No, Supple, after this night, nothing in petticoats shall come within ten yards of my doors.

Sup. Nor in breeches neither.

Sir Sol. Only Mr Clerimont; for I expect him to sign articles with me for the five hundred pounds he is to give me, for that ungovernable jade, my niece Clarinda.—But now to my own affairs. I'll step into the Park, and see if I can meet with my hopeful spouse there. I warrant, engaged in some innocent freedom, as she calls it, as walking in a mask, to laugh at the impertinencies of fops that don't know her; but 'tis more likely, I'm afraid, a plot to intrigue with those that do. Oh, how many torments lie in the small circle of a wedding-ring! [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—CLARINDA's *apartment.*

Enter CLARINDA *and* SYLVIA.

Cla. HA, ha! poor Sylvia!

Syl. Nay, prithee, don't laugh at me. There's no accounting for inclination: for if there were, you know, why should it be a greater folly in me, to fall in love with a man I never saw but once in my life, than it is in you to resist an honest gentleman, whose fidelity has deserved your heart an hundred times over.

Cla. Ah, but an utter stranger, cousin, and one that, for aught you know, may be no gentleman.

Syl. That's impossible: his conversation could not be counterfeit. An elevated wit, and good breeding, have a natural lustre that's inimitable. Beside, he saved my life at the hazard of his own; so that part of what I give him, is but gratitude.

Cla. But suppose now he is married, and has three or four children?

Syl. Psha! prithee don't tease me with so many ill-natured objections. I tell you he is not

married! I am sure he is not: for I never saw a face look more in humour in my life. Beside, he told me himself, he was a country gentleman, just come to town upon business: and I am resolved to believe him.

Cla. Well, well; I'll suppose you both as fit for one another as a couple of tallies. But, still, my dear, you know there's a surly old father's command against you; he is in articles to marry you to another: and, though I know love is a notable contriver, I can't see how you'll get over that difficulty.

Syl. 'Tis a terrible one, I own; but, with a little of your assistance, dear Clarinda, I am still in hopes to bring it to an even wager, I prove as wise as my father.

Cla. Nay, you may be sure of me; you may see, by the management of my own amours, I have so natural a compassion for disobedience, I shan't be able to refuse you any thing in distress—There's my hand; tell me how I can serve you?

Syl. Why, thus:—because I would not wholly discover myself to him at once, I have sent him a note to visit me here, as if these lodgings were my own.

Cla. Hither! to my lodgings! 'Twas well I sent Colonel Standfast word I should not be at home. [*Aside.*

Syl. I hope you'll pardon my freedom, since one end of my taking it, too, was to have your opinion of him before I engage any farther.

Cla. Oh, it needs no apology; any thing of mine is at your service——I am only afraid my troublesome lover, Mr Clerimont, should happen to see him, who is of late so impertinently jealous of a rival, though from what cause I know not—not but I lie too—[*Aside.*] I say, should he see him, your country gentleman would be in danger, I can tell you.

Syl. Oh, there's no fear of that; for I have ordered him to be brought in the back way: when I have talked with him a little alone, I'll find an occasion to leave him with you; and then we'll compare our opinions of him.

Enter a Servant to CLARINDA.

Ser. Madam, my lady Sadlife. [*Exit.*

Syl. Psha! she here!

Cla. Don't be uneasy; she shan't disturb you: I'll take care of her.

Enter LADY SADLIFE.

Lady Sad. Oh, my dears, you have lost the sweetest morning, sure, that ever peeped out of the firmament. The park was never in such perfection.

Cla. 'Tis always so when your ladyship's there.

Lady Sad. 'Tis never so without my dear Clarinda!

Syl. How civilly we women hate one another! [*Aside.*] Was there a good deal of company, madam?

Lady Sad. Abundance! and the best I have seen this season: for 'twas between twelve and one, the very hour, you know, when the mob are violently hungry. Oh, the air was so inspiring! so amorous! And, to complete the pleasure, I was attacked in conversation by the most charming, modest, agreeably insinuating young fellow, sure, that ever woman played the fool with.

Cla. Who was it?

Lady Sad. Nay, Heaven knows; his face is as entirely new as his conversation. What wretches our young fellows are to him!

Syl. What sort of a person?

Lady Sad. Tall, straight, well-limbed, walked firm, and a look as cheerful as a May-day morning.

Syl. The picture's very like: pray Heaven it is not my gentleman's! [*Aside.*

Cla. I wish this don't prove my colonel. [*Aside.*

Syl. How came you to part with him so soon?

Lady Sad. Oh, name it not! that eternal damper of all pleasure, my husband, sir Solomon, came into the Mall in the very crisis of our conversation—I saw him at a distance, and complained that the air grew tainted, that I was sick o' th' sudden, and left him in such abruptness and confusion, as if he had been himself my husband.

Cla. A melancholy disappointment, indeed!

Lady Sad. Oh, 'tis a husband's nature to give them.

A Servant enters, and whispers SYLVIA.

Syl. Desire him to walk in—Cousin, you'll be at hand?

Cla. In the next room—Come, madam, Sylvia has a little business: I'll shew you some of the sweetest, prettiest figured china.

Lady Sad. My dear, I wait on you.

[*Exeunt* LADY SAD. *and* CLAR.

Enter ATALL, *as* MR FREEMAN.

Syl. You find, sir, I have kept my word in seeing you; 'tis all you yet have asked of me; and when I know 'tis in my power to be more obliging, there's nothing you can command in honour I shall refuse you.

Atall. This generous offer, madam, is so high an obligation, that it were almost mean in me to ask a farther favour. But 'tis a lover's merit to be a miser in his wishes, and grasp at all occasions to enrich them. I own I feel your charms too sensibly prevail, but dare not give a loose to my ambitious thoughts, till I have passed one dreadful doubt that shakes them.

Syl. If 'tis in my power to clear it, ask me freely.

Atall. I tremble at the trial; and yet, methinks, my fears are vain: but yet to kill or cure

them once for ever, be just and tell me—are you married?

Syl. If that can make you easy, no.

Atall. 'Tis ease, indeed—nor are you promised, nor your heart engaged?

Syl. That's hard to tell you: but to be just, I own my father has engaged my person to one I never saw; and my heart, I fear, is inclining to one he never saw.

Atall. Oh, yet be merciful, and ease my doubt; tell me the happy man that has deserved so exquisite a blessing.

Syl. That, sir, requires some pause: first, tell me why you're so inquisitive, without letting me know the condition of your own heart?

Atall. In every circumstance my heart's the same with yours; 'tis promised to one I never saw, by a commanding father, who, by my firm hopes of happiness, I am resolved to disobey, unless your cruelty prevents it.

Syl. But my disobedience would beggar me.

Atall. Banish that fear. I'm heir to a fortune will support you like yourself. May I not know your family?

Syl. Yet you must not.

Atall. Why that nicety? Is not it in my power to enquire whose house this is when I am gone?

Syl. And be never the wiser. These lodgings are a friend's, and are only borrowed on this occasion: but to save you the trouble of any further needless questions, I will make you one proposal. I have a young lady here within, who is the only confident of my engagements to you:—on her opinion I rely; nor can you take it ill, if I take no farther steps without it: 'twould be miserable, indeed, should we both meet beggars. I own your actions and appearance merit all you can desire; let her be as well satisfied of your pretensions and condition, and you shall find it shan't be a little fortune shall make me ungrateful.

Atall. So generous an offer exceeds my hopes!

Syl. Who's there?

Enter a Servant.

Desire my cousin Clarinda to walk in.

Atall. Ha! Clarinda! If it should be my Clarinda now, I'm in a sweet condition—by all that's terrible, the very she! this was finely contrived of fortune. [*Aside.*

Enter CLARINDA.

Cla. Defend me! Colonel Standfast! She has certainly discovered my affair with him, and has a mind to insult me by an affected resignation of her pretensions to him. I'll disappoint her—I won't know him. [*Aside.*

Syl. Cousin, pray, come forward; this is the gentleman I am so much obliged to—sir, this lady is a relation of mine, and the person we were speaking of.

Atall. I shall be proud to be better known among any of your friends. [*Salutes her.*

Cla. Soh! he takes the hint, I see, and seems not to know me neither: I know not what to think—I am confounded! I hate both him and her. How unconcerned he looks! Confusion! he addresses her before my face.

LADY SADLIFE *peeping in.*

Lady Sad. What do I see? The pleasant young fellow that talked with me in the park just now! This is the luckiest accident! I must know a little more of him. [*Retires.*

Syl. Cousin, and Mr Freeman, I think I need not make any apology—you both know the occasion of my leaving you together—in a quarter of an hour I'll wait on you again. [*Exit* SYLVIA.

Atall. So! I'm in a hopeful way now, faith; but buff's the word: I'll stand it.

Cla. Mr Freeman! So, my gentleman has changed his name, too! How harmless he looks! I have my senses sure, and yet the demureness of that face looks as if he had a mind to persuade me out of them. I could find in my heart to humour his assurance, and see how far he'll carry it—Will you please to sit, sir? [*They sit.*

Atall. What the devil can this mean? Sure she has a mind to counterface me, and not know me, too——With all my heart: if her ladyship won't know me, I'm sure 'tis not my business, at this time, to know her. [*Aside.*

Cla. Certainly that face is cannon proof. [*Aside.*

Atall. Now for a formal speech, as if I had never seen her in my life before. [*Aside.*] Madam—a-hem! Madam—I—a-hem!

Cla. Curse of that steady face! [*Aside.*

Atall. I say, madam, since I am an utter stranger to you, I am afraid it will be very difficult for me to offer you more arguments than one to do me a friendship with your cousin; but if you are, as she seems to own you, her real friend, I presume you can't give her a better proof of your being so, than pleading the cause of a sincere and humble lover, whose tender wishes never can propose to taste of peace in life without her.

Cla. Umph! I'm choaked. [*Aside.*

Atall. She gave me hopes, that when I had satisfied you of my birth and fortune, you would do me the honour to let me know her name and family.

Cla. Sir, I must own you are the most perfect master of your art, that ever entered the lists of assurance.

Atall. Madam!

Cla. And I don't doubt but you will find it a much easier task to impose upon my cousin, than me.

Atall. Impose, madam! I should be sorry any thing I have said could disoblige you into such

hard thoughts of me. Sure, madam, you are under some misinformation.

Cla. I was indeed; but now my eyes are open: for, till this minute, I never knew that the gay colonel Standfast was the demure Mr Freeman.

Atall. Colonel Standfast! This is extremely dark, madam.

Cla. This jest is tedious, sir—impudence grows dull, when 'tis so very extravagant.

Atall. Madam, I am a gentleman—but not yet wise enough, I find, to account for the humours of a fine lady.

Cla. Troth, sir, on second thoughts, I begin to be a little better reconciled to your assurance; 'tis, in some sort, modesty to deny yourself; for to own your perjuries to my face, had been an insolence transcendently provoking.

Atall. Really, madam, my not being able to apprehend one word of all this, is a great inconvenience to my affair with your cousin: but if you will first do me the honour to make me acquainted with her name and family, I don't much care if I do take a little pains afterwards to come to a right understanding with you.

Cla. Come, come, since you see this assurance will do you no good, you had better put on a simple look, and generously confess your frailties: the same slyness, that deceived me first, will still find me woman enough to pardon you.

Atall. That bite won't do. [*Aside.*] Sure, madam, you mistake me for some other person.

Cla. Insolent, audacious villain! I am not to have my senses, then!

Atall. No. [*Aside.*

Cla. And you are resolved to stand it to the last!

Atall. The last extremity. [*Aside.*

Cla. Well, sir, since you are so much a stranger to colonel Standfast, I'll tell you where to find him, and tell him this from me. I hate him, scorn, detest, and loath him: I never meant him but at best for my diversion; and, should he ever renew his dull addresses to me, I'll have him used as his vain insolence deserves. Now, sir, I have no more to say, and I desire you would leave the house immediately.

Atall. I would not willingly disoblige you, madam; but 'tis impossible to stir 'till I have seen your cousin, and cleared myself of these strange aspersions.

Cla. Don't flatter yourself, sir, with so vain a hope; for I must tell you, once for all, you've seen the last of her; and if you won't be gone, you'll oblige me to have you forced away.

Atall. I'll be even with you. [*Aside.*] Well, madam, since I find nothing can prevail upon your cruelty, I'll take my leave: but, as you hope for justice on the man that wrongs you, at least be faithful to your lovely friend. And when you have named to her my utmost guilt, yet paint my passion, as it is, sincere. Tell her what tortures I endured in this severe exclusion from her sight, that, till my innocence is clear to her, and she again receives me into mercy,

A madman's frenzy's heaven to what I feel;
The wounds you give 'tis she alone can heal.

[*Exit* ATALL.

Cla. Most abandoned impudence! And yet I know not which vexes me most, his out-facing my senses, or his insolent owning his passion for my cousin to my face: 'tis impossible she could put him upon this; it must be all his own; but, be it as it will, by all that's woman, I'll have revenge!

[*Exit* CLA.

Re-enter ATALL *and* LADY SADLIFE *at the other side.*

Atall. Hey-day! is there no way down stairs here? Death! I can't find my way out! This is the oddest house——

Lady Sad. Here he is—I'll venture to pass by him.

Atall. Pray, madam, which is the nearest way out?

Lady Sad. Sir, out——a——

Atall. Oh, my stars! is't you, madam? this is fortunate indeed—I beg you'll tell me, do you live here, madam?

Lady Sad. Not very far off, sir: but this is no place to talk with you alone—indeed I must beg your pardon.

Atall. By all those kindling charms that fire my soul, no consequence on earth shall make me quit my hold, till you've given me some kind assurance that I shall see you again, and speedily! egad I'll have one out of the family at least.

Lady Sad. Oh, good, here's company!

Atall. Oh, do not rack me with delays, but quick, before this dear, short-lived opportunity's lost, inform me where you live, or kill me: to part with this soft white hand is ten thousand daggers to my heart. [*Kissing it eagerly.*

Lady Sad. Oh, lud! I am going home this minute; and if you should offer to dog my chair, I protest I——was ever such usage——Lord——sure! Oh—follow me down, then. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter CLARINDA *and* SYLVIA.

Syl. Ha, ha, ha!

Cla. Nay, you may laugh, madam, but what I tell you is true.

Syl. Ha, ha, ha!

Cla. You don't believe, then?

Syl. I do believe, that when some women are inclined to like a man, nothing more palpably discovers it, than their railing at him; ha, ha!—Your pardon, cousin; you know you laughed at me just now upon the same occasion.

Cla. The occasion's quite different, madam; I hate him. And, once more I tell you, he's a villain; you're imposed on. He's a colonel of foot, his regiment's now in Spain, and his name's Standfast.

Syl. But, pray, good cousin, whence had you this intelligence of him?

Cla. From the same place that you had your false account, madam; his own mouth.

Syl. What was his business with you?

Cla. Much about the same, as his business with you—love.

Syl. Love! to you!

Cla. Me, madam! Lord, what am I? Old, or a monster! Is it so prodigious that a man should like me?

Syl. No! but I'm amazed to think, if he had liked you, he should leave you so soon, for me!

Cla. For you! leave me for you! No, madam, I did not tell you that, neither! Ha, ha, ha!

Syl. No! What made you so violently angry with him, then? Indeed, cousin, you had better take some other fairer way; this artifice is much too weak to make me break with him. But, however, to let you see I can be still a friend, prove him to be what you say he is, and my engagements with him shall soon be over.

Cla. Look you, madam, not but I slight the tenderest of his addresses; but, to convince you that my vanity was not mistaken in him, I'll write to him by the name of Colonel Standfast, and do you the same by that of Freeman; and let's each appoint him to meet us at my lady Sadlife's at the same time: if these appear two different men, I think our dispute's easily at an end; if but one, and he does not own all I have said of him to your face, I'll make you a very humble curtesy, and beg your pardon.

Syl. And, if he does own it, I'll make your ladyship the same reverence, and beg yours.

Enter CLERIMONT.

Cla. Pshaw! he here!

Cle. I am glad to find you in such good company, madam.

Cla. One's seldom long in good company, sir.

Cle. I am sorry mine has been so troublesome of late; but I value your ease at too high a rate to disturb it. [*Going.*

Syl. Nay, Mr Clerimont, upon my word you shan't stir. Hark you—[*Whispers.*]—Your pardon, cousin,

Cle. I must not lose him, neither—Mr Clerimont's way is, to be severe in his construction of people's meaning.

Syl. I'll write my letter, and be with you, cousin. [*Exit* SYLVIA.

Cle. It was always my principle, madam, to have an humble opinion of my merit; when a woman of sense frowns upon me, I ought to think I deserve it.

Cla. But to expect to be always received with a smile, I think, is having a very extraordinary opinion of one's merit.

Cle. We differ a little as to fact, madam: for these ten days past, I have had no distinction, but a severe reservedness. You did not use to be so sparing of your good-humour; and, while I see you gay to all the world but me, I cannot but be a little concerned at the change.

Cla. If he has discovered the colonel now, I'm undone! he could not meet him, sure. I must humour him a little.—[*Aside.*]—Men of your sincere temper, Mr Clerimont, I own, don't always meet with the usage they deserve: but women are giddy things, and, had we no errors to answer for, the use of good-nature in a lover would be lost. Vanity is our inherent weakness: you must not chide, if we are sometimes fonder of your passions than your prudence.

Cle. This friendly condescension makes me more your slave than ever. Oh, yet be kind, and tell me, have I been tortured with a groundless jealousy?

Cla. Let your own heart be judge—But don't take it ill if I leave you now—I have some earnest business with my cousin Sylvia: But to-night, at my lady Dainty's, I'll make you amends: you'll be there?

Cle. I need not promise you.

Cla. Your servant. Ah, how easily is poor sincerity imposed on! Now for the colonel.—[*Aside.*] [*Exit* CLARINDA.

Cle. This unexpected change of humour more stirs my jealousy than all her late severity. I'll watch her close:

For she, that from a just reproach is kind,
Gives more suspicion of her guilty mind,
And throws her smiles, like dust, to strike the lover blind.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—LADY DAINTY'S *apartment: a table, with phials, gallipots, glasses, &c.* LADY DAINTY *and* SITUP, *her woman.*

Lady Dain. SITUP! Situp!

Sit. Madam!

Lady Dain. Thou art strangely slow; I told thee the hartshorn; I have the vapours to that degree!

Sit. If your ladyship would take my advice, you should e'en fling your physic out of the window: if you were not in perfect health in three days, I'd be bound to be sick for you.

Lady Dain. Peace, good impertinence! I tell thee, no woman of quality is, or should be, in perfect health—Huh, huh!—[*Coughs faintly.*]—To be always in health is as vulgar as to be always in humour, and would equally betray one's want of wit and breeding: Where are the fellows?

Sit. Here, madam——

Enter two Footmen.

Lady Dain. Cæsar! Run to my lady Roundsides; desire to know how she rested; and tell her the violence of my cold is abated: huh, huh! Pompey, step you to my lady Killchairman's; give my service; say I have been so embarrassed with the spleen all this morning, that I am under the greatest uncertainty in the world, whether I shall be able to stir out or no—And, d'ye hear? desire to know how my lord does, and the new monkey—— [*Exeunt footmen.*

Sit. In my conscience, these great ladies make themselves sick, to make themselves business; and are well or ill, only in ceremony to one another. [*Aside.*

Lady Dain. Where's t'other fellow?

Sit. He is not returned yet, madam.

Lady Dain. 'Tis indeed a strange lump, not fit to carry a disease to any body; I sent him t'other day to the dutchess of Diet-Drink, with the colic, and the brute put it into his own tramontane language, and called it the belly-ach.

Sit. I wish your ladyship had not occasion to send for any; for my part——

Lady Dain. Thy part! Prithee, thou wert made of the rough masculine kind; 'tis betraying our sex, not to be sickly and tender. All the families I visit, have something derived to them from the elegant nice state of indisposition; you see, even in the men, a genteel, as it were, stagger, or twine of the bodies; as if they were not yet confirmed enough for the rough, laborious exercise of walking. Nay, even most of their diseases, you see, are not prophaned by the crowd: the apoplexy, the gout, and vapours, are all peculiar to the nobility. Huh, huh! And I could almost wish, that colds were only ours; there's something in them so genteel, so agreeably disordering—Huh, huh!

Sit. That, I hope, I shall never be fit for them—Your ladyship forgot the spleen.

Lady Dain. Oh! my dear spleen——I grudge that even to some of us.

Sit. I knew an ironmonger's wife, in the city, that was mightily troubled with it.

Lady Dain. Foh! What a creature hast thou named! An ironmonger's wife have the spleen! Thou mightst as well have said her husband was a fine gentleman—Give me something!

Sit. Will your ladyship please to take any of the steel drops? Or the bolus? Or the electuary? Or——

Lady Dain. This wench will smother me with questions—Huh, huh! Bring any of them—these healthy sluts are so boisterous, they split one's brains: I fancy myself in an inn while she talks to me; I must have some decayed person of quality about me; for the commons of England are the strangest creatures——Huh, huh!

Enter Servant.

Ser. Mrs Sylvia, madam, is come to wait on your ladyship.

Lady Dain. Desire her to walk in; let the physic alone: I'll take a little of her company; she's mighty good for the spleen.

Enter SYLVIA.

Syl. Dear lady Dainty!

Lady Dain. My good creature, I'm overjoyed to see you—huh, huh!

Syl. I am sorry to see your ladyship wrapt up thus; I was in hopes to have had your company to the India House.

Lady Dain. If any thing could tempt me abroad, 'twould be that place, and such agreeable company; but how came you, dear Sylvia, to be reconciled to any thing in an India House? you used to have a most barbarous inclination for our own odious manufactures.

Syl. Nay, madam, I am only going to recruit my tea-table: as to the rest of their trumpery, I am as much out of humour with it as ever.

Lady Dain. Well, thou art a pleasant creature, thy distaste is so diverting.

Syl. And your ladyship is so expensive, that really I am not able to come into it.

Lady Dain. Now it is to me prodigious, how some women can muddle away their money upon housewifery, children, books, and charities, when there are so many well-bred ways, and foreign curiosities, that more elegantly require it—I have every morning the rarities of all countries brought to me, and am in love with every new thing I see.—Are the people come yet, Situp?

Sit. They have been below, madam, this half hour.

Lady Dain. Dispose them in the parlour, and we'll be there presently. [*Exit* SITUP.

Syl. How can your ladyship take such pleasure in being cheated with the baubles of other countries?

Lady Dain. Thou art a very infidel to all finery.

Syl. And you are a very bigot—

Lady Dain. A person of all reason, and no complaisance.

Syl. And your ladyship all complaisance, and no reason.

Lady Dain. Follow me, and be converted.

[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter SITUP, *a woman with china ware; an Indian man with screens, tea, &c. a birdman, with a paroquet, monkey, &c.*

Sit. Come, come into this room.

Chi. I hope your ladyship's lady won't be long in coming.

Sit. I don't care if she never comes to you.—It seems you trade with the ladies for old clothes, and give them china for their gowns and petti-

coats; I'm like to have a fine time on't with such creatures as you indeed!

Chi. Alas, madam, I'm but a poor woman, and am forced to do any thing to live. Will your ladyship be pleased to accept of a piece of china?

Sit. Puh! no.—I don't care.—Though I must needs say you look like an honest woman.

[*Looking on it.*

Chi. Thank you, good madam.

Sit. Our places are like to come to a fine pass indeed, if our ladies must buy their china with our perquisites. At this rate, my lady sha'nt have an old fan or a glove, but——

Chi. Pray, madam, take it.

Sit. No, not I; I won't have it, especially without a saucer to't. Here, take it again.

Chi. Indeed you shall accept of it.

Sit. Not I, truly—come, give it me, give it me;—here's my lady.

Enter LADY DAINTY *and* SYLVIA.

Lady Dain. Well, my dear, is not this a pretty sight now?

Syl. 'Tis better than so many doctors and apothecaries, indeed.

Lady Dain. All trades must live, you know; and those, no more than these, could subsist, if the world were all wise or healthy.

Syl. I am afraid our real diseases are but few to our imaginary, and doctors get more by the sound than the sickly.

Lady Dain. My dear, you're allowed to say any thing—but now I must talk with the people.—— Have you got any thing new there?

Chi. Ind. and Bird. Yes, an't please your ladyship.

Lady Dain. One at once.——

Bird. I have brought your ladyship the finest monkey——

Syl. What a filthy thing it is!

Lady Dain. Now I think he looks very humorous and agreeable—I vow, in a white perriwig he might do mischief. Could he but talk and take snuff, there's ne'er a fop in town would go beyond him.

Syl. Most fops would go farther if they did not speak; but talking, indeed, makes them very often worse company than monkies.

Lady Dain. Thou pretty little picture of man!—How very Indian he looks!——I could kiss the dear creature!

Syl. Ah, don't touch him! he'll bite!

Bird. No, madam, he is the tamest you ever saw, and the least mischievous.

Lady Dain. Then take him away, I won't have him; for mischief is the wit of a monkey; and I would not give a farthing for one that would not break me three or four pounds worth of china in a morning. Oh, I am in love with these Indian figures!—Do but observe what an innocent natural simplicity there is in all the actions of them!

Chi. These are pagods, madam, that the Indians worship.

Lady Dain. So far I am an Indian.

Syl. Now, to me, they are all monsters.

Lady Dain. Profane creature!

Chi. Is your ladyship for a piece of right Flanders lace?

Lady Dain. Um—no; I don't care for it, now it is not prohibited.

Ind. Will your ladyship be pleased to have a pound of fine tea?

Lady Dain. What, filthy, odious Bohea, I suppose?

Ind. No, madam; right Kappakawawa.

Lady Dain. Well, there's something in the very sound of that name, that makes it irresistible. ——What is it a pound?

Ind. But six guineas, madam.

Lady Dain. How infinitely cheap! I'll buy it all.—— Situp, take the man in and pay him, and let the rest call again to-morrow.

Omn. Bless your ladyship!

[*Exeunt* SIT. *Chi. Ind. and Bird.*

Lady Dain. Lord, how feverish I am!—the least motion does so disorder me—do but feel me.

Syl. No, really, I think you are in very good temper.

Lady Dain. Burning, indeed, child.

Enter Servant, Doctor, and Apothecary.

Ser. Madam, here's Doctor Bolus and the apothecary. [*Exit.*

Lady Dain. Oh, doctor, I'm glad you're come; one is not sure of a moment's life without you.

Dr Bol. How did your ladyship rest, madam?

[*Feels her pulse.*

Lady Dain. Never worse, indeed, doctor: I once fell into a little slumber, indeed, but then was disturbed by the most odious, frightful dream, that if the fright had not wakened me, I had certainly perished in my sleep, with the apprehension.

Dr Bol. A certain sign of a disordered brain, madam; but I'll order something that shall compose your ladyship.

Lady Dain. Mr Rhubarb, I must quarrel with you——you don't disguise your medicines enough; they taste all physic.

Rhu. To alter it more might offend the operation, madam,

Lady Dain. I don't care what is offended, so my taste is not.

Dr Bol. Hark you, Mr Rhubarb, withdraw the medicine, rather than not make it pleasant: I'll find a reason for the want of its operation. [*Aside.*

Rhu. But, sir, if we don't look about us, she'll grow well upon our hands.

Dr Bol. Never fear that; she's too much a woman of quality to dare to be well without her doctor's opinion.

Rhu. Sir, we have drained the whole cata-

logue of diseases already; there's not another left to put in her head.

Dr Bol. Then, I'll make her go them over again.

Enter CARELESS.

Care. So, here's the old levee, doctor and apothecary in close consultation! Now will I demolish the quack and his medicines before her face. Mr Rhubarb, your servant. Pray, what have you got in your hand there?

Rhu. Only a julep and composing draught for my lady, sir.

Care. Have you so, sir? Pray, let me see—I'll prescribe to-day. Doctor, you may go—the lady shall take no physic at present but me.

Dr Bol. Sir———

Care. Nay, if you won't believe me——

[*Breaks the phials.*

Lady Dain. Ah ——

[*Frighted, and leaning upon* SYL.

Dr Bol. Come away, Mr Rhubarb—he'll certainly put her out of order, and then she'll send for us again. [*Exit* DR BOL. *and* RHU.

Care. You see, madam, what pains I take to come into your favour.

Lady Dain. You take a very preposterous way, I can tell you, sir.

Care. I can't tell how I succeed, but I am sure I endeavour right; for I study every morning new impertinence to entertain you: for, since I find nothing but dogs, doctors, and monkies are your favourites, it is very hard, if your ladyship won't admit me as one of the number.

Lady Dain. When I find you of an equal merit with my monkey, you shall be in the same state of favour. I confess, as a proof of your wit, you have done me as much mischief here. But you have not half pug's judgment, nor his spirit; for the creature will do a world of pleasant things, without caring whether one likes them or not.

Care. Why, truly, madam, the little gentleman, my rival, I believe, is much in the right on't: and, if you observe, I have taken as much pains of late to disoblige, as to please you.

Lady Dain. You succeed better in one than t'other, I can tell you, sir.

Care. I am glad on't; for, if you had not me now and then to plague you, what would you do for a pretence to be chagrined, to faint, have the spleen, the vapours, and all those modish disorders, that so nicely distinguish a woman of quality?

Lady Dain. I am perfectly confounded!—Certainly there are some people too impudent for our resentment.

Care. Modesty's a starving virtue, madam; an old threadbare fashion of the last age, and would sit as oddly on a lover now, as a poked beard and mustachios.

Lady Dain. Most astonishing!

Care. I have tried sighing and looking silly a great while, but 'twould not do—nay, had you had as little wit as good-nature, should have proceeded to dance and sing. Tell me but how, what face or form can worship you, and behold your votary.

Lady Dain. Not, sir, as the Persians do the sun, with your face towards me. The best proof you can give of your horrid devotion, is never to see me more. Come, my dear. [*Exit* LADY DAIN.

Syl. I'm amazed so much assurance should not succeed. [*Exit.* SYL.

Care. All this shan't make me out of love with my virtue. Impudence has ever been a successful quality, and 'twould be hard, indeed, if I should be the first that did not thrive by it.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—CLERIMORT'S *Lodgings.*

Enter ATALL, *and* FINDER, *his man.*

Atall. You are sure you know the house again?

Fin. Ah, as well as I do the upper gallery, sir.——'Tis sir Solomon Sadlife's, at the two glass lanthorns, within three doors of my lord duke's.

Atall. Very well, sir—then take this letter, enquire for my lady Sadlife's woman, and stay for an answer.

Fin. Yes, sir. [*Exit.* FIN.

Atall. Well, I find 'tis as ridiculous to propose pleasure in love without variety of mistresses, as to pretend to be a keen sportsman without a good stable of horses. How this lady may prove, I can't tell; but, if she is not a reedy tit at the bottom, I'm no jockey.

Re-enter FINDER.

Fin. Sir, here are two letters for you.

Atall. Who brought them?

Fin. A couple of footmen, and they both desire an answer.

Atall. Bid them stay, and do you make haste where I ordered you.

Fin. Yes, sir, [*Exit.*

Atall. To col. Standfast—that's Clarinda's hand—To Mr Freeman—that must be my incognita. Ah, I have most mind to open this first;—but, if t'other malicious creature should have perverted her growing inclination to me, 'twould put my whole frame in a trembling—— Hold, I'll guess my fate by degrees—this may give me a glimpse of it. [*Reads* CLARINDA'S *letter.*] Um—um—um—Ha! To meet her at my lady Sadlife's, at seven o'clock to-night, and take no manner of notice of my late disowning myself to her—Something's at the bottom of all this.——Now, to solve the riddle. [*Reads the other letter.*] 'My cousin Cla-'rinda has told some things of you, that very 'much alarm me; but, I am willing to suspend 'my belief of them till I see you, which I de-'sire may be at my lady Sadlife's, at seven this 'evening.'—The devil! the same place!—'As 'you value the real friendship of your

'INCOGNITA.

So, now the riddle's out—the rival queens are fairly come to a reference, and one or both of them I must lose, that's positive.——Hard!

Enter CLERIMONT.

Hard fortune! Now, poor Impudence, what will become of thee? Oh, Clerimont, such a complication of adventures since I saw thee! such sweet hopes, fears, and unaccountable difficulties, sure never poor dog was surrounded with!

Cle. Oh, you are an industrious person! you'll get over them. But, pray, let's hear.

Atall. To begin, then, in the climax of my misfortunes:—In the first place, the private lodgings, that my incognita appointed to receive me in, prove to be the very individual habitation of my other mistress, whom (to complete the blunder of my ill luck) she civilly introduced in person, to recommend me to her better acquaintance.

Cle. Ha, ha! Death! how could you stand them both together?

Atall. The old way—buff—I stuck like a burr to my name of Freeman, addressed my incognita before the other's face, and, with a most unmoved good-breeding, harmlessly faced her down I had never seen her in my life before.

Cle. The prettiest modesty I ever heard of! Well, but how did they discover you at last?

Atall. Why, faith, the matter's yet in suspence; and, I find, by both their letters, that they don't yet well know what to think: but, (to go on with my luck) you must know, they have since both appointed me, by several names, to meet them at one and the same place, at seven o'clock this evening.

Cle. Ah!

Atall. And, lastly, to crown my fortune (as if the devil himself most triumphantly rode a-straddle upon my ruin) the fatal place of their appointment happens to be the very house of a third lady, with whom I made an acquaintance since morning, and had just before sent word I would visit near the same hour this evening.

Cle. Oh, murder! Poor Atall, thou art really fallen under the last degree of compassion.

Atall. And, yet, with a little of thy assistance, in the middle of their small-shot, I don't still despair of holding my head above water.

Cle. Death! but you can't meet them both; you must lose one of them, unless you can split yourself.

Atall. Prithee, don't suspect my courage or my modesty; for, I'm resolved to go on, if you will stand by me.

Cle. Faith, my very curiosity would make me do that. But what can I do?

Atall. You must appear for me, upon occasion, in person.

Cle. With all my heart. What else?

Atall. I shall want a queen's messenger in my interest, or rather one that can personate one.

Cle. That's easily found—But what to do?

Atall. Come along, and I'll tell you; for, first, I must answer their letters.

Cle. Thou art an original, faith! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* SIR SOLOMON'S *house.*

Enter SIR SOLOMON *leading* LADY SADLIFE, *and* WISHWELL, *her woman.*

Sir Sol. There, madam, let me have no more of these airings.—No good, I am sure, can keep a woman five or six hours abroad in a morning.

Lady Sad. You deny me all the innocent freedoms of life.

Sir Sol. Ha! you have the modish cant of this end of the town, I see. Intriguing, gaming, gadding, and party-quarries, with a pox to them, are innocent freedoms, forsooth!

Lady Sad. I don't know what you mean; I'm sure I have not one acquaintance in the world, that does an ill thing.

Sir Sol. They must be better looked after than your ladyship then; but I'll mend my hands as fast as I can. Do you look to your reputation henceforward, and I'll take care of your person.

Lady Sad. You wrong my virtue with these unjust suspicions.

Sir Sol. Ay, it's no matter for that; better I wrong it than you. I'll secure my doors for this day at least. [*Exit.*

Lady Sad. Oh, Wishwell! what shall I do?

Wish. What's the matter, madam?

Lady Sad. I expect a letter from a gentleman every minute; and if it should fall into sir Solomon's hands, I'm ruined past redemption.

Wish. He won't suspect it, madam, sure, if they are directed to me, as they used to be.

Lady Sad. But his jealousy's grown so violent of late, there's no trusting to it now. If he meets it, I shall be locked up for ever.

Wish. Oh, dear madam! I vow your ladyship frights me—Why, he'll kill me for keeping counsel.

Lady Sad. Run to the window, quick, and watch the messenger. [*Exit* WISH.] Ah, there's my ruin near!—I feel it—[*A knocking at the door.*]——What shall I do? Be very insolent, or very humble, and cry?—I have known some women, upon these occasions, outstrut their husbands' jealousy, and make them ask pardon for finding them out. Oh, lud! here he comes!——I can't do't; My courage fails me——I must e'en stick to my handkerchief, and trust to nature.

Re-enter SIR SOLOMON, *taking a letter from* FINDER.

Sir Sol. Sir, I shall make bold to read this

letter; and if you have a mind to save your bones, there's your way out.

Fin. Oh, terrible! I shan't have a whole one in my skin, when I come home to my master.

[*Exit.*

Lady Sad. [*Aside.*] I'm lost for ever!

Sir Sol. [*Reads.*] 'Pardon, most divine crea-'ture, the impatience of my heart'—Very well! these are her innocent freedoms! Ah, cockatrice!—'which languishes for an opportunity to 'convince you of its sincerity;'——Oh, the tender son of a whore!——'which nothing could 'relieve, but the sweet hope of seeing you this 'evening.'—Poor lady, whose virtue I have wronged with unjust suspicions!

Lady Sad. I'm ready to sink with apprehension.

Sir Sol. [*Reads.*] 'To-night, at seven, expect 'your dying Strephon'—Die, and be damned! for I'll remove your comforter, by cutting her throat. I could find in my heart to ram his impudent letter into her windpipe—Ha! what's this!——'To Mrs Wishwell, my lady Sadlife's 'woman.'—Ad, I'm glad of it! with all my heart! What a happy thing it is to have one's jealousy disappointed!——Now have I been cursing my poor wife for the mistaken wickedness of that trollop! 'Tis well I kept my thoughts to myself: for the virtue of a wife, when wrongfully accused, is most unmercifully insolent. Come, I'll do a great thing; I'll kiss her, and make her amends—What's the matter, my dear? Has anything frighted you?

Lady Sad. Nothing but your hard usage.

Sir Sol. Come, come, dry thy tears; it shall be so no more. But, hark ye, I have made a discovery here—Your Wishwell, I'm afraid, is a slut; she has an intrigue.

Lady Sad. An intrigue! Heavens, in our family!

Sir Sol. Read there—I wish she be honest.

Lady Sad. How!——If there be the least ground to think it, sir Solomon, positively she shan't stay a minute in the house———Impudent creature!——have an affair with a man!

Sir Sol. But hold, my dear; don't let your virtue censure too severely neither.

Lady Sad. I shudder at the thoughts of her.

Sir Sol. Patience, I say—How do we know but his courtship may be honourable?

Lady Sad. That, indeed, requires some pause.

Wish. [*Peeping in.*] So, all's safe, I see—He thinks the letter's to me—Oh, good madam! that letter was to me, the fellow says. I wonder, sir, how you could serve one so! If my sweetheart should hear you had opened it, I know he would not have me, so he would not.

Sir Sol. Never fear that: for if he is in love with you, he's too much a fool to value being laughed at.

Lady Sad. If it be yours, here take your stuff; and next time, bid him take better care than to send his letter so publicly.

Wish. Yes, madam. But now your ladyship has read it, I'd fain beg the honour of sir Solomon to answer it for me; for I can't write.

Lady Sad. Not write!

Sir Sol. Nay, he thinks she's above that, I suppose; for he calls her divine creature—A pretty piece of divinity, truly!—But, come, my dear; 'egad, we'll answer it for her. Here's paper—— you shall do it.

Lady Sad. I, sir Solomon! Lard, I won't write to fellows, not I——I hope he won't take me at my word. [*Aside.*

Sir Sol. Nay, you shall do it. Come, it will get her a good husband.

Wish. Aye, pray, good madam, do.

Sir Sol. Ah, how eager the jade is!

Lady Sad. I cannot tell how to write to any body but you, my dear.

Sir Sol. Well, well, I'll dictate, then. Come, begin.

Lady Sad. Lard, this is the oddest fancy!—

[*Sits to write.*

Sir Sol. Come, come—Dear sir—(for we'll be as loving as he, for his ears.)

Wish. No, pray madam, begin, Dear honey, or, My dearest angel.

Lady Sad. Out, you fool! You must not be so fond—Dear sir, is very well. [*Writes.*

Sir Sol. Aye, aye, so 'tis; but these young fillies are for setting out at the top of their speed. But, prithee, Wishwell, what is thy lover? for the style of his letter may serve for a countess?

Wish. Sir, he's but a butler at present; but he's a good schollard, as you may see by his hand-writing; and, in time, may come to be a steward; and then we shan't be long without a coach, sir.

Lady Sad. Dear sir——What must I write next?

Sir Sol. Why——

[*Musing.*

Wish. Hoping you are in good health, as I am at this present writing.

Sir Sol. You puppy, he'll laugh at you.

Wish. I'm sure my mother used to begin all her letters so.

Sir Sol. And thou art every inch of thee her own daughter, that I'll say for thee.

Lady Sad. Come, I have done it.—[*Reads.*]—'Dear sir, she must have very little merit that is 'insensible of yours.'

Sir Sol. Very well, faith! Write all yourself.

Wish. Aye, good madam, do; that's better than mine. But, pray, dear madam, let it end with, 'So I rest your dearest loving friend, till death us do part.

Lady Sad. [*Aside.*]—This absurd slut will make me laugh out.

Sir Sol. But, hark you, hussy; suppose now you should be a little scornful and insolent to

shew your breeding, and a little ill-natured in it to shew your wit?

Wish. Aye, sir, that is, if I designed him for my gallant; but, since he is to be but my husband, I must be very good-natured and civil before I have him; and huff him, and shew my wit after.

Sir Sol. Here's a jade for you!—[*Aside.*]—But why must you huff your husband, hussy?

Wish. Oh, sir, that's to give him a good opinion of my virtue! for you know, sir, a husband cannot think one could be so very domineering, if one were not very honest.

Sir Sol. 'Sbud, this fool, on my conscience, speaks the sense of the whole sex!

[*Aside.*

Wish. Then, sir, I have been told, that a husband loves one the better, the more one hectors him; as a spaniel does, the more one beats him.

Sir Sol. Ha! Thy husband will have a blessed time on't.

Lady Sad. So——I have done.

Wish. Oh, pray, madam, read it!

Lady Sad. [*Reads.*]—'Dear sir——She must have very little merit that is insensible of yours; and, while you continue to love, and tell me so, expect whatever you can hope from so much wit, and such unfeigned sincerity—At the hour you mention, you will be truly welcome to your passionate——'

Wish. Oh, madam, it is not half kind enough. Pray, put in some more dears.

Sir Sol. Aye, aye, sweeten it well; let it be all syrup, with a pox to her!

Wish. Every line should have a *dear sweet sir* in it, so it should——He'll think I don't love him, else.

Sir Sol. Poor moppet!

Lady Sad. No, no; 'tis better now——Well, what must be at the bottom, to answer Strephon?

Sir Sol. Pray, let her divine ladyship sign Abigail.

Wish. No, pray, madam, put down Lipsamintha.

Sir Sol. Lipsamintha!

Lady Sad. No, come, I'll write Celia. Here, go in and seal it.

Sir Sol. Ay, come, I'll lend you a wafer, that he mayn't wait for your ladyship.

Wish. Pshaw! you always flout one.

[*Exeunt* SIR SOL. *and* WISH.

Lady Sad. So, this is luckily over——Well, I see, a woman should never be discouraged from coming off at the greatest plunge; for, though I was half dead with the fright, yet, now, I am a little recovered, I find———

That apprehension does the bliss endear;
The real danger's nothing to the fear.

[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—SIR SOLOMON'S.

Enter LADY SADLIFE, ATALL, *and* WISHWELL, *with lights.*

Lady Sad. THIS room, I think, is pleasanter; if you please, we'll sit here, sir——Wishwell, shut the door, and take the key o' the inside, and set chairs.

Wish. Yes, madam.

Lady Sad. Lard, sir, what a strange opinion you must have of me, for receiving your visits upon so slender an acquaintance!

Atall. I have a much stranger opinion, madam, of your ordering your servant to lock herself in with us.

Lady Sad. Oh, you would not have us wait upon ourselves?

Atall. Really, madam, I cannot conceive, that two lovers, alone, have much occasion for attendance. [*They sit.*

Lady Sad. Lovers! Lard, how you talk!—Can't people converse without that stuff?

Atall. Um—Yes, madam, people may; but, without a little of that stuff, conversation is generally very apt to be insipid.

Lady Sad. Pooh! why, we can say any thing without her hearing, you see.

Atall. Aye; but if we should talk ourselves up to an occasion of being without her, it would look worse to send her out, than to have let her wait without, when she was without.

Lady Sad. You are pretty hard to please, I find, sir. Some men, I believe, would think themselves well used in so free a reception as yours.

Atall. Ha! I see this is like to come to nothing this time; so I'll e'en put her out of humour, that I may get off in time to my incognita. [*Aside.*] Really, madam, I can never think myself free, where my hand and my tongue are tied.

[*Pointing to* WISHWELL.

Lady Sad. Your conversation, I find, is very different from what it was, sir.

Atall. With submission, madam, I think it very proper for the place we are in. If you had sent for me only to sip tea, to sit still, and be civil, with my hat under my arm, like a strange relation from Ireland, or so, why was I brought hither with so much caution and privacy?

[SIR SOLOMON *knocks at the door.*

Wish. Oh, Heavens! my master, madam!

Sir Sol. [*Within.*] Open the door there!

Lady Sad. What shall we do?

Atall. Nothing now, I'm sure.

Lady Sad. Open the door, and say the gentleman came to you.

Wish. Oh, lud, madam, I shall never be able to manage it at so short a warning! We had better shut the gentleman into the closet, and say he came to nobody at all.

Lady Sad. In, in, then, for mercy's sake, quickly, sir!

Atall. So—this is like to be a very pretty business! Oh, success and impudence, thou hast quite forsaken me! [*Enters the closet.*

Wish. Do you step into your bed-chamber, madam, and leave my master to me.

[*Exit* LADY SADLIFE.

WISHWELL *opens the door, and* SIR SOLOMON *enters.*

Sir Sol. What's the reason, mistress, I am to be locked out of my wife's apartment?

Wish. My lady was washing her—her—neck, sir, and I could not come any sooner.

Sir Sol. I'm sure I heard a man's voice.——[*Aside.*] Bid your lady come hither.——[*Exit* WISHWELL.] He must be hereabouts—'tis so; all's out, all's over, now: the devil has done his worst, and I am a cuckold in spite of my wisdom. 'Sbud! now, an Italian would poison his wife for this, a Spaniard would stab her, and a Turk would cut off her head with a scymitar; but a poor dog of an English cuckold now can only squabble and call names—Hold, here she comes—I must smother my jealousy, that her guilt mayn't be upon its guard.

Enter LADY SADLIFE *and* WISHWELL.

Sir Sol. My dear, how do you do? Come hither, and kiss me.

Lady Sad. I did not expect you home so soon, my dear.

Sir Sol. Poor rogue! I don't believe you did, with a pox to you. [*Aside.*] Wishwell, go down; I have business with your lady.

Wish. Yes, sir—but I'll watch you; for I am afraid this good-humour has mischief at the bottom of it. [*Retires.*

Lady Sad. I scarce know whether he is jealous or not. [*Aside.*

Sir Sol. Now, dare not I go nearer that closet door, lest the murderous dog should poke a hole in my guts through the key-hole. Um——I have an odd thought in my head—aye, and that will discover the whole bottom of her affair.——'Tis better to seem not to know one's dishonour, when one has not courage enough to revenge it.

Lady Sad. I don't like his looks, methinks.

Sir Sol. Odso! what have I forgot, now?—Prithee, my dear, step into my study—for I am so weary! and, in the uppermost parcel of letters, you'll find one that I received from Yorkshire to-day, in the scrutoir; bring it down, and some paper; I will answer it while I think on't.

Lady Sad. If you please to lend me your key—But had you not better write in your study, my dear?

Sir Sol. No, no: I tell you, I'm so tired, I am not able to walk. There, make haste.

Lady Sad. Would all were well over! [*Exit.*

Sir Sol. 'Tis so, by her eagerness to be rid of me. Well, since I find I dare not behave myself like a man of honour in this business, I'll at least act like a person of prudence and penetration; for say, should I clap a brace of slugs now in the very bowels of this rascal, it may hang me; but if it does not, it can't divorce me. No, I'll e'en put out the candles, and in a soft, gentle whore's voice, desire the gentleman to walk about his business; and if I can't get him out before my wife returns, I'll fairly post myself in his room; and so, when she comes to set him at liberty, in the dark, I'll humour the cheat, till I draw her into some casual confession of the fact, and, then, this injured front shall bounce upon her like a thunderbolt. [*Puts out the candles.*

Wish. [*Behind.*] Say you so, sir! I'll take care my lady shall be provided for you. [*Exit.*

Sir Sol. Hist, hist, sir, sir!

Enter ATALL *from the closet.*

Atall. Is all clear? May I venture, madam?

Sir Sol. Aye, aye; quick, quick! make haste before sir Solomon returns. A strait-backed dog, I warrant him. [*Aside.*] But when shall I see you again?

Atall. Whenever you'll promise me to make a better use of an opportunity.

Sir Sol. Ha! then 'tis possible he mayn't yet have put the finishing stroke to me.

Atall. Is this the door?

Sir Sol. Aye, aye, away. [*Exit* ATALL.] So, now the danger of being murdered is over, I find my courage returns: and, if I catch my wife but inclining to be no better than she should be, I'm not sure that blood won't be the consequence.

He goes into the closet, and WISHWELL *enters.*

Wish. So—my lady has her cue; and if my wise master can give her no better proofs of his penetration than this, she'd be a greater fool than he, if she should not do what she has a mind to. Sir, sir, come; you may come out now; sir Solomon's gone.

Enter SIR SOLOMON, *from the closet.*

Sir Sol. So, now for a soft speech, to set her impudent blood in a ferment, and then let it out with my penknife. [*Aside.*] Come, dear creature, now let's make the kindest use of our opportunity.

Wish. Not for the world. If sir Solomon should come again, I should be ruined. Pray, begone—I'll send to you to-morrow.

Sir Sol. Nay, now you love me not; you would not let me part else thus unsatisfied.

Wish. Now you're unkind. You know I love you, or I should not run such hazards for you.

Sir Sol. Fond whore! [*Aside.*] But I'm afraid

you love sir Solomon, and lay up your tenderness for him.

Wish. Oh, ridiculous! How can so sad a wretch give you the least uneasy thought? I loath the very sight of him.

Sir Sol. Damned, infernal strumpet!—I can bear no longer—Lights, lights, within there!

[*Siezes her.*

Wish. Ah! [*Shrieks*] Who's this? Help!—murder!

Sir Sol. No, traitress, don't think to escape me; for, now I've trapped thee in thy guilt, I could find in my heart to have thee flead alive, thy skin stuffed, and hung up in the middle of Guildhall, as a terrible consequence of cuckoldom to the whole city—Lights there!

Enter LADY SADLIFE, *with a light.*

Lady Sad. Oh, Heavens! what's the matter?

[SIR SOLOMON *looks astonished.*

Ha! what do I see? My servant on the floor, and sir Solomon offering rudeness to her! Oh, I I can't bear it! Oh! [*Falls into a chair.*

Sir Sol. What has the devil been doing here?

Lady Sad: This the reward of all my virtue! Oh, revenge, revenge!

Sir Sol. My dear, my good, virtuous, injured dear, be patient; for here has been such wicked doings———

Lady Sad. Oh, torture! Do you own it, too? 'Tis well my love protects you. But for this wretch, this monster, this sword shall do me justice on her.

[*Runs at* WISHWELL *with* SIR SOLOMON'S *sword.*

Sir Sol. Oh, hold, my poor mistaken dear! This horrid jade, the gods can tell, is innocent for me; but she has had, it seems, a strong dog in the closet here; which I suspecting, put myself into his place, and had almost trapped her in the very impudence of her iniquity.

Lady Sad. How! I'm glad to find he dares not own 'twas his jealousy of me—— [*Aside.*

Wish. [*Kneeling.*] Dear madam, I hope your ladyship will pardon the liberty I took in your absence, in bringing my lover into your ladyship's chamber; but I did not think you would come home from prayers so soon; and so I was forced to hide him in that closet: but my master suspecting the business, it seems, turned him out unknown to me, and then put himself there, and so had a mind to discover whether there was any harm between us; and so, because he fancied I had been naught with him———

Sir Sol. Ay, my dear; and the jade was so confoundedly fond of me, that I grew out of all patience, and fell upon her like a fury.

Lady Sad. Horrid creature! And does she think to stay a minute in the family after such impudence?

Sir Sol. Hold, my dear!——for, if this should be the man that is to marry her, you know there may be no harm done yet.

Wish. Yes, it was he indeed, madam.

Sir Sol. [*Aside.*] I must not let the jade be turned away, for fear she should put it in my wife's head that I hid myself to discover her ladyship, and then the devil would not be able to live in the house with her.

Wish. Now, sir, you know what I can tell of you. [*Aside to* SIR SOL.

Sir Sol. Mum—that's a good girl; there's a guinea for you.

Lady Sad. Well, upon your intercession, my dear, I'll pardon her this fault. But pray, mistress, let me hear of no more such doings. I am so disordered with this fright—Fetch my prayer-book; I'll endeavour to compose myself.

[*Exit* LADY SAD. *and* WISH.

Sir Sol. Ay, do so; that's my good dear—— What two blessed escapes have I had! to find myself no cuckold at last, and, (which had been equally terrible,) my wife not know I wrongfully suspected her!——Well, at length I am fully convinced of her virtue—and now, if I can but cut off the abominable expence, that attends some of her impertinent acquaintance, I shall shew myself a Machiavel.

Re-enter WISHWELL.

Wish. Sir, here's my lady Dainty come to wait upon my lady.

Sir Sol. I'm sorry for't, with all my heart—Why did you say she was within?

Wish. Sir, she did not ask, if she was; but she's never denied to her.

Sir Sol. Gadso! why, then, if you please to leave her ladyship to me, I'll begin with her now.

WISHWELL *brings in* LADY DAINTY.

Lady Dain. Sir Solomon, your very humble servant.

Sir Sol. Yours, yours, madam.

Lady Dain. Where's my lady?

Sir Sol. Where your ladyship very seldom is—at prayers.

Enter LADY SADLIFE.

Lady Sad. My dear lady Dainty!

Lady Dain. Dear madam, I am the happiest person alive in finding your ladyship at home.

Sir Sol. So, now for a torrent of impertinence.

Lady Sad. Your ladyship does me a great deal of honour.

Lady Dain. I am sure I do myself a great deal of pleasure. I have made at least twenty visits to-day. Oh, I'm quite dead! not but my coach is very easy—yet so much perpetual motion, you know——

Sir Sol. Ah, pox of your disorder! If I had the providing your equipage, odzooks, you should rumble to your visits in a wheel-barrow. [*Aside.*

Lady Sad. Was you at my lady dutchess's?

Lady Dain. A little while.

Lady Sad. Had she a great circle?

Lady Dain. Extreme—I was not able to bear the breath of so much company.

Lady Sad. You did not dine there?

Lady Dain. Oh, I can't touch any body's dinner but my own!——and I have almost killed myself this week, for want of my usual glass of Tokay, after my ortolans and Muscovy duck eggs.

Sir Sol. 'Sbud, if I had the feeding of you, I'd bring you in a fortnight, to neck-beef, and a pot of plain bub. [*Aside.*

Lady Dain. Then I have been so surfeited with the sight of a hideous entertainment to-day, at my lady Cormorant's, who knows no other happiness, or way of making one welcome, than eating or drinking: for, though she saw I was just fainting at her vast limbs of butcher's meat, yet the civil savage forced me to sit down, and heaped enough upon my plate to victual a fleet for an East India voyage.

Lady Sad. How could you bear it? Ha, ha!—Does your ladyship never go to the play?

Lady Dain. Never, but when I bespeak it myself; and, then, not to mind the actors; for it's common to love sights. My great diversion is, in a reposed posture, to turn my eyes upon the galleries, and bless myself to hear the happy savages laugh; or when an awkward citizen crowds herself in among us, 'tis an unspeakable pleasure to contemplate her airs and dress: and they never 'scape me; for I am as apprehensive of such a creature's coming near me, as some people are when a cat is in the room. But the play is begun. I believe; and, if your ladyship has an inclination, I'll wait upon you.

Lady Sad. I think, madam, we can't do better; and here comes Mr Careless most opportunely to squire us.

Sir Sol. Careless! I don't know him; but my wife does, and that's as well.

Enter CARELESS.

Care. Ladies, your servant. Seeing your coach at the door, madam, made me not able to resist this opportunity to—to—you know, madam, there's no time to be lost in love. Sir Solomon, your servant.

Sir Sol. Oh, yours, yours, sir!——A very impudent fellow; and I'm in hopes will marry her. [*Aside.*

Lady Dain. The assurance of this creature almost grows diverting: all one can do, can't make him the least sensible of a discouragement.

Lady Sad. Try what compliance will do; perhaps that may fright him.

Lady Dain. If it were not too dear a remedy—one would almost do any thing to get rid of his company.

Care. Which you never will, madam, till you marry me, depend upon it. Do that, and I'll trouble you no more.

Sir Sol. This fellow's abominable! He'll certainly have her. [*Aside.*

Lady Dain. There's no depending upon your word, or else I might; for the last time I saw you, you told me then, you would trouble me no more.

Care. Ay, that's true, madam; but to keep one's word, you know, looks like a tradesman.

Sir Sol. Impudent rogue! But he'll have her. [*Aside.*

Care. And is as much below a gentleman as paying one's debts.

Sir Sol. If he is not hanged first. [*Aside.*

Care. Besides, madam, I considered that my absence might endanger your constitution, which is so very tender, that nothing but love can save it; and so I would e'en advise you to throw away your juleps, your cordials, and slops, and take me all at once.

Lady Dain. No, sir; bitter potions are not to be taken so suddenly.

Care. Oh, to choose, madam; for, if you stand making of faces, and kicking against it, you'll but increase your aversion, and delay the cure. Come, come; you must be advised. [*Pressing her.*

Lady Dain. What mean you, sir?

Care. To banish all your ails, and be myself your universal medicine.

Sir Sol. Well said! he'll have her. [*Aside.*

Lady Dain. Impudent, robust man! I protest, did not I know his family, I should think his parents had not lived in chairs and coaches, but had used their limbs all their lives! Hu! hu! but I begin to be persuaded health is a great blessing. [*Aside.*

Care. My limbs, madam, were conveyed to me before the use of chairs and coaches; and it might lessen the dignity of my ancestors, not to use them as they did.

Lady Dain. Was ever such a rude understanding, to value himself upon the barbarism of his forefathers! Indeed, I have heard of kings, that were bred to the plough, and, I fancy, you might descend from such a race; for you court as if you were behind one—Huh! huh! huh! To treat a woman of quality like an Exchange wench, and express your passion with your arms—unpolished man!

Care. I was willing, madam, to take from the vulgar the only desirable thing among them, and shew you—how they live so healthy—for they have no other remedy.

Lady Dain. A very rough medicine! huh! huh!

Care. To those that never took it, it may seem so—

Lady Dain. Abandoned ravisher! Oh! [*Struggling.*

Sir Sol. He has her! he has her! [*Aside.*

Lady Dain. Leave the room, and see my face no more.

Care. [*Bows, and is going.*]

Lady Dain. And, hark ye, sir, no bribe; no mediations to my woman.

Care. [*Bows, and sighs.*]

Lady Dain. Thou profligate! to hug! to clasp! to embrace, and throw your robust arms about me, like a vulgar and indelicate—Oh, I faint with apprehension of so gross an address!

[*She faints, and* CARE. *catches her.*

Care. Oh, my offended fair!

Lady Dain. Inhuman! ravisher! Oh!

[CARE. *carries her off*

Sir Sol. He has her! he has her!

[*Exeunt* SIR SOL. *and* LADY SAD.

Enter CLARINDA *and* SYLVIA.

Cla. Well, cousin, what do you think of your gentleman now?

Syl. I fancy, madam, that would be as proper a question to ask you: for, really, I don't see any great reason to alter my opinion of him yet.

Cla. Now I could dash her at once, and shew it her, under his own hand, that his name's Standfast, and he'll be here in a quarter of an hour. [*Aside.*] I vow I don't think I ought to refuse you any service in my power; therefore, if you think it worth your while not to be out of countenance when the colonel comes, I would advise you to withdraw now; for, if you dare take his own word for it, he will be here in three minutes, as this may convince you. [*Gives a letter.*

Syl. What's here? a letter from colonel Standfast?—Really, cousin, I have nothing to say to him——Mr Freeman's the person I'm concerned for, and I expect to see him here in a quarter of an hour.

Cla. Then you don't believe them both the same person?

Syl. Not by their hands or style, I can assure you, as this may convince you. [*Gives a letter.*

Cla. Ha! the hand is different indeed——I scarce know what to think—and yet I'm sure my eyes were not deceived.

Syl. Come, cousin, let's be a little cooler; 'tis not impossible but we may have both laughed at one another to no purpose—for I am confident they are two persons.

Cla. I can't tell that, but I'm sure here comes one of them.

Enter ATALL *as* COLONEL STANDFAST.

Syl. Ha!

Atall. Hey! Bombard, (there they are, faith!) bid the chariot set up, and call again about one or two in the morning——You see, madam, what 'tis to give an impudent fellow the least encouragement: I'm resolved now to make a night on't with you.

Cla. I'm afraid, colonel, we shall have much ado to be good company, for we are two women to one man, you see; and if we should both have fancy to have you particular, I doubt you'd make but bungling work on't.

Atall. I warrant you we will pass our time like gods: two ladies and one man! the prettiest set for Ombre in the universe—Come, come! Cards, cards, cards! and tea—that I insist upon.

Cla. Well, sir, if my cousin will make one, I won't baulk your good humour.

[*Turning* SYL. *to face him.*

Atall. Is the lady your relation, madam?—I beg the honour to be known to her.

Cla. Oh, sir, that I'm sure she can't refuse you—Cousin, this is colonel Standfast. [*Laughs. Aside.*] I hope now she's convinced.

Atall. Your pardon, madam, if I am a little particular in my desire to be known to any of this lady's relations. [*Salutes.*

Syl. You'll certainly deserve mine, sir, by being always particular to that lady——

Atall. Oh, madam!—Tall, lall.

[*Turns away, and sings.*

Syl. This assurance is beyond example. [*Aside.*

Cla. How do you do, cousin?

Syl. Beyond bearing—but not incurable.

[*Aside.*

Cla. [*Aside.*] Now can't I find in my heart to give him one angry word for his impudence to me this morning! the pleasure of seeing my rival mortified, makes me strangely good-natured.

Atall. [*Turning familiarly to* CLA.] Upon my soul, you are provokingly handsome to-day! Ay, Gad! why is not it high treason for any beautiful woman to marry?

Cla. What, would you have us lead apes?

Atall. Not one of you, by all that's lovely!—Do you think we could not find you better employment?——Death! what a hand is here?—Gad, I shall grow foolish!

Cla. Stick to your assurance, and you are in no danger.

Atall. Why, then, in obedience to your commands, prithee, answer me sincerely one question: How long do you really design to make me dangle thus?

Cla. Why, really, I can't just set you a time; but when you are weary of your service, come to me with a sixpence and modesty, and I'll give you a discharge.

Atall. Thou insolent, provoking, handsome tyrant!

Cla. Come, let me go——this is not a very civil way of entertaining my cousin, methinks.

Atall. I beg her pardon indeed. [*Bowing to* SYL.] But lovers, you know, madam, may plead a sort of excuse for being singular, when the favourite fair's in company—But we were talking of cards, ladies.

Cla. Cousin, what say you?

Syl. I had rather you would excuse me; I am a little unfit for play at this time.

Atall. What a valuable virtue is assurance! Now am I as intrepid as a lawyer at the bar. [*Aside.*

Cla. Bless me! you are not well?

Syl. I shall be presently——Pray, sir, give me leave to ask you a question.

Atall. So, now its coming! [*Aside.*] Freely, madam.

Syl. Look on me well:—ha e you never seen my face before?

Atall. Upon my word, madam, I can't recollect that I have.

Syl. I am satisfied.

Atall. But pray, madam, why may you ask?

Syl. I am too much disordered now to tell you. But, if I'm not deceived, I'm miserable! [*Weeps.*

Atall. This is strange——How her concern transports me!

Cla. Her fears have touched me, and half persuade me to revenge them——Come, cousin, be easy: I see you are convinced he is the same, and now I'll prove myself a friend.

Syl. I know not what to think——my senses are confounded: their features are indeed the same; and yet there's something in their air, their dress, and manner, strangely different: but, be it as it will, all right to him in presence I disclaim, and yield to you for ever.

Cla. No, cousin, believe it, both our senses cannot be deceived; he's individually the same; and, since he dares be base to you, he's miserable indeed, if flattered with a distant hope of me: I know his person and his falsehood both too well: and you shall see I will, as becomes your friend, resent it.

Atall. What means this strangeness, madam?

Cla. I'll tell you, sir; and, to use few words, know then, this lady and myself have borne your faithless insolence and artifice too long: but that you may not think to impose on me, at least, I desire you would leave the house, and from this moment never see me more.

Atall. Madam! What! what is all this?

Riddle me riddle me re;
For the devil take me
For ever from thee,
If I can divine what this riddle can be!

Syl. Not moved! I'm more amazed.

Atall. Pray, madam, in the name of common sense, let me know, in two words, what the real meaning of your last terrible speech was; and if I don't make you a plain, honest, reasonable answer to it, be pleased, the next minute, to blot my name out of your table-book, never more to be enrolled in the senseless catalogue of those vain coxcombs, that impudently hope to come into your favour.

Cla. This insolence grows tedious: what end can you propose by this assurance?

Atall. Hey-day!

Syl. Hold, cousin——one moment's patience: I'll send this minute again to Mr Freeman, and if he does not immediately appear, the dispute will need no farther argument.

Atall. Mr Freeman! Who the devil's he? What have I to do with him?

Syl. I'll soon inform you, sir.

[*Going, meets* WISHWELL *entering.*

Wish. Madam, here's a footman mightily out of breath, says he belongs to Mr Freeman, and desires very earnestly to speak with you.

Syl. Mr Freeman! Pray bid him come in—What can this mean?

Atall. You'll see presently. [*Aside.*

Re-enter WISHWELL *with* FINDER.

Cla. Ha!

Syl. Come hither, friend: do you belong to M Freeman?

Fin. Yes, madam, and my poor master gives his humble service to your ladyship, and begs your pardon for not waiting on you, according to his promise; which he would have done, but for an unfortunate accident.

Syl. What's the matter?

Fin. As he was coming out of his lodgings to pay his duty to you, madam, a parcel of fellows set upon him, and said they had a warrant against him; and so, because the rascals began to be saucy with him, and my master knowing that he did not owe a shilling in the world, he drew to defend himself, and, in the scuffle, the bloody villains run one of their swords quite through his arm; but the best of the jest was, madam, that as soon as they got him into a house, and sent for a surgeon, he proved to be the wrong person; for their warrant, it seems, was against a poor scoundrel, that happens, they say, to be very like him, one Colonel Standfast.

Atall. Say you so, Mr Dog?——If your master had been here, I would have given him as much.

[*Gives him a box on the ear.*

Fin. Oh, Lord! pray, madam, save me—I did not speak a word to the gentleman.—Oh, the devil! this must be the devil in the likeness of my master.

Syl. Is this gentleman so very like him, say you?

Fin. Like, madam! ay, as one box on the ear is like to another; only I think, madam, my master's nose is a little, little higher.

Atall. Now, ladies, I presume the riddle's solved.——Hark you, where is your master, rascal?

Fin. Master, rascal! Sir, my master's name's Freeman, and I'm a free-born Englishman; and I must tell you, sir, that I don't use to take such arbitrary socks of the face from any man that does not pay me wages; and so my master will tell you too, when he comes, sir.

Syl. Will he be here, then?

Fin. This minute, madam; he only stays to have his wound dressed.

Atall. I'm resolved I'll stay that minute out, if he does not come till midnight.

Fin. A pox of his mettle!—when his hand's in, he makes no difference between jest and earnest, I find.—If he does not pay me well for this, 'egad he shall tell the next for himself. [*Aside.*] Has your ladyship any commands to my master, madam?

Syl. Yes; pray give him my humble service; say I'm sorry for his misfortune; and if he thinks 'twill do his wound no harm, I beg, by all means, he may be brought hither immediately.

Fin. 'Shah! his wound, madam! I know he does not value it of a rush; for he'll have the devil and all of actions against the rogues for false imprisonment, and smart-money——Ladies, I kiss your hands——Sir, I——nothing at all—— [*Exit.*

At. [*Aside.*] The dog has done it rarely! for a lie upon the stretch, I don't know a better rascal in Europe.

Enter an Officer.

Offi. Ay! now I'm sure I'm right——Is not your name Colonel Standfast, sir?

At. Yes, sir; what then?

Offi. Then you are my prisoner, sir——

At. Your prisoner! who the devil are you? a bailiff? I don't owe a shilling.

Offi. I don't care if you don't, sir; I have a warrant against you for high treason, and I must have you away this minute.

At. Look you, sir, depend upon't, this is but some impertinent, malicious prosecution: you may venture to stay a quarter of an hour, I'm sure; I have some business here till then, that concerns me nearer than my life.

Cla. Have but so much patience, and I'll satisfy you for your civility.

Offi. I could not stay a quarter of an hour, madam, if you'd give me five hundred pounds.

Syl. Can't you take bail, sir?

Offi. Bail! no, no.

Cla. Whither must he be carried!

Offi. To my house, till he's examined before the council.

Cla. Where is your house?

Offi. Just by the secretary's office; every body knows Mr Lockum the messenger—Come, sir.

At. I can't stir yet, indeed, sir. [*Lays his hand on his sword.*

Offi. Nay, look you, if you are for that play—Come in, gentlemen; away with him.

Enter Musqueteers, and force him off.

Syl. This is the strangest accident: I am extremely sorry for the colonel's misfortune; but I am heartily glad he is not Mr Freeman.

Cla. I'm afraid you'll find him so——I shall never change my opinion of him, till I see them face to face.

Syl. Well, cousin, let them be two or one, I'm resolved to stick to Mr Freeman; for, to tell you the truth, this last spark has too much of the confident rake in him to please me; but there is a modest sincerity in the other's conversation that's irresistible.

Cla. For my part, I'm almost tired with his impertinence either way, and could find in my heart to trouble myself no more about him; and yet, methinks, it provokes me to have a fellow outface my senses.

Syl. Nay, they are strangely alike, I own; but yet, if you observe nicely, Mr Freeman's features are more pale and pensive than the colonel's.

Cla. When Mr Freeman comes, I'll be closer in my observation of him—in the mean time, let me consider what I really propose by all this rout I make about him: suppose (which I can never believe) they should prove two several men at last, I don't find that I'm fool enough to think of marrying either of them; nor (whatever airs I give myself) am I yet mad enough to do worse with them——Well, since I don't design to come to a close engagement myself, then why should I not generously stand out of the way, and make room for one that would? No, I can't do that, neither—I want, methinks, to convict him first of being one and the same person, and then to have him convince my cousin that he likes me better than her—Ay, that would do! and to confess my infirmity, I still find (though I don't care for this fellow) while she has assurance enough to nourish the least hope of getting him from me, I shall never be heartily easy till she's heartily mortified. [*Aside.*

Syl. You seem very much concerned for the colonel's misfortune, cousin.

Cla. His misfortunes seldom hold him long, as you may see; for here he comes.

Enter ATALL *as* MR FREEMAN.

Syl. Bless me!

At. I am sorry, madam, I could not be more punctual to your obliging commands; but the accident that prevented my coming sooner, will, I hope, now give me a pretence to a better welcome than my last; for now, madam, [*To* CLAR.] your mistake's set right, I presume, and, I hope, you won't expect Mr Freeman to answer for all the miscarriages of Colonel Standfast.

Cla. Not in the least, sir; the colonel's able to answer for himself, I find; ha, ha!

At. Was not my servant with you, madam? [*To* SYL.

Syl. Yes, yes, sir, he has told us all. [*Aside.*] And I am sorry you have paid so dear for a proof of your innocence. Come, come, I'd advise you to set your heart at rest; for what I design, you'll find, I shall come to a speedy resolution in.

At. Oh, generous resolution!

Cla. Well, madam, since you are so tenacious of your conquest, I hope you'll give me the same liberty: and not expect, the next time you fall a crying at the colonel's gallantry to me, that my good nature should give you up my pretensions

to him. And for you, sir, I shall only tell you, this last plot was not so closely laid, but that a woman of a very slender capacity, you'll find, has wit enough to discover it. [*Exit* CLA.

At. So! she's gone to the messenger's, I suppose—but, poor soul, her intelligence there will be extremely small. [*Aside.*] Well, madam, I hope at last your scruples are over.

Syl. You cannot blame me, sir, if, now we are alone, I own myself a little more surprised at her positiveness, than my woman's pride would let me confess before her face; and yet, methinks, there's a native honesty in your looks, that tells me I am not mistaken, and may trust you with my heart.

At. Oh, for pity, still preserve that tender thought, and save me from despair!

Enter CLERIMONT.

Cle. Ha! Freeman again! Is it possible!

At. How now, Clerimont? what are you surprised at?

Cle. Why, to see thee almost in two places at one time; 'tis but this minute, I met the very image of thee with the mob about a coach, in the hands of a messenger, whom I had the curiosity to stop and call to, and had no other proof of his not being thee, but that the spark would not know me!

Syl. Strange! I almost think I'm really not deceived.

Cle. 'Twas certainly Clarinda I saw go out in a chair just now—it must be she—the circumstances are too strong for a mistake. [*Aside.*

Syl. Well, sir, to ease you of your fears, now I dare own to you that mine are over.

[*To* ATALL.

Cle. What a coxcomb have I made myself, to serve my rival even with my own mistress! But 'tis at least some ease to know him: all I have to hope is, that he does not know the ass he has made of me—that might indeed be fatal to him. [*Aside.*

Enter SYLVIA'S *maid.*

Maid. Oh, madam, I'm glad I've found you: your father and I have been hunting you all the town over.

Syl. My father in town!

Maid. He waits below in the coach for you: he must needs have you come away this minute; and talks of having you married this very night to the fine gentleman he spoke to you of.

Syl. What do I hear?

At. If ever soft compassion touch'd your soul, give me a word of comfort in this last distress, to save me from the horrors that surround me!

Syl. You see we are observed——but yet depend upon my faith as on my life.——In the mean time, I'll use my utmost power to avoid my father's hasty will: in two hours you shall know my fortune and my family—Now, don't follow me, as you'd preserve my friendship. Come—— [*Exit with maid.*

At. Death! how this news alarms me! I never felt the pains of love before.

Cle. Now, then, to ease, or to revenge, my fears—This sudden change of your countenance, Mr Atall, looks as if you had a mind to banter your friend into a belief of your being really in love with the lady that just now left you.

At. Faith, Clerimont, I have too much concern upon me at this time, to be capable of a banter.

Cle. Ha! he seems really touched, and I begin now only to fear Clarinda's conduct.—— Well, sir, if it be so, I'm glad to see a convert of you; and now, in return to the little services I have done you, in helping you to carry on your affair with both these ladies at one time, give me leave to ask a favour of you——Be still sincere, and we may still be friends.

At. You surprise me—but use me as you find me.

Cle. Have you no acquaintance with a certain lady, whom you have lately heard me own I was unfortunately in love with?

At. Not that I know of; I'm sure not as the lady you are in love with: but, pray, why do you ask?

Cle. Come, I'll be sincere with you, too: because I have strong circumstances that convince me 'tis one of those two you have been so busy about.

At. Not she you saw with me, I hope?

Cle. No; I mean the other—But, to clear the doubt at once, is her name Clarinda?

At. I own it is: but had I the least been warned of your pretences———

Cle. Sir, I dare believe you; and though you may have prevailed even against her honour, your ignorance of my passion for her makes you stand at least excused to me.

At. No; by all the solemn protestations tongue can utter, her honour is untainted yet for me; nay, even unattempted.

Cle. You own she has received your gallantries at least?

At. Faith, not to be vain, she has indeed taken some pains to pique her cousin about me; and if her beautiful cousin had not fallen in my way at the same time, I must own, 'tis very possible I might have endeavoured to push my fortune with her; but since I know your heart, put my friendship to a trial.

Cle. Only this—if I should be reduced to ask it of you, promise to confess your imposture, and your passion to her cousin, before her face.

At. There's my hand—I'll do't, to right my friend and mistress. But, dear Clerimont, you'll pardon me if I leave you here; for my poor incognita's affairs at this time are in a very critical condition.

Cle. No ceremony—I release you.

At. Adieu! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter CLERIMONT *and* CARELESS.

Cle. AND so you took the opportunity of her fainting to carry her off! Pray, how long did her fit last?

Care. Why, faith, I so humoured her affectation, that 'tis hardly over yet; for I told her, her life was in danger, and swore, if she would not let me send for a parson to marry her before she died, I'd that minute send for a shroud, and be buried alive with her in the same coffin: But at the apprehension of so terrible a thought, she pretended to be frightened into her right senses again; and forbid me her sight for ever. So that, in short, my impudence is almost exhausted, her affectation is as insurmountable as another's real virtue, and I must e'en catch her that way, or die without her at last.

Cle. How do you mean?

Care. Why, if I find I cannot impose upon her by humility, which I'll try, I'll even turn rival to myself in a very fantastical figure, that I'm sure she won't be able to resist. You must know, she has of late been flattered that the Muscovite Prince, Alexander, is dying for her, though he never spoke to her in his life.

Cle. I understand you: so you'd first venture to pique her against you, and then let her marry you in another person, to be revenged of you.

Care. One of the two ways I am pretty sure to succeed.

Cle. Extravagant enough! Prithee, is sir Solomon in the next room?

Care. What! You want his assistance? Clarinda's in her airs again!

Cle. Faith, Careless, I am almost ashamed to tell you, but I must needs speak with him.

Care. Come along, then. [*Exeunt.*

Enter LADY DAINTY, LADY SADLIFE, *and* CARELESS.

Lady Dain. This rude, boisterous man, has given me a thousand disorders; the colic, the spleen, the palpitation of the heart, and convulsions all over——Huh! huh! I must send for the doctor.

Lady Sad. Come, come, madam, e'en pardon him, and let him be your physician——Do but observe his penitence, so humble he dares not speak to you.

Care. [*Folds his arms, and sighs.*]—Oh!

Lady Sad. How can you hear him sigh so?

Lady Dain. Nay, let him groan—for nothing but his pangs can ease me.

Car. [*Kneels, and presents her his drawn sword; opening his breast.*]—Be then at once most barbarously just, and take your vengeance here!

Lady Dain. No, I give thee life, to make thee miserable; live, that my resenting eyes may kill thee every hour.

Care. Nay, then there's no relief—but this—

[*Offering at his sword,* LADY SADLIFE *holds him.*]

Lady Sad. Ah! for mercy's sake!—barbarous creature, how can you see him thus?

Lady Dain. Why, I did not bid him kill himself: but do you really think he would have done it?

Lady Sad. Certainly, if I had not prevented it.

Lady Dain. Strange passion! But 'tis its nature to be violent, when one makes it despair.

Lady Sad. Won't you speak to him?

Lady Dain. No, but if your——is enough concerned to be his friend, you may tell him—not that it really is so—but you may say—you believe I pity him.

Lady Sad. Sure love was never more ridiculous on both sides.

Enter WISHWELL.

Wish. Madam, here's a page from prince Alexander desires to give a letter into your ladyship's own hands.

Lady Dain. Prince Alexander! What means my heart? I come to him.

Lady Sad. By no means, madam; pray let him come in.

Care. Ha! Prince Alexander! Nay, then, I have found out the secret of this coldness, madam.

Enter Page.

Page. Madam, his royal highness prince Alexander, my master, has commanded me, on pain of death, thus—[*Kneeling.*]—to deliver this, the burning secret of his heart.

Lady Dain. Where is the prince?

Page. Reposed, in private, on a mourning pallet, till your commands vouchsafe to raise him.

Lady Sad. By all means, receive him here immediately. I have the honour to be a little known to his highness.

Lady Dain. The favour, madam, is too great to be resisted; pray, tell his highness, then, the honour of the visit he designs me, makes me thankful and impatient! Huh! Huh!

[*Exit Page.*

Care. Are my sufferings, madam, so soon forgot, then! Was I but flattered with the hope of pity?

Lady Dain. The happy have whole days, and those they choose.—[*Resenting.*]—The unhappy have but hours, and those they lose.

[*Exit repeating.*

Lady Sad. Don't you lose a minute, then.

Care. I'll warrant you—ten thousand thanks, dear madam, I'll be transformed in a secon— [*Exeunt severally.*

Enter CLARINDA *in a man's habit.*

Cla. So! I'm in for't now! how I shall come off, I cannot tell: 'twas but a bare saving game I made with Clerimont; his resentment had brought my pride to its last legs, dissembling; and, if the poor man had not loved me too well, I had made but a dismal humble figure—I have used him ill, that's certain, and he may e'en thank himself for't—he would be sincere—well, (begging my sex's pardon) we do make the silliest tyrants—we had better be reasonable; for (to do them right) we don't run half the hazard in obeying the good sense of a lover; at least, I'm reduced now to make the experiment———Here they come.

Enter SIR SOLOMON *and* CLERIMONT.

Sir Sol. What have we here! another captain? If I were sure he were a coward now, I'd kick him before he speaks——Is your business with me, sir?

Cla. If your name be sir Solomon Sadlife.

Sir Sol. Yes, sir, it is; and I'll maintain it as ancient as any, and related to most of the families in England.

Cla. My business will convince you, sir, that I think well of it.

Sir Sol. And what is your business, sir?

Cla. Why, sir——You have a pretty kinswoman, called Clarinda.

Cle. Ha!

Sir Sol. And what then, sir?——Such a rogue as t'other. [*Aside.*

Cla. Now, sir, I have seen her, and am in love with her.

Cle. Say you so, sir?—I may chance to cure you of it. [*Aside.*

Cla. And to back my pretensions, sir, I have a good fifteen hundred pounds a-year estate, and am, as you see, a pretty fellow into the bargain.

Sir Sol. She that marries you, sir, will have a choice bargain, indeed!

Cla. In short, sir, I'll give you a thousand guineas to make up the match.

Sir Sol. Hum—[*Aside.*]—But, sir, my niece is provided for.

Cle. That's well! [*Aside.*

Sir Sol. But if she were not, sir, I must tell you, she is not to be caught with a smock-face and a feather, sir——And——and——let me see you an hour hence. [*Aside.*

Cla. Well said, uncle! [*Aside.*]—But, sir, I'm in love with her, and positively will have her.

Sir Sol. Whether she likes you or no, sir?

Cla. Like me! ha, ha! I'd fain see a woman that dislikes a pretty fellow, with fifteen hundred pounds a-year, a white wig, and black eyebrows.

Cle. Hark, you, young gentleman, there must go more than all this to the gaining of that lady. [*Takes* CLARINDA *aside.*

Sir Sol. [*Aside.*] A thousand guineas—that's five hundred more than I proposed to get of Mr Clerimont——But my honour is engaged——Ay, but then here's a thousand pounds to release it. Now, shall I take the money?—It must be so—Coin will carry it.

Cla. Oh, sir, if that be all, I'll soon remove your doubts and pretensions! Come, sir, I'll try your courage.

Cle. I'm afraid you won't, young gentleman.

Cla. As young as I am, sir, you shall find I scorn to turn my back to any man.

[*Exeunt* CLARINDA *and* CLERIMONT.

Sir Sol. Ha! they are gone to fight——with all my heart—a fair chance, at least, for a better bargain: for if the young spark should let the air into my friend Clerimont's midriff now, it may possibly cool his love, too, and then there's my honour safe, and a thousand guineas snug. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to a field.*

Enter CLARINDA *and* CLERIMONT.

Cle. Come, sir, we are far enough.

Cla. I only wish the lady were by, sir, that the conqueror might carry her off the spot——I warrant she'd be mine.

Cle. That, my talking hero, we shall soon determine.

Cla. Not that I think her handsome, or care a rush for her.

Cle. You are very mettled, sir, to fight for a woman you don't value.

Cla. Sir, I value the reputation of a gentleman; and I don't think any young fellow ought to pretend to it, till he has talked himself into a lampoon, lost his two or three thousand pounds at play, kept his miss, and killed his man.

Cle. Very gallant, indeed, sir! but, if you please to handle your sword, you'll soon go through your course.

Cla. Come on, sir——I believe I shall give your mistress a truer account of your heart than you have done. I have had her heart long enough, and now will have yours.

Cle. Ha! does she love you, then? [*Endeavouring to draw.*

Cla. I leave you to judge that, sir. But I have lain with her a thousand times; in short, so long, till I'm tired of it.

Cle. Villain, thou liest! Draw, or I'll use you as you deserve, and stab you.

Cla. Take this with you first: Clarinda will never marry him, that murders me.

Cle. She may the man, that vindicates her honour——therefore, be quick, or I'll keep my word——I find your sword is not for doing things in haste.

Cla. It sticks to the scabbard so—I believe I

did not wipe off the blood of the last man I fought with.

Cle. Come, sir, this trifling sha'nt serve your turn—Here, give me yours, and take mine.

Cla. With all my heart, sir.——Now have at you!

[CLER. *draws, and finds only a hilt in his hand.*]

Cle. Death! you villain, do you serve me so!

Cla. In love and war, sir, all advantages are fair: so we conquer, no matter whether by force or stratagem.——Come, quick, sir—your life or mistress.

Cle. Neither. Death! you shall have both, or none! Here drive your sword; for only through this heart you reach Clarinda.

Cla. Death, sir! can you be mad enough to die for a woman that hates you?

Cle. If that were true, 'twere greater madness, then, to live.

Cla. Why, to my knowledge, sir, she has used you basely, falsely, ill, and for no reason.

Cle. No matter; no usage can be worse than the contempt of poorly, tamely parting with her. She may abuse her heart by happy infidelities; but, 'tis the pride of mine to be even miserably constant.

Cla. Generous passion! You almost tempt me to resign her to you.

Cle. You cannot, if you would. I would indeed have won her fairly from you with my sword; but scorn to take her as your gift. Be quick, and end your insolence.

Cla. Yes, thus——Most generous Clerimont, you now, indeed, have fairly vanquished me! [*Runs to him.*] My woman's follies, and my shame, be buried ever here.

Cle. Ha, Clarinda! Is it possible? My wonder rises with my joy!—How came you in this habit?

Cla. Now you indeed recall my blushes; but I had no other veil to hide them, while I confessed the injuries I had done your heart, in fooling with a man I never meant, on any terms, to engage with. Beside, I knew, from our late parting, your fear of losing me would reduce you to comply with sir Solomon's demands, for his interest in your favour. Therefore, as you saw, I was resolved to ruin his market, by seeming to raise it; for he secretly took the offer I made him.

Cle. 'Twas generously and timely offered; for it really prevented my signing articles to him. But, if you would heartily convince me that I shall never more have need of his interest, even let us steal to the next priest, and honestly put it out of his power ever to part us.

Cla. Why, truly, considering the trusts I have made you, 'twould be ridiculous now, I think, to deny you any thing: and if you should grow weary of me after such usage, I can't blame you.

Cle. Banish that fear; my flame can never waste,
For love sincere refines upon the taste.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter SIR SOLOMON, *with old* MR WILFUL; LADY SADLIFE, *and* SYLVIA *weeping.*

Sir Sol. Troth, my old friend, this is a bad business, indeed; you have bound yourself in a thousand pounds bond, you say, to marry your daughter to a fine gentleman, and she, in the mean time, it seems, is fallen in love with a stranger.

Wil. Look you, sir Solomon, it does not trouble me o' this; for, I'll make her do as I please, or I'll starve her.

Lady Sad. But, sir, your daughter tells me that the gentleman she loves is in every degree in as good circumstances as the person you design her for; and, if he does not prove himself so before to-morrow morning, she will cheerfully submit to whatever you'll impose on her.

Wil. All sham! all sham! only to gain time. I expect my friend and his son here immediately to demand performance of articles; and if her ladyship's nice stomach does not immediately comply with them, as I told you before, I'll starve her.

Lady Sad. But, consider, sir, what a perpetual discord must a forced marriage probably produce.

Wil. Discord! pshaw, waw! One man makes as good a husband as another. A month's marriage will set all to rights, I warrant you. You know the old saying, sir Solomon—lying together makes pigs love,

Lady Sad. [*To* SYL.] What shall we do for you? There's no altering him. Did your lover promise to come to your assistance?

Syl. I expect him every minute; but can't foresee, from him, the least hope of my redemption.——This is he.

Enter ATALL, *undisguised.*

Atall. My Sylvia, dry those tender eyes; for while there's life, there's hope.

Lady Sad. Ha! is't he? but I must smother my confusion. [*Aside.*

Wil. How now, sir! pray, who gave you commission to be so familiar with my daughter?

Atall. Your pardon, sir; but when you know me right, you'll neither think my freedom or my pretensions familiar or dishonourable.

Wil. Why, sir, what pretensions have you to her?

Atall. Sir, I saved her life at the hazard of my own: that gave me a pretence to know her; knowing her made me love, and gratitude made her receive it.

Wil. Ay, sir! And some very good reasons,

best known to myself, make me refuse it. Now, what will you do?

Atall. I can't tell yet, sir; but if you'll do me the favour to let me know those reasons——

Wil. Sir, I don't think myself obliged to do either;—but I'll tell you what I'll do for you: since you say you love my daughter, and she loves you, I'll put you in the nearest way to get her.

Atall. Don't flatter me, I beg you, sir.

Wil. Not I, upon my soul, sir! for, look you, 'tis only this——get my consent, and you shall have her.

Atall. I beg your pardon, sir, for endeavouring to talk reason to you. But, to return your raillery, give me leave to tell you, when any man marries her but myself, he must extremely ask my consent.

Wil. Before George, thou art a very pretty impudent fellow! and I'm sorry I can't punish her disobedience, by throwing her away upon thee.

Atall. You'll have a great deal of plague about this business, sir; for I shall be mighty difficult to give up my pretensions to her.

Wil. Ha! 'tis a thousand pities I can't comply with thee. Thou wilt certainly be a thriving fellow; for thou dost really set the best face upon a bad cause, that ever I saw since I was born.

Atall. Come, sir, once more, raillery apart; suppose I prove myself of equal birth and fortune to deserve her?

Wil. Sir, if you were eldest son to the Cham of Tartary, and had the dominions of the Great Mogul entailed upon you and your heirs for ever, it would signify no more than the bite of my thumb. The girl's disposed of; I have matched her already, upon a thousand pounds forfeit; and, faith, she shall fairly run for't, though she's yerked and flead from the crest to the crupper.

Atall. Confusion!

Syl. What will become of me?

Wil. And if you don't think me in earnest now, here comes one that will convince you of my sincerity.

Atall. My father! Nay, then my ruin is inevitable.

Enter SIR HARRY ATALL.

Sir Har. [*To* ATALL.] Oh, sweet sir! have I found you at last? Your very humble servant. What's the reason, pray, that you have had the assurance to be almost a fortnight in town, and never come near me, especially when I sent you word I had business of such consequence with you?

Atall. I understood your business was to marry me, sir, to a woman I never saw: and, to confess the truth, I durst not come near you, because I was at the same time in love with one you never saw.

Sir Har. Was you so, sir? Why, then, sir, I'll find a speedy cure for your passion—Brother Wilful—Hey, fiddles there!

Atall. Sir, you may treat me with what severity you please; but my engagements to that lady are too powerful and fixed to let the utmost misery dissolve them.

Sir Har. What does the fool mean?

Atall. That I can sooner die than part with her.

Wil. Hey!———Why, is this your son, sir Harry?

Sir Har. Hey-day!—Why, did not you know that before?

Atall. Oh, earth, and all ye stars! is this the lady you designed me, sir?

Syl. Oh, fortune! is it possible?

Sir Har. And is this the lady, sir, you have been making such a bustle about?

Atall. Not life, health, or happiness are half so dear to me.

Sir Sol. [*Joining* ATALL *and* SYLVIA's *hands.*] Loll, loll, leroll!

Atall. Oh, tranporting joy!

[*Embracing* SYLVIA.

Sir Har. and Wil. Loll! loll! [*Joining in the tune, and dancing about them.*]

Sir Sol. Hey! within there! [*Calls the fiddles.*] By jingo, we'll make a night on't!

Enter CLARINDA *and* CLERIMONT.

Cla. Save you, save you, good people!—I'm glad, uncle, to hear you call so cheerfully for the fiddles; it looks as if you had a husband ready for me.

Sir Sol. Why, that I may have by to-morrow night, madam; but, in the mean time, if you please, you may wish your friends joy.

Cla. Dear Sylvia!

Syl. Clarinda!

Atall. Oh, Clerimont, such a deliverance!

Cle. Give you joy, joy, sir!

Cla. I congratulate your happiness, and am pleased our little jealousies are over; Mr Clerimont has told me all, and cured me of curiosity for ever.

Syl. What, married?

Cla. You'll see presently. But, sir Solomon, what do you mean by to morrow? Why, do you fancy I have any more patience than the rest of my neighbours?

Sir Sol. Why, truly, madam, I don't suppose you have; but I believe to-morrow will be as soon as their business can be done; by which time I expect a jolly fox-hunter from Yorkshire: and if you are resolved not to have patience till next day, why, the same parson may toss you up all four in a dish together.

Cla. A filthy fox-hunter!

Sir Sol. Odzooks, a mettled fellow, that will ride you from day-break to sun-set! None of your flimsy London rascals, that must have a chair to carry them to their coach, and a coach

to carry them to a trapes, and a constable to carry both to the round-house.

Cla. Ay, but this fox-hunter, sir Solomon, will come home dirty and tired as one of his hounds; he'll be always asleep before he's a-bed, and on horseback before he's awake; he must rise early to follow his sport, and I sit up late at cards for want of better diversion. Put this together, my wise uncle.

Sir Sol. Are you so high fed, madam, that a country gentleman of fifteen hundred pounds a-year won't go down with you?

Cla. Not so, sir; but you really kept me so sharp, that I was e'en forced to provide for myself; and here stands the fox-hunter for my money. [*Claps* CLE. *on the shoulder.*

Sir Sol. How!

Cle. Even so, sir Solomon—Hark in your ear, sir—You really held your consent at so high a price, that, to give you a proof of my good husbandry, I was resolved to save charges, and e'en marry her without it.

Sir Sol. Hell and——

Cla. And hark you in t'other ear, sir—Because I would not have you expose your reverend age by a mistake, know, sir, I was the young spark, with a smooth face and a feather, that offered you a thousand guineas for your consent, which you would have been glad to have taken.

Sir Sol. The devil! If ever I traffic in women's flesh again, may all the bank stocks fall when I have bought them, and rise when I have sold them!——Hey-day! what have we here? more cheats.

Cle. Not unlikely, sir; for I fancy they are married.

Enter LADY DAINTY *and* CARELESS, *disguised.*

Lady Sad. That they are, I can assure you—I give your highness joy, madam.

Lady Dain. Lard, that people of any rank shoule use such vulgar salutations! though, methinks, highness has something of grandeur in the sound. But I was in hopes, good people, that confident fellow, Careless, had been among you.

Care. What say you, madam, (to divert the good company) shall we send for him by way of mortification?

Lady Dain. By all means; for your sake, methinks, I ought to give him full despair.

Care. Why, then, to let you see, that 'tis a much easier thing to cure a fine lady of her sickly taste, than a lover of his impudence——there's Careless for you, without the least tincture of despair about him. [*Discovers himself.*

All. Ha, Careless!

Lady Dain. Abused! undone!

All. Ha, ha!

Cle. Nay, now, madam, we wish you a superior joy; for you have married a man instead of a monster.

Care. Come, come, madam; since you find you were in the power of such a cheat, you may be glad it was no greater: you might have fallen into a rascal's hands; but you know I am a gentleman, my fortune no small one, and, if your temper will give me leave, will deserve you.

Lady Sad. Come, e'en make the best of your fortune; for, take my word, if the cheat had not been a very agreeable one, I would never have had a hand in't.—You must pardon me, if I can't help laughing.

Lady Dain. Well, since it must be so, I pardon all; only one thing let me beg of you, sir; that is, your promise to wear this habit one month for my satisfaction.

Care. Oh, madam, that's a trifle! I'll lie in the sun a whole summer for an olive complexion, to oblige you.

Lady Dain. Well, Mr Careless, I begin now to think better of my fortune, and look back with apprehension of the escape I have had; you have already cured my folly, and, were but my health recoverable, I should think myself completely happy.

Care. For that, madam, we'll venture to save you doctor's fees;

And trust to nature: time will soon discover,
Your best physician is a favoured lover.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

RECRUITING OFFICER.

BY

FARQUHAR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

MR BALANCE, } *justices.*
MR SCALES, }
MR SCRUPLE, }
MR WORTHY, *a gentleman of Shropshire.*
CAPTAIN PLUME, } *recruiting officers.*
CAPTAIN BRAZEN, }
KITE, *Serjeant to* CAPTAIN PLUME.
BULLOCK, *a country clown.*
COSTAR PEARMAIN, } *recruits.*
THOMAS APPLETREE, }

WOMEN.

MELINDA, *a lady of fortune.*
SYLVIA, *daughter to* MR BALANCE, *in love with* CAPTAIN PLUME.
LUCY, *maid to* MELINDA.
ROSE, *a country wench.*
Constable, Recruits, Mob, Servants, and Attendants.

Scene—Shrewsbury.

ACT. I.

SCENE I.—*The Market-Place—Drum beats the Grenadier's March.*

Enter SERJEANT KITE, *followed by* THOMAS APPLETREE, COSTAR PEARMAIN, *and the Mob.*

KITE, *making a speech.*

IF any gentlemen, soldiers, or others, have a mind to serve his majesty, and pull down the French king; if any 'prentices have severe masters, any children have undutiful parents, if any servants have too little wages, or any husband too much wife, let them repair to the noble Serjeant Kite, at the sign of The Raven, in this good town of Shrewsbury, and they shall receive present relief and entertainment—Gentlemen, I don't beat my drums here to insnare or inveigle any man; for you must know, gentlemen, that I am a man of honour: besides, I don't beat up for common soldiers; no, I list only grenadiers; grenadiers, gentlemen——Pray, gentlemen, observe this cap—this is the cap of honour; it dubs a man a gentleman in the drawing of a trigger; and he, that has the good fortune to be born six foot high, was born to be a great man—Sir, will you give me leave to try this cap upon your head.

Cos. Is there no harm in't? won't the cap list me?

Kite. No, no; no more than I can—Come, let me see how it becomes you.

Cos. Are you sure there be no conjuration i it? no gunpowder-plot upon me?

Kite. No, no, friend; don't fear, mar

Cos. My mind misgives me plaguily—Let me see it—[*Going to put it on.*] It smells woundily of sweat and brimstone. Smell, Tummas.

Tho. Ay, wauns does it.

Cos. Pray, serjeant, what writing is this upon the face of it?

Kite. The crown, or the bed of honour.

Cos. Pray now, what may be that same bed of honour?

Kite. Oh! a mighty large bed! bigger by half than the great bed at Ware—ten thousand people may lie in it together, and never feel one another.

Cos. My wife and I would do well to lie in't, for we don't care for feeling one another—But do folk sleep sound in this same bed of honour?

Kite. Sound! ay, so sound that they never wake.

Cos. Wauns! I wish again that my wife lay there.

Kite. Say you so! then I find, brother——

Cos. Brother! hold there, friend; I am no kindred to you that I know of yet—Look ye, serjeant, no coaxing, no wheedling, d'ye see—if I have a mind to list, why so—if not, why 'tis not so—therefore, take your cap and your brothership back again, for I am not disposed at this present writing—No coaxing, no brothering me, faith!

Kite. I coax! I wheedle! I'm above it, sir: I have served twenty campaigns——but, sir, you talk well, and I must own that you are a man, every inch of you; a pretty, young, sprightly fellow!—I love a fellow with a spirit; but I scorn to coax; 'tis base; though, I must say, that never in my life have I seen a man better built. How firm and strong he treads! he steps like a castle! but I scorn to wheedle any man—Come, honest lad! will you take share of a pot?

Cos. Nay, for that matter, I'll spend my penny with the best he that wears a head; that is, begging your pardon, sir, and in a fair way.

Kite. Give me your hand, then; and now, gentlemen, I have no more to say but this—here's a purse of gold, and there is a tub of humming ale at my quarters—'tis the king's money, and the king's drink—he's a generous king, and loves his subjects—I hope, gentlemen, you won't refuse the king's health?

All Mob. No, no, no.

Kite. Huzza, then! huzza for the king, and the honour of Shropshire!

All Mob. Huzza!

Kite. Beat drum.

[*Exeunt shouting, drum beating a grenadier's march.*

Enter PLUME *in a riding habit.*

Plume. By the grenadier's march, that should be my drum, and by that shout it should bear with success—Let me see—four o'clock—[*Looking on his watch.*] At ten yesterday morning I left London—an hundred and twenty miles in thirty hours is pretty smart riding, but nothing to the fatigue of recruiting.

Enter KITE.

Kite. Welcome to Shrewsbury, noble captain! from the banks of the Danube to the Severn side, noble captain, you're welcome!

Plume. A very elegant reception, indeed, Mr Kite. I find you are fairly entered into your recruiting strain—Pray, what success?

Kite. I've been here a week, and I've recruited five.

Plume. Five! pray what are they?

Kite. I have listed the strong man of Kent, the king of the gipsies, a Scotch pedlar, a scoundrel attorney, and a Welch parson.

Plume. An attorney! wert thou mad? list a lawyer! discharge him, discharge him, this minute!

Kite. Why, sir?

Plume. Because I will have nobody in my company that can write; a fellow that can write can draw petitions—I say, this minute discharge him!

Kite. And what shall I do with the parson?

Plume. Can he write?

Kite. Hum! he plays rarely upon the fiddle.

Plume. Keep him, by all means—But how stands the country affected? were the people pleased with the news of my coming to town?

Kite. Sir, the mob are so pleased with your honour, and the justices and better sort of people are so delighted with me, that we shall soon do your business—But, sir, you have got a recruit here, that you little think of.

Plume. Who?

Kite. One that you beat up for the last time you were in the country. You remember your old friend Molly at The Castle?

Plume. She's not with child, I hope?

Kite. She was brought to-bed yesterday.

Plume. Kite, you must father the child.

Kite. And so her friends will oblige me to marry the mother?

Plume. If they should, we'll take her with us; she can wash, you know, and make a bed upon occasion.

Kite. Aye, or unmake it upon occasion. But your honour knows that I am married already.

Plume. To how many?

Kite. I can't tell readily—I have set them down here upon the back of the muster-roll.—[*Draws it out.*] Let me see—*Imprimis*, Mrs Shely Snikereyes; she sells potatoes upon Ormond Key in Dublin—Peggy Guzzle, the brandy woman at the Horse-Guards at Whitehall——Dolly Waggon, the carrier's daughter at Hull—Mademoiselle Van Bottomflat at the Buss—then Jenny Oakum, the ship-carpenter's widow at Portsmouth; but I don't reckon upon her, for she was married at the same time to two lieu-

tenants of marines, and a man of war's boatswain.

Plume. A full company—you have named five—come, make them half-a-dozen—Kite, is the child a boy or girl?

Kite. A chopping boy.

Plume. Then set the mother down in your list, and the boy in mine; enter him a grenadier by the name of Francis Kite, absent upon furlow—I'll allow you a man's pay for his subsistence; and, now, go comfort the wench in the straw.

Kite. I shall, sir.

Plume. But, hold—have you made any use of your German doctor's habit since you arrived?

Kite. Yes, yes, sir; and my fame's all about the country for the most faithful fortune-teller, that ever told a lie—I was obliged to let my landlord into the secret, for the convenience of keeping it so: but he is an honest fellow, and will be faithful to any roguery that is trusted to him. This device, sir, will get you men and me money, which I think is all we want at present—But yonder comes your friend, Mr Worthy—Has your honour any further commands?

Plume. None at present. [*Exit* KITE.] 'Tis, indeed, the picture of Worthy, but the life's departed.

Enter WORTHY.

What, arms across, Worthy! methinks you should hold them open when a friend's so near—The man has got the vapours in his ears, I believe. I must expel this melancholy spirit.

Spleen, the worst of fiends below,
Fly, I conjure thee, by this magic blow!

[*Slaps* WORTHY *on the shoulder.*

Wor. Plume! my dear captain! welcome.—Safe and sound returned!

Plume. I escaped safe from Germany, and sound, I hope, from London: you see I have lost neither leg, arm, nor nose. Then for my inside, 'tis neither troubled with sympathies nor antipathies; and I have an excellent stomach for roast-beef.

Wor. Thou art a happy fellow: once I was so.

Plume. What ails thee, man? no inundations nor earthquakes in Wales, I hope? Has your father rose from the dead, and reassumed his estate?

Wor. No.

Plume. Then you are married, surely?

Wor. No.

Plume. Then you are mad, or turning quaker?

Wor. Come, I must out with it—Your once gay roving friend is dwindled into an obsequious, thoughtful, romantic, constant coxcomb.

Plume. And, pray, what is all this for?

Wor. For a woman.

Plume. Shake hands, brother. If thou go to that, behold me as obsequious, as thoughtful, and as constant a coxcomb as your worship.

Wor. For whom?

Plume. For a regiment—but for a woman! 'Sdeath! I have been constant to fifteen at a time, but never melancholy for one: and can the love of one bring you into this condition? Pray, who is this wonderful Helen?

Wor. A Helen, indeed! not to be won under ten years siege; as great a beauty, and as great a jilt.

Plume. A jilt! pho! is she as great a whore?

Wor. No, no.

Plume. 'Tis ten thousand pities! But who is she? do I know her?

Wor. Very well.

Plume. That's impossible—I know no woman that will hold out a ten years siege.

Wor. What think you of Melinda?

Plume. Melinda! why she began to capitulate this time twelvemonth, and offered to surrender upon honourable terms: and I advised you to propose a settlement of five hundred pounds a-year to her, before I went last abroad.

Wor. I did, and she hearkened to it, desiring only one week to consider—when, beyond her hopes, the town was relieved, and I forced to turn my siege into a blockade.

Plume. Explain, explain.

Wor. My lady Richly, her aunt in Flintshire, dies, and leaves her, at this critical time, twenty thousand pounds.

Plume. Oh, the devil! what a delicate woman was there spoiled! But, by the rules of war, now—Worthy, blockade was foolish—After such a convoy of provisions was entered the place, you could have no thought of reducing it by famine; you should have redoubled your attacks, taken the town by storm, or have died upon the breach.

Wor. I did make one general assault, but was so vigorously repulsed, that, despairing of ever gaining her for a mistress, I have altered my conduct, given my addresses the obsequious and distant turn, and court her now for a wife.

Plume. So; as you grew obsequious, she grew haughty, and, because you approached her like a goddess, she used you like a dog.

Wor. Exactly.

Plume. 'Tis the way of them all—Come, Worthy; your obsequious and distant airs will never bring you together; you must not think to surmount her pride by your humility. Would you bring her to better thoughts of you, she must be reduced to a meaner opinion of herself. Let me see—Suppose we lampooned all the pretty women in town, and left her out? or, what if we made a ball, and forgot to invite her, with one or two of the ugliest?

Wor. These would be mortifications, I must confess; but we live in such a precise, dull place, that we can have no balls, no lampoons, no———

Plume. What! no bastards! and so many re-

cruiting officers in town! I thought 'twas a maxim among them to leave as many recruits in the country as they carried out.

Wor. Nobody doubts your good-will, noble captain, in serving your country with your best blood; witness our friend Molly at The Castle; there have been tears in town about that business, captain.

Plume. I hope Sylvia has not heard of it.

Wor. Oh, sir, you have thought of her? I began to fancy you had forgot poor Sylvia.

Plume. Your affairs had quite put mine out of my head. 'Tis true, Sylvia and I had once agreed to go to bed together, could we have adjusted preliminaries; but she would have the wedding before consummation, and I was for consummation before the wedding: we could not agree.

Wor. But do you intend to marry upon no other conditions?

Plume. Your pardon, sir, I'll marry upon no condition at all—If I should, I am resolved never to bind myself down to a woman for my whole life, till I know whether I shall like her company for half an hour. Suppose I married a woman that wanted a leg—such a thing might be, unless I examined the goods before-hand——— If people would but try one another's constitutions before they engaged, it would prevent all these elopements, divorces, and the devil knows what.

Wor. Nay, for that matter, the town did not stick to say that——

Plume. I hate country towns for that reason—If your town has a dishonourable thought of Sylvia, it deserves to be burnt to the ground—I love Sylvia, I admire her frank generous disposition—there's something in that girl more than woman—her sex is but a foil to her—the ingratitude, dissimulation, envy, pride, avarice, and vanity, of her sister females, do but set off their contraries in her. In short, were I once a general, I would marry her.

Wor. Faith, you have reason—for, were you but a corporal, she would marry you—But my Melinda coquettes it with every fellow she sees—I'll lay fifty pounds she makes love to you.

Plume. I'll lay you a hundred, that I return it, if she does. Look'e, Worthy, I'll win her, and give her to you afterwards!

Wor. If you win her, you shall wear her, faith. I would not value the conquest, without the credit of the victory.

Enter KITE.

Kite. Captain, captain! a word in your ear.

Plume. You may speak out; here are none but friends.

Kite. You know, sir, that you sent me to comfort the good woman in the straw, Mrs Molly—my wife, Mr Worthy.

Wor. O ho! very well! I wish you joy, Mr Kite.

Kite. Your worship very well may—for I have got both a wife and a child in half an hour—But, as I was saying—you sent me to comfort Mrs Molly—my wife, I mean—but what d'ye think, sir? she was better comforted before I came.

Plume. As how?

Kite. Why, sir, a footman, in a blue livery, had brought her ten guineas to buy her baby-clothes.

Plume. Who, in the name of wonder, could send them?

Kite. Nay, sir, I must whisper that—Mrs Sylvia.

Plume. Sylvia! generous creature!

Wor. Sylvia! impossible!

Kite. Here are the guineas, sir—I took the gold as part of my wife's portion. Nay, farther, sir, she sent word the child should be taken all imaginable care of, and that she intended to stand godmother. The same footman, as I was coming to you with this news, called after me, and told me, that his lady would speak with me—I went, and, upon hearing that you were come to town, she gave me half-a-guinea for the news, and ordered me to tell you, that Justice Balance, her father, who is just come out of the country, would be glad to see you.

Plume. There's a girl for you, Worthy!—Is there anything of woman in this? no, 'tis noble, generous, manly friendship. Shew me another woman, that would lose an inch of her prerogative that way, without tears, fits, and reproaches. The common jealousy of her sex, which is nothing but their avarice of pleasure, she despises, and can part with the lover, though she dies for the man—Come, Worthy—where's the best wine? for there I'll quarter.

Wor. Horton has a fresh pipe of choice Barcelona, which I would not let him pierce before, because I reserved it for your welcome to town.

Plume. Let's away, then—Mr Kite, go to the lady with my humble service, and tell her, I shall only refresh a little, and wait upon her.

Wor. Hold, Kite!—have you seen the other recruiting captain?

Kite. No, sir; I'd have you to know I don't keep such company.

Plume. Another! who is he?

Wor. My rival, in the first place, and the most unaccountable fellow—but I'll tell you more as we go. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An apartment.*

MELINDA *and* SYLVIA *meeting.*

Mel. Welcome to town, cousin Sylvia! [*Salute.*] I envied you your retreat in the country; for Shrewsbury, methinks, and all your heads of shires, are the most irregular places for living. Here, we have smoke, scandal, affectation, and pretension; in short, every thing to give the

spleen—and nothing to divert it—then the air is intolerable.

Syl. Oh, madam! I have heard the town commended for its air.

Mel. But you don't consider, Sylvia, how long I have lived in it; for I can assure you, that, to a lady, the least nice in her constitution, no air can be good above half a year. Change of air I take to be the most agreeable of any variety in life.

Syl. As you say, cousin Melinda, there are several sorts of airs.

Mel. Psha! I talk only of the air we breathe, or, more properly, of that we taste—Have not you, Sylvia, found a vast difference in the taste of airs?

Syl. Pray, cousin, are not the vapours a sort of air? Taste air! you might as well tell me I may feed upon air! but prithee, my dear Melinda, don't put on such an air to me. Your education and mine were just the same; and I remember the time when we never troubled our heads about air, but when the sharp air from the Welch mountains made our fingers ache in a cold morning at the boarding-school.

Mel. Our education, cousin, was the same, but our temperaments had nothing alike; you have the constitution of an horse.

Syl. So far as to be troubled neither with spleen, cholic, nor vapours. I need no salts for my stomach, no hartshorn for my head, nor wash for my complexion; I can gallop all the morning after the hunting-horn, and all the evening after a fiddle. In short, I can do every thing with my father, but drink and shoot flying; and I am sure I can do every thing my mother could, were I put to the trial.

Mel. You are in a fair way of being put to't; for I am told your captain is come to town.

Syl. Ay, Melinda, he is come; and I'll take care he shan't go—without a companion.

Mel. You are certainly mad, cousin.

Syl. 'And there's a pleasure in being mad,
'Which none but madmen know.'

Mel. Thou poor romantic Quixotte! hast thou the vanity to imagine, that a young, sprightly officer, that rambles o'er half the globe in half a year, can confine his thoughts to the little daughter of a country justice, in an obscure part of the world?

Syl. Psha! what care I for his thoughts? I should not like a man with confined thoughts; it shews a narrowness of soul. In short, Melinda, I think a petticoat a mighty simple thing, and I am heartily tired of my sex.

Mel. That is, you are tired of an appendix to our sex, that you can't so handsomely get rid of in petticoats as if you were in breeches. O' my conscience, Sylvia, hadst thou been a man, thou hadst been the greatest rake in Christendom!

Syl. I should have endeavoured to know the world, which a man can never do thoroughly, without half a hundred friendships, and as many amours. But, now I think on't, how stands your affair with Mr Worthy?

Mel. He's my aversion.

Syl. Vapours!

Mel. What do you say, madam?

Syl. I say that you should not use that honest fellow so inhumanly: he's a gentleman of parts and fortune; and, besides that, he's my Plume's friend; and, by all that's sacred, if you don't use him better, I shall expect satisfaction.

Mel. Satisfaction! you begin to fancy yourself in breeches in good earnest—But, to be plain with you, I like Worthy the worse for being so intimate with your captain; for I take him to be a loose, idle, unmannerly coxcomb.

Syl. Oh, madam! you never saw him, perhaps, since you were mistress of twenty thousand pounds: you only knew him, when you were capitulating with Worthy for a settlement, which, perhaps, might encourage him to be a little loose and unmannerly with you.

Mel. What do you mean, madam!

Syl. My meaning needs no interpretation, madam.

Mel. Better it had, madam; for methinks you are too plain.

Syl. If you mean the plainness of my person, I think your ladyship's as plain as me to the full.

Mel. Were I sure of that, I would be glad to take up with a rakehelly officer, as you do.

Syl. Again! look'e, madam; you are in your own house.

Mel. And if you had kept in yours, I should have excused you.

Syl. Don't be troubled, madam; I sha'nt desire to have my visit returned.

Mel. The sooner, therefore, you make an end of this, the better.

Syl. I am easily persuaded to follow my inclinations; and so, madam, your humble servant.
[*Exit.*

Mel. Saucy thing!

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. What's the matter, madam?

Mel. Did not you see the proud nothing, how she swell'd upon the arrival of her fellow?

Lucy. Her fellow has not been long enough arrived to occasion any great swelling, madam; I don't believe she has seen him yet.

Mel. Nor sha'nt, if I can help it—Let me see—I have it—bring me pen and ink—Hold, I'll go write in my closet.

Lucy. An answer to this letter, I hope, madam? [*Presents a letter.*

Mel. Who sent it?

Lucy. Your captain, madam.

Mel. He's a fool, and I'm tir'd of him: send it back, unopened.

Lucy. The messenger's gone, madam.

Mel. Then how should I send an answer? Call him back immediately, while I go write. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment.*

Enter JUSTICE BALANCE *and* PLUME.

Bal. Look'e, captain, give us but blood for our money, and you sha'nt want men.

Plume. Pray, Mr Balance, how does your fair daughter?

Bal. Ah, captain! what is my daughter to a marshal of France? we're upon a nobler subject; I want to have a particular description of the battle of Hockstet.

Plume. The battle, sir, was a very pretty battle as any one should desire to see; but we were all so intent upon victory, that we never minded the battle: all that I know of the matter is, our general commanded us to beat the French, and we did so; and, if he pleases but to say the word, we'll do it again. But pray, sir, how does Mrs Sylvia?

Bal. Still upon Sylvia! for shame, captain! you are engaged already, wedded to the war: Victory is your mistress, and 'tis below a soldier to think of any other.

Plume. As a mistress, I confess; but as a friend, Mr Balance——

Bal. Come, come, captain, never mince the matter; would not you debauch my daughter, if you could?

Plume. How, Sir! I hope she is not to be debauched.

Bal. Faith, but she is, sir; and any woman in England, of her age and complexion, by your youth and vigour. Look'e, captain, once I was young, and once an officer, as you are, and I can guess at your thoughts now, by what mine were then; and I remember very well, that I would have given one of my legs to have deluded the daughter of an old country gentleman like me, as I was then like you.

Plume. But, sir, was that country gentleman your friend and benefactor?

Bal. Not much of that.

Plume. There the comparison breaks: the favours, sir, that——

Bal. Pho, pho! I hate set speeches: if I have done you any service, captain, it was to please myself. I love thee, and if I could part with my girl, you should have her as soon as any young fellow I know; but I hope you have more honour than to quit the service, and she more prudence than to follow the camp; but she's at her own disposal; she has fifteen hundred pounds in her pocket, and so—Sylvia, Sylvia! [*Calls.*

Enter SYLVIA.

Syl. There are some letters, sir, come by the post from London: I left them upon the table in your closet.

Bal. And here is a gentleman from Germany. [*Presents* PLUME *to her.*] Captain, you'll excuse me; I'll go read my letters, and wait on you.

[*Exit.*

Syl. Sir, you are welcome to England.

Plume. You are indebted to me a welcome, madam, since the hopes of receiving it from this fair hand was the principal cause of my seeing England.

Syl. I have often heard, that soldiers were sincere; may I venture to believe public report?

Plume. You may, when 'tis backed by private insurance; for, I swear, madam, by the honour of my profession, that whatever dangers I went upon, it was with the hope of making myself more worthy of your esteem; and if ever I had thoughts of preserving my life, 'twas for the pleasure of dying at your feet.

Syl. Well, well, you shall die at my feet, or where you will; but you know, sir, there is a certain will and testament to be made beforehand.

Plume. My will, madam, is made already, and there it is; and if you please to open that parchment, which was drawn the evening before the battle of Hockstet, you will find whom I left my heir.

Syl. Mrs Sylvia Balance—[*Opens the will, and reads.*] Well, captain, this is a handsome and a substantial compliment; but I can assure you I am much better pleased with the bare knowledge of your intention, than I should have been in the possession of your legacy: but, methinks, sir, you should have left something to your little boy at the Castle.

Plume. That's home. [*Aside.*] My little boy! lack-a-day, madam! that alone may convince you 'twas none of mine: why, the girl, madam, is my serjeant's wife; and so the poor creature gave out, that I was the father, in hopes that my friends might support her in case of necessity.—That was all, madam.—My boy! no, no, no!

Enter a servant.

Ser. Madam, my master has received some ill news from London, and desires to speak with you immediately, and he begs the captain's pardon, that he can't wait on him as he promised.

Plume. Ill news! Heavens avert it! nothing could touch me nearer than to see that generous, worthy gentleman afflicted. I'll leave you to comfort him; and be assured, that if my life and fortune can be any way serviceable to the father of my Sylvia, he shall freely command both.

Syl. The necessity must be very pressing, that would engage me to endanger either.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*Another Apartment.*

Enter BALANCE *and* SYLVIA.

Syl. Whilst there is life there is hope, sir; perhaps my brother may recover.

Bal. We have but little reason to expect it; the doctor acquaints me here, that before this comes to my hands, he fears I shall have no son—Poor Owen!—but the decree is just; I was pleased with the death of my father, because he left me an estate, and now I am punished with the loss of an heir to inherit mine. I must now look upon you as the only hope of my family; and I expect that the augmentation of your fortune will give you fresh thoughts and new prospects.

Syl. My desire in being punctual in my obedience, requires that you would be plain in your commands, sir.

Bal. The death of your brother makes you sole heiress to my estate, which you know is about twelve hundred pounds a-year: this fortune gives you a fair claim to quality and a title: you must set a just value upon yourself, and, in plain terms, think no more of Captain Plume.

Syl. You have often commended the gentleman, sir.

Bal. And I do so still; he's a very pretty fellow: but, though I liked him well enough for a bare son-in-law, I don't approve of him for an heir to my estate and family: fifteen hundred pounds, indeed, I might trust in his hands, and it might do the young fellow a kindness; but—odd's my life! twelve hundred pounds a-year would ruin him, quite turn his brain—A captain of foot worth twelve hundred pounds a-year! 'tis a prodigy in nature!

Enter a servant.

Ser. Sir, here's one with a letter below for your worship; but he will deliver it into no hands but your own.

Bal. Come, shew me the messenger.

[*Exit with servant.*

Syl. Make the dispute between love and duty, and I am Prince Prettyman exactly.—If my brother dies, ah, poor brother! if he lives, ah, poor sister! It is bad both ways. I'll try it again—Follow my own inclinations, and break my father's heart, or obey his commands, and break my own? Worse and worse. Suppose I take it thus: A moderate fortune, a pretty fellow, and a pad; or, a fine estate, a coach-and-six, and an ass?—That will never do neither.

Enter BALANCE *and a servant.*

Bal. Put four horses to the coach. [*To a servant, who goes out.*] Ho, Sylvia!

Syl. Sir.

Bal. How old were you, when your mother died?

Syl. So young, that I don't remember I ever had one; and you have been so careful, so indulgent, to me since, that indeed I never wanted one.

Bal. Have I ever denied you any thing you asked of me?

Syl. Never, that I remember.

Bal. Then, Sylvia, I must beg, that, once in your life, you would grant me a favour.

Syl. Why should you question it, sir?

Bal. I don't: but I would rather counsel than command. I don't propose this with the authority of a parent, but as the advice of your friend, that you would take the coach this moment, and go into the country.

Syl. Does this advice, sir, proceed from the contents of the letter you received just now?

Bal. No matter; I will be with you in three or four days, and then give you my reasons—but, before you go, I expect you will make me one solemn promise.

Syl. Propose the thing, sir.

Bal. That you will never dispose of yourself to any man, without my consent.

Syl. I promise.

Bal. Very well; and to be even with you, I promise I never will dispose of you, without your own consent: and so, Sylvia, the coach is ready. Farewell—[*Leads her to the door, and returns.*]—Now, she's gone, I'll examine the contents of this letter a little nearer.

[*Reads.*

'SIR,

'My intimacy with Mr Worthy has drawn a 'secret from him, that he had from his friend 'captain Plume; and my friendship and relation 'to your family, oblige me to give you timely no-'tice of it. The captain has dishonourable de-'signs upon my cousin Sylvia. Evils of this na-'ture are more easily prevented, than amended; 'and that you would immediately send my cou-'sin into the country, is the advice of,

'Sir, your humble servant,

'MELINDA.'

Why, the devil's in the young fellows of this age! they are ten times worse than they were in my time: had he made my daughter a whore, and foreswore it, like a gentleman, I could almost have pardoned it; but to tell tales before-hand is monstrous. Hang it! I can fetch down a woodcock, or a snipe, and why not a hat and a cockade? I have a case of good pistols, and have a good mind to try.

Enter WORTHY.

Worthy! your servant.

Wor. I'm sorry, sir, to be the messenger of ill news.

Bal. I apprehend it, sir; you have heard that my son Owen is past recovery.

Wor. My letters say he's dead, sir.

Bal. He's happy, and I am satisfied: The

stroke of Heaven I can bear; but injuries from men, Mr Worthy, are not so easily supported.

Wor. I hope, sir, you're under no apprehensions of wrong from any body?

Bal. You know I ought to be.

Wor. You wrong my honour in believing I could know any thing to your prejudice, without resenting it as much as you should.

Bal. This letter, sir, which I tear in pieces to conceal the person that sent it, informs me that Plume has a design upon Sylvia, and that you are privy to it.

Wor. Nay, then, sir, I must do myself justice and endeavour to find out the author.—[*Takes up a bit.*]—Sir, I know the hand, and, if you refuse to discover the contents, Melinda shall tell me.

[*Going.*

Bal. Hold, sir! the contents I have told you already; only with this circumstance, that her intimacy with Mr Worthy had drawn the secret from him.

Wor. Her intimacy with me! Dear sir! Let me pick up the pieces of this letter, 'twill give me such a power over her pride, to have her own an intimacy under her hand——This was the luckiest accident!—[*Gathering up the letter.*]—The aspersion, sir, was nothing but malice, the effect of a little quarrel between her and Mrs Sylvia.

Bal. Are you sure of that, sir?

Wor. Her maid gave me the history of part of the battle, just now, as she overheard it: But I hope, sir, your daughter has suffered nothing upon the account?

Bal. No, no, poor girl; she's so afflicted with the news of her brother's death, that, to avoid company, she begged leave to go into the country.

Wor. And is she gone?

Bal. I could not refuse her, she was so pressing: the coach went from the door the minute before you came.

Wor. So pressing to be gone, sir! I find her fortune will give her the same airs with Melinda, and then Plume and I may laugh at one another.

Bal. Like enough; women are as subject to pride as men are; and why mayn't great women, as well as great men, forget their old acquaintance? But come, where's this young fellow?—I love him so well, it would break the heart of me to think him a rascal——I am glad my daughter's gone fairly off, though—[*Aside.*]—Where does the captain quarter?

Wor. At Horton's; I am to meet him there two hours hence, and we should be glad of your company.

Bal. Your pardon, dear Worthy! I must allow a day or two to the death of my son; afterwards, I'm yours over a bottle, or how you will.

Wor. Sir, I'm your humble servant.

[*Exeunt apart.*

SCENE III.—*The street.*

Enter KITE, *with* COSTAR PEARMAIN *in one hand, and* THOMAS APPLETREE *in the other, drunk.*

KITE *sings.*

Our 'prentice Tom may now refuse
To wipe his scoundrel master's shoes,
For now he's free to sing and play
Over the hills and far away.——Over, &c.

[The mob sing the chorus.

We shall lead more happy lives,
By getting rid of brats and wives,
That scold and brawl both night and day,
Over the hills and far away.——Over, &c.

Kite. Hey, boys! thus we soldiers live! drink, sing, dance, play—we live, us one should say—we live—'tis impossible to tell how we live—we are all princes—why—why, you are a king—you are an emperor, and I'm a prince—now—an't we?

Tho. No, serjeant; I'll be no emperor.

Kite. No!

Tho. I'll be a justice of peace.

Kite. A justice of peace, man!

Tho. Aye, wauns, will I; for, since this pressing act, they are greater than any emperor under the sun.

Kite. Done; you are a justice of peace, and you are a king; and I am a duke, and a rum duke, an't I?

Cos. Aye, but I'll be no king.

Kite. What, then?

Cos. I'll be a queen.

Kite. A queen!

Cos. Aye, of England, that's greater than any king of them all.

Kite. Bravely said, faith! Huzza for the queen!—[*Huzza.*]—But, hark'e, you, Mr Justice, and you, Mr Queen, did you ever see the king's picture?

Both. No, no, no!

Kite. I wonder at that; I have two of them set in gold, and as like his majesty, God bless the mark! see here, they are set in gold.

[*Takes two broad pieces out of his pocket; presents one to each.*

Tho. The wonderful works of nature!

[*Looking at it.*

Cos. What's this written about? Here's a posy, I believe. Ca-ro-lus? What's that, serjeant?

Kite. O! Carolus! Why, Carolus is Latin for king George; that's all.

Cos. 'Tis a fine thing to be a scollard!—Serjeant, will you part with this? I'll buy it of you, if it come within the compass of a crown.

Kite. A crown! never talk of buying; 'tis the same thing among friends, you know; I'll present them to ye both: you shall give me as good a thing. Put them up, and remember your old friend when I am over the hills and far away.

[*They sing, and put up the money.*

Enter PLUME, *singing.*

Over the hills and over the main,
To Flanders, Portugal, or Spain;
The king commands, and we'll obey,
Over the hills and far away.

Come on, my men of mirth; away with it; I'll make one among ye. Who are these hearty lads?

Kite. Off with your hats; 'ounds! off with your hats; this is the captain, the captain!

Tho. We have seen captains afore now, mun.

Cos. Aye, and lieutenant-captains, too. 'Sflesh! I'll keep on my nab.

Tho. And I'se scarcely d'off mine for any captain in England. My vether's a freeholder.

Plume. Who are those jolly lads, serjeant?

Kite. A couple of honest, brave fellows, that are willing to serve the king: I have entertained them, just now, as volunteers under your honour's command.

Plume. And good entertainment they shall have: volunteers are the men I want; those are the men fit to make soldiers, captains, generals.

Cos. Wounds, Tummas, what's this? Are you listed?

Tho. Flesh! not I: are you, Costar?

Cos. Wounds! not I.

Kite. What! Not listed? Ha, ha, ha! a very good jest, i'faith!

Cos. Come, Tummas, we'll go home.

Tho. Aye, aye, come.

Kite. Home! for shame, gentlemen; behave yourselves better before your captain. Dear Tummas, honest Costar!

Tho. No, no, we'll be gone.

Kite. Nay, then, I command you to stay; I place you both centinels in this place for two hours, to watch the motion of St Mary's clock, you—and you the motion of St Chad's; and he that dares stir from his post, till he be relieved, shall have my sword in his guts the next minute.

Plume. What's the matter, serjeant? I'm afraid you are too rough with these gentlemen.

Kite. I'm too mild, sir; they disobey command, sir; and one of them should be shot for an example to the other.

Cos. Shot! Tummas?

Plume. Come, gentlemen, what's the matter?

Tho. We don't know; the noble serjeant is pleased to be in a passion, sir—but——

Kite. They disobey command; they deny their being listed.

Tho. Nay, serjeant, we don't downright deny it, neither; that we dare not do, for fear of being shot; but we humbly conceive, in a civil way, and begging your worship's pardon, that we may go home.

Plume. That's easily known. Have either of you received any of the king's money?

Cos. Not a brass farthing, sir.

Kite. They have each of them received one-and-twenty shillings, and 'tis now in their pockets.

Cos. Wounds! if I have a penny in my pocket but a bent sixpence, I'll be content to be listed, and shot into the bargain.

Tho. And I: look ye, here, sir.

Cos. Nothing but the king's picture that the serjeant gave me, just now.

Kite. See there, a guinea, one-and-twenty shillings; t'other has the fellow on't.

Plume. The case is plain, gentlemen; the goods are found upon you: those pieces of gold are worth one-and-twenty shillings, each.

Cos. So it seems that Carolus is one-and-twenty shillings in Latin.

Tho. 'Tis the same thing in Greek; for we are listed.

Cos. Flesh! But we an't, Tummas; I desire to be carried before the mayor, captain.

[*Captain and serjeant whisper the while.*

Plume. 'Twill never do, Kite—your damned tricks will ruin me at last—I won't lose the fellows, though, if I can help it—Well, gentlemen, there must be some trick in this; my serjeant offers to take his oath, that you are fairly listed.

Tho. Why, captain, we know that you soldiers have more liberty of conscience than other folks; but, for me, or neighbour Costar here, to take such an oath, 'twould be downright perjuration.

Plume. Look'e, rascal, you villain! If I find, that you have imposed upon these two honest fellows, I'll trample you to death, you dog—— Come, how was't?

Tho. Nay, then, we'll speak. Your serjeant, as you say, is a rogue, an't like your worship, begging your worship's pardon—and—

Cost. Nay, Tummas, let me speak; you know I can read. And so, sir, he gave us those two pieces of money for pictures of the king, by way of a present.

Plume. How! by way of a present? the son of a whore! I'll teach him to abuse honest fellows like you! scoundrel! rogue! villain!

[*Beats off the serjeant, and follows.*

Both. O brave, noble captain! huzza! A brave captain, faith!

Cos. Now, Tummas, Carolus is Latin for a beating. This is the bravest captain I ever saw—Wounds! I have a month's mind to go with him.

Enter PLUME.

Plume. A dog, to abuse two such honest fellows as you—Look'e, gentlemen, I love a pretty

fellow; I come among you as an officer, to list soldiers, not as a kidnapper, to steal slaves.

Cost. Mind that, Tummas.

Plume. I desire no man to go with me but as I went myself; I went a volunteer, as you, or you may do; for a little time carried a musket, and now I command a company.

Tho. Mind that, Costar. A sweet gentleman!

Plume. 'Tis true, gentlemen, I might take an advantage of you; the king's money was in your pockets; my serjeant was ready to take his oath you were listed; but I scorn to do a base thing; you are both of you at your liberty.

Cost. Thank you, noble captain!——'icod! I can't find in my heart to leave him, he talks so finely.

Tho. Aye, Costar, would he always hold in this mind!

Plume. Come, my lads, one thing more I'll tell you: you're both young tight fellows, and the army is the place to make you men for ever: every man has his lot, and you have yours: what think you of a purse of French gold out of a monsieur's pocket, after you have dashed out his brains with the butt-end of your fire-lock? eh?

Cost. Wauns! I'll have it. Captain—give me a shilling; I'll follow you to the end of the world.

Tho. Nay, dear Costar! do'na: be advised.

Plume. Here, my hero; here are two guineas for thee, as earnest of what I'll do farther for thee.

Tho. Do'na take it; do'na, dear Costar!

[*Cries, and pulls back his arm.*

Cost. I wull—I wull—Waunds! my mind gives me that I shall be a captain myself——— I take your money, sir, and now I am a gentleman.

Plume. Give me thy hand, and now you and I will travel the world o'er, and command it wherever we tread—Bring your friend with you, if you can. [*Aside.*

Cost. Well, Tummas, must we part?

Tho No, Costar, I cannot leave thee—Come, captain, I'll e'en go along, too; and if you have two honester, simpler lads in your company, than we two have been, I'll say no more.

Plume. Here, my lad. [*Gives him money.*]—— Now, your name?

Tho. Tummas Appletree.

Plume. And yours?

Cost. Costar Pearmain.

Plume. Well said, Costar! Born where?

Tho. Both in Herefordshire.

Plume. Very well. Courage, my lads——— Now we'll—[*Sings.*]

Over the hills and far away.
Courage, boys, it is one to ten
But we return all gentlemen:
While conquering colours we display,
Over the hills and far away.

Kite, take care of them. [*Exit.*

Enter KITE.

Kite. An't you a couple of pretty fellows, now! Here you have complained to the captain, I am to be turned out, and one of you will be serjeant. Which of you is to have my halberd?

Both Rec. I.

Kite. So you shall—in your guts—March, you sons of whores!

[*Beats them off.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Market-place.*

Enter PLUME *and* WORTHY.

Wor. I CANNOT forbear admiring the equality of our two fortunes: we love two ladies; they meet us half way, and just as we were upon the point of leaping into their arms, fortune drops in their laps, pride possesses their hearts, a maggot fills their heads, madness takes them by the tails; they snort, kick up their heels, and away they run.

Plume. And leave us here to mourn upon the shore—a couple of poor melancholy monsters—What shall we do?

Wor. I have a trick for mine; the letter, you know, and the fortune-teller.

Plume. And I have a trick for mine.

Wor. What is't?

Plume. I'll never think of her again.

Wor. No!

Plume. No; I think myself above administering to the pride of any woman, were she worth twelve thousand a-year, and I han't the vanity to believe I shall gain a lady worth twelve hundred. The generous, good-natured Sylvia, in her smock, I admire; but the haughty and scornful Sylvia, with her fortune, I despise—What! sneak out of town, and not so much as a word, a line, a compliment! 'Sdeath! how far off does she live? I'll go and break her windows.

Wor. Ha, ha, ha! aye, and the window-bars, too, to come at her. Come, come, friend; no more of your rough military airs.

Enter KITE.

Kite. Captain, captain! Sir, look yonder, she's a-coming this way. 'Tis the prettiest, cleanest, little tit!

Plume. Now, Worthy, to shew you how much I'm in love—here she comes. But, Kite, what is that great country-fellow with her?

Kite. I can't tell, sir.

Enter ROSE, *followed by her brother* BULLOCK, *with chickens on her arm, in a basket.*

Rose. Buy chickens, young and tender chickens, young and tender chickens.

Plume. Here, you chickens!

Rose. Who calls?

Plume. Come hither, pretty maid!

Rose. Will you please to buy, sir?

Wor. Yes, child, we'll both buy.

Plume. Nay, Worthy, that's not fair; market for yourself——Come, child, I'll buy all you have.

Rose. Then all I have is at your service.

[*Curtesies.*

Wor. Then must I shift for myself, I find.

[*Exit* WOR.

Plume. Let me see; young and tender you say? [*Chucks her under the chin.*

Rose. As ever you tasted in your life, sir.

Plume. Come, I must examine your basket to the bottom, my dear!

Rose. Nay, for that matter, put in your hand; feel, sir; I warrant my ware is as good as any in the market.

Plume. And I'll buy it all, child, were it ten times more.

Rose. I can furnish you.

Plume. Come, then, we won't quarrel about the price; they're fine birds—Pray, what's your name, pretty creature?

Rose. Rose, sir. My father is a farmer within three short miles o' the town: we keep this market; I sell chickens, eggs, and butter, and my brother Bullock, there, sells corn.

Bul. Come, sister, haste; we shall be late home. [*Whistles about the stage.*

Plume. Kite! [*Tips him the wink, he returns it.*] Pretty Mrs Rose—you have; let me see; how many?

Rose. A dozen, sir, and they are richly worth a crown.

Bul. Come, Ruose; I sold fifty strake of barley to-day in half this time; but you will higgle and higgle for a penny more than the commodity is worth.

Rose. What's that to you, oaf? I can make as much out of a groat as you can out of fourpence, I'm sure—The gentleman bids fair, and when I meet with a chapman I know how to make the best of him—And so, sir, I say, for a crown-piece, the bargain's yours.

Plume. Here's a guinea, my dear!

Rose. I can't change your money, sir.

Plume. Indeed, indeed, but you can——my lodging is hard by, chicken! and we'll make change there. [*Goes off, she follows him.*

Kite. So, sir, as I was telling you, I have seen one of these hussars eat up a ravelin for his breakfast, and afterwards pick his teeth with a palisado.

Bul. Ay, you soldiers see very strange things; but pray, sir, what is a rabelin?

Kite. Why, 'tis like a modern minced pie, but the crust is confounded hard, and the plumbs are somewhat hard of digestion.

Bul. Then your palisado—pray what may he be? Come, Ruose, pray ha' done.

Kite. Your palisado is a pretty sort of bodkin, about the thickness of my leg.

Bul. That's a fib, I believe. [*Aside.*] Eh! where's Ruose? Ruose, Ruose! S'flesh! where's Ruose gone?

Kite. She's gone with the captain.

Bul. The captain! wouns! there's no pressing of women, sure.

Kite. But there is, sure.

Bul. If the captain shoul'd press Ruose, I should be ruined———Which way went she? Oh! the devil take your rabelins and palisadoes!

[*Exit* BUL.

Kite. You shall be better acquainted with them, honest Bullock, or I shall miss of my aim.

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. Why thou art the most useful fellow in nature to your captain; admirable in your way, I find.

Kite. Yes, sir, I understand my business, I will say it.

Wor. How came you so qualified?

Kite. You must know, sir, I was born a gipsy, and bred among that crew, till I was ten years old; there, I learned canting and lying: I was bought from my mother Cleopatra by a certain nobleman for three pistoles; there, I learned impudence and pimping: I was turned off for wearing my lord's linen, and drinking my lady's ratafia, and turned bailiff's follower; there, I learned bullying and swearing: I at last got into the army; and there, I learned whoring and drinking—so that if your worship pleases to cast up the whole sum, *viz.* canting, lying, impudence, pimping, bullying, swearing, whoring, drinking, and a halberd, you will find the sum total amount to a recruiting serjeant.

Wor. And pray, what induced you to turn soldier?

Kite. Hunger and ambition. The fears of starving, and hopes of a truncheon, led me along to a gentleman with a fair tongue, and fair periwig, who loaded me with promises; but, 'gad, it was the lightest load that ever I felt in my life———He promised to advance me, and indeed he did so—to a garret in the Savoy. I asked him why he put me in prison? he called me lying dog, and said I was in garrison; and indeed 'tis a garrison that may hold out till doomsday before I should desire to take it again. But here comes Justice Balance.

Enter BALANCE *and* BULLOCK.

Bal. Here you, serjeant, where's your captain? here's a poor foolish fellow comes clamouring to me with a complaint, that your captain has pressed his sister. Do you know any thing of this matter, Worthy?

Wor. Ha, ha, ha! I know his sister is gone with Plume to his lodging to sell him some chickens.

Bal. Is that all? the fellow's a fool.

Bul. I know that, an't like your worship; but if your worship pleases to grant me a warrant to bring her before your worship for fear of the worst.

Bal. Thou'rt mad, fellow; thy sister's safe enough.

Kite. I hope so, too. [*Aside.*

Wor. Hast thou no more sense, fellow, than to believe, that the captain can list women?

Bul. I know not whether they list them, or what they do with them; but I'm sure they carry as many women as men with them out of the country.

Bal. But how came you not to go along with your sister?

Bul. Lord, sir, I thought no more of her going, than I do of the day I shall die: but this gentleman here, not suspecting any hurt neither, I believe—you thought no harm, friend, did you?

Kite. Lack-a-day, sir, not I——only that I believe I shall marry her to-morrow.

Bal. I begin to smell powder. Well, friend, but what did that gentleman with you?

Bul. Why, sir, he entertained me with a fine story of a great sea-fight between the Hungarians, I think it was, and the wild Irish.

Kite. And so, sir, while we were in the heat of battle——the captain carried off the baggage.

Bal. Serjeant, go along with this fellow to your captain, give him my humble service, and desire him to discharge the wench, though he has listed her.

Bul. Ay, and if she ben't free for that, he shall have another man in her place.

Kite. Come, honest friend. You shall go to my quarters, instead of the captain's. [*Aside.*

[*Exeunt* KITE *and* BULLOCK.

Bal. We must get this mad captain his complement of men, and send him packing, else he'll over-run the country.

Wor. You see, sir, how little he values your daughter's disdain.

Bal. I like him the better: I was just such another fellow at his age:—But how goes your affair with Melinda?

Wor. Very slowly. My mistress has got a captain, too; but such a captain!—as I live, yonder he comes!

Bal. Who, that bluff fellow in the sash? I don't know him.

Wor. But I engage he knows you, and every body, at first sight; his impudence were a prodigy, were not his ignorance proportionable. He has the most universal acquaintance of any man living, for he won't be alone, and nobody will keep him company twice: then he's a Cæsar among the women—*veni, vidi, vici*, that's all. If he has but talked with the maid, he swears he has lain with the mistress: but the most surprising part of his character is his memory, which is the most prodigious, and the most trifling, in the world.

Bal. I have known another acquire so much by travel, as to tell you the names of most places in Europe, with their distances of miles, leagues, or hours, as punctually as a post-boy; but, for any thing else, as ignorant as the horse that carries the mail.

Wor. This is your man, sir; add but the traveller's privilege of lying, and even that he abuses: this is the picture; behold the life.

Enter BRAZEN.

Braz. Mr Worthy, I'm your servant, and so forth—Hark'e, my dear!

Wor. Whispering, sir, before company, is not manners; and, when nobody's by, 'tis foolish.

Braz. Company! *mort de ma vie!* I beg the gentleman's pardon—who is he?

Wor. Ask him.

Braz. So I will. My dear! I am your servant, and so forth—Your name, my dear!

Bal. Very laconic, sir.

Braz. Laconic! a very good name, truly! I have known several of the Laconics abroad—— Poor Jack Laconic! he was killed at the battle of Landen. I remember, that he had a blue ribband in his hat that very day, and after he fell, we found a piece of neat's tongue in his pocket.

Bal. Pray, sir, did the French attack us, or we them, at Landen?

Braz. The French attack us! Oons, sir, are you a jacobite?

Bal. Why that question?

Braz. Because none but a jacobite could think that the French durst attack us—No, sir, we attacked them on the—I have reason to remember the time, for I had two-and-twenty horses killed under me that day.

Wor. Then, sir, you must have rid mighty hard.

Bal. Or, perhaps, sir, like my countrymen, you rid upon half a dozen horses at once.

Braz. What do ye mean, gentlemen? I tell you they were killed, all torn to pieces by cannon-shot, except six I staked to death upon the enemy's *chevaux de frise*.

Bal. Noble captain! may I crave your name?

Braz. Brazen, at your service.

Bal. Oh, Brazen! a very good name. I have known several of the Brazens abroad.

Wor. Do you know one captain Plume, sir?

Braz. Is he any thing related to Frank Plume in Northamptonshire?—Honest Frank! many, many a dry bottle have we cracked hand to fist. You must have known his brother Charles, that was concerned in the India Company; he married the daughter of Old Tonguepad, the master in Chancery, a very pretty woman, only she squinted a little; she died in child-bed of her first child, but the child survived: 'twas a daughter; but whether it was called Margaret or Margery, upon my soul I can't remember. [*Looking on his watch.*] But, gentlemen, I must meet a lady, a twenty thousand pounder, presently, upon the walk by the water—Worthy, your servant; Laconic, yours. [*Exit* BRAZ.

Bal. If you can have so mean an opinion of Melinda as to be jealous of this fellow, I think she ought to give you cause to be so.

Wor. I don't think she encourages him so much for gaining herself a lover, as to set up a rival. Were there any credit to be given to his words, I should believe Melinda had made him this assignation. I must go see, sir; you'll pardon me. [*Exit* WOR.

Bal. Ay, ay, sir; you're a man of business—But what have we got here?

Enter ROSE, *singing.*

Rose. And I shall be a lady, a captain's lady, and ride single upon a white horse with a star, upon a velvet side-saddle; and I shall go to London, and see the tombs, and the lions, and the king and queen. Sir, an please your worship, I have often seen your worship ride through our grounds a hunting, begging your worship's pardon. Pray, what may this lace be worth a-yard? [*Shewing some lace.*

Bal. Right Mechlin, by this light! Where did you get this lace, child?

Rose. No matter for that, sir; I came honestly by it.

Bal. I question it much. [*Aside.*

Rose. And see here, sir, a fine Turkey-shell snuff-box, and fine mangere: see here. [*Takes snuff affectedly.*] The captain learnt me how to take it with an air.

Bal. Oh ho! the captain! now the murder's out. And so the captain taught you to take it with an air?

Rose. Yes, and give it with an air, too. Will your worship please to taste my snuff? [*Offers the box affectedly.*

Bal. You are a very apt scholar, pretty maid! And pray, what did you give the captain, for these fine things?

Rose. He's to have my brother for a soldier, and two or three sweethearts I have in the country; they shall all go with the captain. Oh, he's the finest man, and the humblest withal. Would you believe it, sir? he carried me up with him to his own chamber, with as much fam-mam-mil-yararality as if I had been the best lady in the land.

Bal. Oh! he's a mighty familiar gentleman as can be.

Enter PLUME, *singing.*

Plume. *But it is not so*
With those that go
Through frost and snow——
Most apropos
My maid with the milking-pail.
[*Takes hold of* ROSE.
How, the justice! then I'm arraigned, condemned, and executed.

Bal. Oh, my noble captain!

Rose. And my noble captain, too, sir.

Plume. 'Sdeath! child, are you mad?—Mr Balance, I am so full of business about my recruits, that I han't a moment's time to—I have just now three or four people to——

Bal. Nay, captain, I must speak to you——

Rose. And so must I too, captain.

Plume. Any other time, sir—I cannot for my life, sir——

Bal. Pray, sir——

Plume. Twenty thousand things—I would—but—now, sir, pray—Devil take me—I cannot—I must— [*Breaks away.*

Bal. Nay, I'll follow you. [*Exit.* BAL.

Rose. And I, too. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The walk by the Severn side.*

Enter MELINDA, *and her maid* LUCY.

Mel. And, pray, was it a ring, or buckle, or pendents, or knots? or in what shape was the almighty gold transformed, that has bribed you so much in his favour?

Lucy. Indeed, madam, the last bribe I had from the captain was only a small piece of Flanders' lace for a cap.

Mel. Ay, Flanders' lace is as constant a present from officers to their women, as something else is from their women to them. They every year bring over a cargo of lace to cheat the king of his duty and his subjects of their honesty.

Lucy. They only barter one sort of prohibited goods for another, madam.

Mel. Has any of them been bartering with you, Mrs Pert, that you talk so like a trader?

Lucy. One would imagine, madam, by your concern for Worthy's absence, that you should use him better when he's with you.

Mel. Who told you, pray, that I was concerned for his absence? I'm only vexed that I have had nothing said to me these two days: as one may love the treason and hate the traitor. Oh! here comes another captain, and a rogue that has the confidence to make love to me; but, indeed, I don't wonder at that, when he has the assurance to fancy himself a fine gentleman.

Lucy. If he should speak o' the assignation, I should be ruined. [*Aside.*

Enter BRAZEN.

Braz. True to the touch, faith! [*Aside.*] Madam, I am your humble servant, and all that, madam. A fine river this same Severn—Do you love fishing, madam?

Mel. 'Tis a pretty melancholy amusement for lovers.

Braz. I'll go buy hooks and lines presently; for you must know, madam, that I have served in Flanders against the French, in Hungary against the Turks, and in Tangier against the Moors, and I was never so much in love before; and, split me, madam, in all the campaigns I ever made I have not seen so fine a woman as your ladyship.

Mel. And from all the men I ever saw, I never had so fine a compliment: but you soldiers are the best bred men; that we must allow.

Braz. Some of us, madam; but there are brutes among us, too; very sad brutes; for my own part, I have always had the good luck to prove agreeable. I have had very considerable offers, madam—I might have married a German princess worth fifty thousand crowns a-year; but her stove disgusted me. The daughter of a Turkish bashaw fell in love with me, too, when I was a prisoner among the infidels; she offered to rob her father of his treasure, and make her escape with me; but I don't know how, my time was not come: hanging and marriage, you know, go by destiny: Fate has reserved me for a Shropshire lady worth twenty thousand pounds. Do you know any such person, madam?

Mel. Extravagant coxcomb! [*Aside.*] To be sure, a great many ladies of that fortune would be proud of the name of Mrs Brazen.

Braz. Nay, for that matter, madam, there are women of very good quality of the name of Brazen.

Enter WORTHY.

Mel. Oh, are you there, gentleman!—Come, captain, we'll walk this way. Give me your hand.

Braz. My hand, heart's blood, and guts, are at your service. Mr Worthy, your servant, my dear! [*Exit, leading* MELINDA.

Wor. Death and fire! this is not to be borne!

Enter PLUME.

Plume. No more it is, faith!

Wor. What?

Plume. The March beer at the Raven. I have been doubly serving the king; raising men, and raising the excise. Recruiting and elections are rare friends to the excise.

Wor. You an't drunk?

Plume. No, no; whimsical only. I could be mighty foolish, and fancy myself mighty witty. Reason still keeps its throne, but it nods a little that's all.

Wor. Then you're just fit for a frolic.

Plume. As fit as close pinners for a punk in the pit.

Wor. There's your play, then; recover me that vessel from that Tangerine.

Plume. She's well rigged; but how is she manned?

Wor. By captain Brazen, that I told you of to-day; she is called the Melinda, a first rate, I can assure you; she sheered off with him just now, on purpose to affront me; but, according to your advice, I would take no notice, because I would seem to be above a concern for her behaviour; but have a care of a quarrel.

Plume. No, no: I never quarrel with any thing in my cups, but an oysterwench or a cook-maid; and if they ben't civil, I knock them down. But, hark'e, my friend, I'll make love, and I must make love—I tell you what, I'll make love like a platoon.

Wor. Platoon! how's that?

Plume. I'll kneel, stoop, and stand, faith: most ladies are gained by platooning.

Wor. Here they come; I must leave you. [*Exit* WOR.

Plume. So! now must I look sober and demure.

Enter BRAZEN *and* MELINDA.

Who's that, madam?

Mel. A brother officer of your's, I suppose, sir.

Braz. Ay—my dear! [*To* PLUME.

Plume. My dear! [*Run, and embrace.*

Braz. My dear boy! how is't? Your name, my dear! If I be not mistaken, I have seen your face.

Plume. I never saw your's in my life, my dear ——but there's a face well known as the sun's, that shines on all, and is by all adored.

Braz. Have you any pretensions, sir?

Plume. Pretensions!

Braz. That is, sir, have you ever served abroad?

Plume. I have served at home, sir, for ages served this cruel fair, and that will serve the turn, sir.

Mel. So, between the fool and the rake, I shall bring a fine spot of work upon my hands! I see Worthy yonder; I could be content to be friends with him, would he come this way.

Braz. Will you fight for the lady, sir?

Plume. No, sir; but I'll have her notwithstanding.

Thou peerless princess of Salopian plains,
Envy'd by nymphs, and worshipped by the swains—

Braz. Oons! sir, not fight for her!

Plume. Prithee be quiet—I shall be out—

Behold, how humbly does the Severn glide,
To greet thee, princess of the Severn side!

Braz. Don't mind him, madam—if he were not so well dressed, I should take him for a poet; but I'll shew you the difference presently. Come, madam, we'll place you between us, and now, the longest sword carries her. [*Draws.*

Mel. [*Shrieking.*]

Enter WORTHY.

Oh, Mr Worthy! save me from these madmen. [*Exit with.* WOR.

Plume. Ha, ha, ha! why don't you follow, sir, and fight the bold ravisher?

Braz. No, sir, you are the man.

Plume. I don't like the wages; I won't be your man.

Braz. Then, you're not worth my sword.

Plume. No! pray, what did it cost?

Braz. It cost me twenty pistoles in France, and my enemies thousands of lives in Flanders.

Plume. Then they had a dear bargain.

Enter SYLVIA, *in man's apparel.*

Syl. Save ye, save ye! gentlemen.

Braz. My dear! I'm yours.

Plume. Do you know the gentleman?

Braz. No, but I will presently—Your name, my dear?

Syl. Wilful, Jack Wilful, at your service.

Braz. What, the Kentish Wilfuls, or those of Staffordshire?

Syl. Both, sir, both; I'm related to all the Wilfuls in Europe, and I'm head of the family at present.

Plume. Do you live in this country, sir?

Syl. Yes, sir, I live where I stand; I have neither home, house, or habitation, beyond this spot of ground.

Braz. What are you, sir?

Syl. A rake.

Plume. In the army, I presume?

Syl. No; but I intend to list immediately. Look'e, gentleman, he that bids the fairest, has me.

Braz. Sir, I'll prefer you; I'll make you a corporal this minute.

Plume. Corporal! I'll make you my companion; you shall eat with me.

Braz. You shall drink with me.

Plume. You shall lie with me, you young rogue.

Braz. You shall receive your pay, and do no duty.

Syl. Then, you must make me a field-officer.

Plume. Pho, pho, pho! I'll do more than all this; I'll make you a corporal, and give you a brevet for serjeant.

Braz. Can you read and write, sir?

Syl. Yes.

Braz. Then your business is done—I'll make you chaplain to the regiment.

Syl. Your promises are so equal, that I'm at a loss to choose. There is one Plume that I hear much commended in town; pray, which of you is captain Plume?

Plume. I am captain Plume.

Braz. No, no; I am captain Plume.

Syl. Heyday!

Plume. Captain Plume! I'm your servant, my dear!

Braz. Captain Brazen! I'm your's—The fellow dares not fight. [*Aside.*

Enter KITE.

Kite. Sir, if you please——

[*Goes to whisper* PLUME.

Plume. No, no, there's your captain. Captain Plume, your serjeant has got so drunk, he mistakes me for you.

Braz. He's an incorrigible sot. Here, my Hector of Holborn, here's forty shillings for you.

Plume. I forbid the bans. Look'e, friend, you shall list with captain Brazen.

Syl. I will see captain Brazen hanged first! I will list with captain Plume: I am a free-born Englishman, and will be a slave my own way. Look'e, sir, will you stand by me? [*To* BRAZ.

Braz. I warrant you, my lad.

Syl. Then, I will tell you, captain Brazen, [*To* PLUME.] that you are an ignorant, pretending, impudent coxcomb.

Braz. Ay, ay, a sad dog.

Syl. A very sad dog. Give me the money, noble captain Plume.

Plume. Then you won't list with captain Brazen?

Syl. I won't.

Braz. Never mind him, child; I'll end the dispute presently. Hark'e, my dear!

[*Takes* PLUME *to one side of the stage, and entertains him in dumb shew.*]

Kite. Sir, he in the plain coat is captain Plume; I am his serjeant, and will take my oath on't.

Syl. What! you are serjeant Kite?

Kite. At your service.

Syl. Then I would not take your oath for a farthing.

Kite. A very understanding youth of his age! Pray, sir, let me look you full in the face.

Syl. Well, sir, what have you to say to my face?

Kite. The very image of my brother; two bullets of the same caliber were never so like: it must be Charles; Charles———

Syl. What do you mean by Charles?

Kite. The voice, too; only a little variation in *F faut* flat. My dear brother! for I must call you so, if you should have the fortune to enter

into the most noble society of the sword, I bespeak you for a comrade.

Syl. No, sir, I'll be the captain's comrade, if any-body's.

Kite. Ambition! there again! 'tis a noble passion for a soldier; by that I gained this glorious halberd. Ambition! I see a commission in his face already. Pray, noble captain, give me leave to salute you. [*Offers to kiss her.*

Syl. What! men kiss one another?

Kite. We officers do, 'tis our way; we live together like man and wife, always either kissing or fighting: but I see a storm coming.

Syl. Now, serjeant, I shall see who is your captain by your knocking down the other.

Kite. My captain scorns assistance, sir.

Braz. How dare you contend for any thing, and not dare to draw your sword? But you are a young fellow, and have not been much abroad; I excuse that: but prithee, resign the man, prithee do: you are a very honest fellow.

Plume. You lie; and you are a son of a whore. [*Draws, and makes up to* BRAZEN.

Braz. Hold, hold; did not you refuse to fight for the lady?

Plume. I always do; but, for a man, I'll fight knee-deep; so you lie again.

[PLUME *and* BRAZEN *fight a traverse or two about the stage,* SYLVIA *draws, and is held by* KITE, *who sounds to arms with his mouth, takes* SYLVIA *in his arms, and carries her off the stage.*

Braz. Hold! where's the man?

Plume. Gone.

Braz. Then, what do we fight for? [*Puts up.*] Now, let's embrace, my dear!

Plume. With all my heart, my dear! [*Putting up.*] I suppose Kite has listed him by this time. [*Embraces.*

Braz. You are a brave fellow! I always fight with a man before I make him my friend; and if once I find he will fight, I never quarrel with him afterwards. And, now, I'll tell you a secret, my dear friend! that lady we frightened out of the walk just now, I found in bed this morning, so beautiful, so inviting;—I presently locked the door—but I'm a man of honour—but I believe I shall marry her nevertheless—her twenty thousand pounds, you know, will be a pretty conveniency. I had an assignation with her here; but your coming spoiled my sport. Curse you, my dear! but don't do so again——

Plume. No, no, my dear! men are my business at present. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The walk continues.*

Enter ROSE *and* BULLOCK *meeting.*

Rose. WHERE have you been, you great booby? you are always out of the way in the time of preferment.

Bul. Preferment! who should prefer me?

Rose. I would prefer you! who should prefer a man but a woman? Come, throw away that great club, hold up your head, cock your hat, and look big.

Bul. Ah, Ruose, Ruose! I fear somebody will look big sooner than folk think of. Here has been Cartwheel, your sweetheart; what will become of him?

Rose. Look'e, I'm a great woman, and will provide for my relations: I told the captain how finely he played upon the tabor and pipe, so he set him down for drum-major.

Bul. Nay, sister, why did not you keep that place for me? you know I have always loved to be a drumming, if it were but on a table or on a quart pot.

Enter SYLVIA.

Syl. Had I but a commission in my pocket, I fancy my breeches would become me as well as any ranting fellow of them all; for I take a bold step, a rakish toss, a smart cock, and an impudent air, to be the principal ingredients in the composition of a captain. What's here? Rose, my nurse's daughter! I'll go and practise. Come, child, kiss me at once. [*Kisses* ROSE.] And her brother, too! Well, honest Dungfork, do you know the difference between a horse and a cart, and a cart-horse? eh?

Bul. I presume, that your worship is a captain, by your clothes and your courage.

Syl. Suppose I were, would you be contented to list, friend?

Rose. No, no; though your worship be a handsome man, there be others as fine as you. My brother is engaged to captain Plume.

Syl. Plume! do you know captain Plume?

Rose. Yes, I do, and he knows me. He took the ribbands out of his shirt sleeves, and put them into my shoes: see there—I can assure you, that I can do any thing with the captain.

Bul. That is, in a modest way, sir. Have a care what you say, Ruose; don't shame your parentage.

Rose. Nay, for that matter, I am not so simple as to say, that I can do any thing with the captain but what I may do with any body else.

Syl. So!——And pray, what do you expect from this captain, child?

Rose. I expect, sir!—I expect—but he ordered me to tell nobody—but suppose he should propose to marry me?

Syl. You should have a care, my dear! men will promise any thing beforehand.

Rose. I know that; but he promised to marry me afterwards.

Bul. Marry! Rose, what have you said?

Syl. Afterwards! After what?

Rose. After I had sold my chickens—I hope there's no harm in that.

Enter PLUME.

Plume. What, Mr Wilful! so close with my market woman?

Syl. No matter if he loves her. [*Aside.*] Close, sir, ay, and closer yet, sir. Come, my pretty maid, you and I will withdraw a little.

Plume. No, no, friend; I han't done with her yet.

Syl. Nor have I begun with her; so I have as good a right as you have.

Plume. Thou'rt a bloody impudent fellow!

Syl. Sir, I would qualify myself for the service.

Plume. Hast thou really a mind to the service?

Syl. Yes, sir; so let her go.

Rose. Pray, gentlemen, don't be so violent.

Plume. Come, leave it to the girl's own choice. Will you belong to me or to that gentleman?

Rose. Let me consider; you're both very handsome.

Plume. Now the natural inconstancy of her sex begins to work.

Rose. Pray, sir, what will you give me?

Bul. Dunna be angry, sir, that my sister should be mercenary, for she's but young.

Syl. Give thee, child! I'll set thee above scandal; you shall have a coach, with six before, and six behind; an equipage to make vice fashionable, and put virtue out of countenance.

Plume. Pho! that's easily done: I'll do more for thee, child; I'll buy you a furbelow-scarf, and give you a ticket to see a play.

Bul. A play! wauns! Ruose, take the ticket, and let's see the show.

Syl. Look'e, captain, if you won't resign, I'll go list with captain Brazen this minute.

Plume. Will you list with me, if I give up my title?

Syl. I will.

Plume. Take her; I'll change a woman for a man at any time.

Rose. I have heard before, indeed, that you captains used to sell your men.

Bul. Pray, captain, do not send Ruose to the Western Indies.

Plume. Ha, ha, ha! West Indies! No, no, my honest lad; give me thy hand; nor you nor she shall move a step farther than I do. This gentleman is one of us, and will be kind to you, Mrs Rose.

Rose. But will you be so kind to me, sir, as the captain would?

Syl. I can't be altogether so kind to you; my circumstances are not so good as the captain's; but I'll take care of you, upon my word.

Plume. Ay, ay, we'll all take care of her; she shall live like a princess, and her brother here shall be—What would you be?

Bul. Oh, sir, if you had not promised the place of drum-major!

Plume. Ay, that is promised; but what think you of barrack-master? you are a person of understanding, and barrack-master you shall be—But what's become of this same Cartwheel you told me of, my dear?

Rose. We'll go fetch him—Come, brother barrack-master—We shall find you at home, noble captain? [*Exeunt* ROSE *and* BUL.

Plume. Yes, yes; and, now, sir, here are your forty shillings.

Syl. Captain Plume, I despise your listing-money; if I do serve, 'tis purely for love—of that wench, I mean—for you must know, that among my other sallies, I've spent the best part of my fortune in search of a maid, and could never find one hitherto; so you may be assured, I'd not sell my freedom under a less purchase than I did my estate—so, before I list, I must be certified that this girl is a virgin.

Plume. Mr Wilful, I can't tell you how you can be certified in that point till you try; but, upon my honour, she may be a vestal for aught that I know to the contrary. I gained her heart, indeed, by some trifling presents and promises, and knowing, that the best security for a woman's heart is her person, I would have made myself master of that too, had not the jealousy of my impertinent landlady interposed

Syl. So you only want an opportunity for accomplishing your designs upon her?

Plume. Not at all; I have already gained my ends, which were only the drawing in one or two of her followers. Kiss the prettiest country wenches, and you are sure of listing the lustiest fellows.

Syl. Well, sir, I am satisfied as to the point in debate; but now, let me beg you to lay aside your recruiting airs, put on the man of honour, and tell me plainly, what usage I must expect, when I am under your command?

Plume. You must know, in the first place, then, I hate to have gentlemen in my company; they are always troublesome and expensive, sometimes dangerous: and, 'tis a constant maxim amongst us, that those who know the least obey the best. Notwithstanding all this, I find something so agreeable about you, that engages me to court your company; and I can't tell how it is, but I should be uneasy to see you under the command of any body else. Your usage will chiefly depend upon your behaviour; only, this you must expect, that, if you commit a small fault, I will excuse it; if a great one, I'll discharge you; for something tells me I shall not be able to punish you.

Syl. And something tells me, that if you do

discharge me, 'twill be the greatest punishment you can inflict; for, were we this moment to go upon the greatest dangers in your profession, they would be less terrible to me than to stay behind you—And now, your hand! this lists me—and now you are my captain.

Plume. Your friend. [*Kisses her.*] 'Sdeath! there's something in this fellow that charms me!

Syl. One favour I must beg—this affair will make some noise, and I have some friends that would censure my conduct, if I threw myself into the circumstance of a private centinel of my own head—I must therefore take care to be imprest by the act of parliament; you shall leave that to me.

Plume. What you please as to that—Will you lodge at my quarters in the mean time? you shall have part of my bed.

Syl. O fy! lie with a common soldier! would not you rather lie with a common woman?

Plume. No, faith, I am not that rake, that the world imagines. I've got an air of freedom, which people mistake for lewdness in me, as they mistake formality in others for religion. The world is all a cheat; only I take mine, which is undesigned, to be more excusable than theirs, which is hypocritical. I hurt nobody but myself; they abuse all mankind—Will you lie with me?

Syl. No, no, captain; you forget Rose; she's to be my bedfellow, you know.

Plume. I had forgot: pray be kind to her.

[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter MELINDA *and* LUCY.

Mel. 'Tis the greatest misfortune in nature for a woman to want a confident: we are so weak, that we can do nothing without assistance; and then a secret racks us worse than the colic—I am at this minute so sick of a secret, that I'm ready to faint away——Help me, Lucy!

Lucy. Bless me! Madam, what's the matter?

Mel. Vapours only; I begin to recover.——If Sylvia were in town I could heartily forgive her faults for the ease of discovering my own.

Lucy. You are thoughtful, madam; am not I worthy to know the cause?

Mel. Oh, Lucy! I can hold my secret no longer. You must know, that, hearing of a famous fortune-teller in town, I went, disguised, to satisfy a curiosity, which has cost me dear. The fellow is certainly the devil, or one of his bosom-favourites: he has told me the most surprising things of my life.

Lucy. Things past, madam, can hardly be reckoned surprising, because we know them already. Did he tell you any thing surprising that was to come.

Mel. One thing very surprising; he said I should die a maid!

Lucy. Die a maid! come into the world for nothing! Dear madam! if you believe him, it might come to pass; for the bare thought on't might kill one in four-and-twenty hours—And did you ask him any questions about me?

Mel. You! why I passed for you.

Lucy. So 'tis I, that am to die a maid—But the devil was a liar from the beginning; he can't make me die a maid—I've put it out of his power already. [*Aside.*

Mel. I do but jest. I would have passed for you, and called myself Lucy; but he presently told me my name, my quality, my fortune, and gave me the whole history of my life. He told me of a lover I had in this country, and described Worthy exactly, but in nothing so well as in his present indifference—I fled to him for refuge today; he never so much as encouraged me in my fright, but coldly told me, that he was sorry for the accident, because it might give the town cause to censure my conduct, excused his not waiting on me home, made me a careless bow, and walked off—'Sdeath! I could have stabbed him, or myself; 'twas the same thing—Yonder he comes—I will so use him!

Lucy. Don't exasperate him; consider what the fortune-teller told you. Men are scarce; and, as times go, it is not impossible for a woman to die a maid.

Enter WORTHY.

Mel. No matter.

Wor. I find she's warmed; I must strike, while the iron is hot—You've a great deal of courage, madam, to venture into the walks, where you were so lately frightened.

Mel. And you have a quantity of impudence to appear before me, that you so lately have affronted.

Wor. I had no design to affront you, nor appear before you either, madam; I left you here, because I had business in another place; and came hither, thinking to meet another person.

Mel. Since you find yourself disappointed, I hope you'll withdraw to another part of the walk.

Wor. The walk is broad enough for us both. [*They walk by one another, he with his hat cocked, she fretting and tearing her fan.*] Will you please to take snuff, madam? [*He offers her his box. She strikes it out off his hand; while he is gathering it up,* BRAZEN *enters, and takes her round the waist; she cuffs him.*]

Braz. What, here before me, my dear!

Mel. What means this insolence?

Lucy. Are you mad? don't you see Mr Worthy? [*To* BRAZEN.

Braz. No; no; I'm struck blind—Worthy! odso! well turned—My mistress has wit at her finger's ends—Madam, I ask your pardon; 'tis our way abroad—Mr Worthy, you're the happy man.

Wor. I don't envy your happiness very much, if the lady can afford no other sort of favours but what she has bestowed upon you.

Mel. I'm sorry the favour miscarried, for it was designed for you, Mr Worthy; and, be assured, 'tis the last and only favour you must expect at my hands——captain, I ask your pardon.

[*Exit with* LUCY.

Braz. I grant it——You see, Mr Worthy, 'twas only a random-shot; it might have taken off your head as well as mine. Courage, my dear! 'tis the fortune of war; but the enemy has thought fit to withdraw, I think.

Wor. Withdraw! Oons! Sir, what d'ye mean by withdraw?

Braz. I'll shew you. [*Exit* BRAZEN.

Wor. She's lost, irrecoverably lost, and Plume's advice has ruined me. 'Sdeath! why should I, that knew her haughty spirit, be ruled by a man that's a stranger to her pride?

Enter PLUME.

Plume. Ha, ha, ha! a battle royal! Don't frown so, man; she's your own, I tell you: I saw the fury of her love in the extremity of her passion. The wildness of her anger is a certain sign that she loves you to madness. That rogue, Kite, began the battle with abundance of conduct, and will bring you off victorious, my life on't; he plays his part admirably: she's to be with him again presently.

Wor. But what could be the meaning of Brazen's familiarity with her?

Plume. You are no logician, if you pretend to draw consequences from the actions of fools—Whim, unaccountable whim, hurries them on, like a man drunk with brandy before ten o'clock in the morning——But we lose our sport;—Kite has opened about an hour ago: let's away.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A chamber; a table with books and globes.*

KITE *disguised in a strange habit, sitting at a table.*

Kite. [*Rising.*] By the position of the heavens, gained from my observation upon these celestial globes, I find, that Luna was a tide-waiter; Sol a surveyor; Mercury a thief; Venus a whore; Saturn an alderman; Jupiter a rake; and Mars a serjeant of grenadiers;—and this is the system of Kite the conjurer.

Enter PLUME *and* WORTHY.

Plume. Well, what success?

Kite. I have sent away a shoemaker and a tailor already; one's to be a captain of the marines, and the other a major of dragoons—I am to manage them at night—Have you seen the lady, Mr Worthy?

Wor. Aye, but it won't do—Have you shewed her her name, that I tore off from the bottom of the letter?

Kite. No, sir, I reserve that for the last stroke.

Plume. What letter?

Wor. One that I would not let you see, for fear that you should break windows in good earnest. Here, captain, put it into your pocket-book, and have it ready upon occasion.

[*Knocking at the door.*

Kite. Officers, to your posts. Tycho, mind the door.

[*Exeunt* PLUME *and* WORTHY. *Servant opens the door.*

Enter MELINDA *and* LUCY.

Kite. Tycho, chairs for the ladies.

Mel. Don't trouble yourself; we shan't stay, doctor.

Kite. Your ladyship is to stay much longer than you imagine.

Mel. For what?

Kite. For a husband—For your part, madam, you won't stay for a husband. [*To* LUCY.

Lucy. Pray, doctor, do you converse with the stars or the devil?

Kite. With both; when I have the destinies of men in search, I consult the stars; when the affairs of women come under my hands, I advise with my t'other friend.

Mel. And have you raised the devil upon my account?

Kite. Yes, madam, and he's now under the table.

Lucy. Oh, heavens protect us! Dear madam, let's be gone.

Kite. If you be afraid of him, why do ye come to consult him?

Mel. Don't fear, fool.—Do you think, sir, that because I'm a woman, I'm to be fooled out of my reason, or frighted out of my senses? Come, show me this devil.

Kite. He's a little busy at present; but when he has done he shall wait on you.

Mel. What is he doing?

Kite. Writing your name in his pocket-book.

Mel. Ha, ha! my name! pray what have you or he to do with my name?

Kite. Look'e, fair lady, the devil is a very modest person; he seeks nobody, unless they seek him first; he's chain'd up like a mastiff, and can't stir unless he be let loose—You come to me to have your fortune told—do you think, madam, that I can answer you of my own head? No, madam, the affairs of women are so irregular, that nothing less than the devil can give any account of them. Now, to convince you of your incredulity, I'll shew you a trial of my skill. Here, you Cacodemo del Plumo, exert your power; draw me this lady's name; the word *Melinda*, in proper letters and characters of her own hand-writing.—Do it at three motions—one—two—three—'tis done—Now, madam, will you please to send your maid to fetch it?

Lucy. I fetch it! the devil fetch me, if I do!

Mel. My name in my own hand-writing! that would be convincing indeed.

Kite. Seeing is believing. [*Goes to the table, and lifts up the carpet.*] Here Tre, Tre, poor Tre, give me the bone, sirrah. There's your name upon that square piece of paper. Behold!—

Mel. 'Tis wonderful! my very letters to a tittle!

Lucy. 'Tis like your hand, madam, but not so like your hand, neither: and now, I look nearer, 'tis not like your hand at all.

Kite. Here's a chambermaid, now, will outlie the devil!

Lucy. Look'e, madam, they sha'nt impose upon us; people can't remember their hands, no more than they can their faces—Come, madam, let us be certain; write your name upon this paper, then we'll compare the two hands.

[*Takes out a paper, and folds it.*

Kite. Any thing for your satisfaction, madam—Here's pen and ink.

[MELINDA *writes*, LUCY *holds the paper.*

Lucy. Let me see it, madam; 'tis the same—the very same——But I'll secure one copy for my own affairs. [*Aside.*

Mel. This is demonstration!

Kite. 'Tis so, madam—the word Demonstration comes from Dæmon, the father of lies.

Mel. Well, doctor, I'm convinced: and now, pray, what account can you give of my future fortune?

Kite. Before the sun has made one course round this earthly globe, your fortune will be fixed for happiness or misery.

Mel. What! so near the crisis of my fate?

Kite. Let me see—About the hour of ten to-morrow morning, you will be saluted by a gentleman, who will come to take his leave of you, being designed for travel; his intention of going abroad is sudden, and the occasion a woman. Your fortune and his are like the bullet and the barrel, one runs plump into the other—In short, if the gentleman travels, he will die abroad, and if he does, you will die before he comes home.

Mel. What sort of a man is he?

Kite. Madam, he's a fine gentleman, and a lover; that is, a man of very good sense, and a very great fool.

Mel. How is that possible, doctor?

Kite. Because, madam—because it is so—A woman's reason is the best for a man's being a fool.

Mel. Ten o'clock, you say?

Kite. Ten—about the hour of tea-drinking throughout the kingdom.

Mel. Here, doctor. [*Gives money.*] Lucy, have you any questions to ask?

Lucy. Oh, madam! a thousand.

Kite. I must beg your patience till another time, for I expect more company this minute; besides, I must discharge the gentleman under the table.

Lucy. O pray, sir, discharge us first!

Kite. Tycho, wait on the ladies down stairs.

[*Exeunt* MELINDA *and* LUCY.

Enter WORTHY *and* PLUME.

Kite. Mr Worthy, you were pleased to wish me joy to-day; I hope to be able to return the compliment to-morrow.

Wor. I'll make it the best compliment to you, that ever I made in my life, if you do; but I must be a traveller, you say?

Kite. No farther than the chops of the channel, I presume, sir.

Plume. That we have concerted already. [*Knocking hard.*] Heyday! you don't profess midwifery, doctor?

Kite. Away to your ambuscade.

[*Exeunt* WORTHY *and* PLUME.

Enter BRAZEN.

Braz. Your servant, my dear!

Kite. Stand off; I have my familiar already.

Braz. Are you bewitched, my dear?

Kite. Yes, my dear! but mine is a peaceable spirit, and hates gunpowder. Thus I fortify myself: [*Draws a circle round him.*] and now, captain, have a care how you force my lines.

Braz. Lines! what dost talk of lines! you have something like a fishing-rod there, indeed; but I come to be acquainted with you, man—What's your name, my dear?

Kite. Conundrum.

Braz. Conundrum? rat me! I knew a famous doctor in London of your name—Where were you born?

Kite. I was born in Algebra.

Braz. Algebra! 'tis no country in Christendom, I'm sure, unless it be some place in the Highlands in Scotland.

Kite. Right—I told you I was bewitched.

Braz. So am I, my dear! I am going to be married—I have had two letters from a lady of fortune that loves me to madness, fits, cholic, spleen, and vapours——shall I marry her in four-and-twenty hours, ay or no?

Kite. Certainly.

Braz. Gadso, ay——

Kite. —Or no—But I must have the year, and the day of the month, when these letters were dated.

Braz. Why, you old bitch! did you ever hear of love-letters dated with the year and day of the month? do you think billetdoux are like bank-bills?

Kite. They are not so good, my dear—but if they bear no date, I must examine the contents.

Braz. Contents! that you shall, old boy! here they be both.

Kite. Only the last you received, if you please. [*Takes the letter.*] Now, sir, if you please to let

me consult my books for a minute, I'll send this letter enclosed to you with the determination of the stars upon it to your lodgings.

Braz. With all my heart—I must give him—[*Puts his hands in his pockets*] Algebra! I fancy, doctor, 'tis hard to calculate the place of your nativity—Here—[*Gives him money.*] And if I succeed, I'll build a watch-tower on the top of the highest mountain in Wales, for the study of astrology, and the benefit of the Conundrums.

[*Exit.*

Enter PLUME *and* WORTHY.

Wor. O doctor! that letter's worth a million; let me see it: and now I have it, I'm afraid to open it.

Plume. Pho! let me see it. [*Opening the letter.*] If she be a jilt—Damn her, she is one—there's her name at the bottom on't.

Wor. How! then I'll travel in good earnest—By all my hopes, 'tis Lucy's hand!

Plume. Lucy's!

Wor. Certainly—'tis no more like Melinda's character, than black is to white.

Plume. Then 'tis certainly Lucy's contrivance to draw in Brazen for a husband—But are you sure 'tis not Melinda's hand?

Wor. You shall see; where's the bit of paper I gave you just now, that the devil wrote Melinda upon?

Kite. Here, sir.

Plume. 'Tis plain they are not the same: and is this the malicious name that was subscribed to the letter which made Mr Balance send his daughter into the country?

Wor. The very same: the other fragments I shewed you just now, I once intended for another use; but I think I have turned it now to a better advantage.

Plume. But 'twas barbarous to conceal this so long, and to continue me so many hours in the pernicious heresy of believing that angelic creature could change. Poor Sylvia!

Wor. Rich Sylvia, you mean, and poor captain; ha, ha, ha!—Come, come, friend, Melinda is true, and shall be mine; Sylvia is constant, and may be yours.

Plume. No, she's above my hopes——but for her sake, I'll recant my opinion of her sex.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Justice* BALANCE'S *house.*

Enter BALANCE *and* SCALE.

Scale. I SAY, 'tis not to be borne, Mr Balance.

Bal. Look'e, Mr Scale, for my own part I shall be very tender in what regards the officers of the army; I only speak in reference to captain Plume—for the other spark, I know nothing of.

Scale. Nor can I hear of any body that does—Oh, here they come.

Enter SYLVIA, BULLOCK, ROSE, *Prisoners, Constable, and Mob.*

Const. May it please your worships, we took them in the very act, *re infecta,* sir—The gentleman, indeed, behaved himself like a gentleman, for he drew his sword and swore, and afterwards laid it down, and said nothing.

Bal. Give the gentleman his sword again—Wait you without. [*Exeunt Constable and Watch.*] I'm sorry, sir, [*To* SYLVIA] to know a gentleman upon such terms, that the occasion of our meeting should prevent the satisfaction of an acquaintance.

Syl. Sir, you need make no apology for your warrant, no more than I shall do for my behaviour—my innocence is upon an equal foot with your authority.

Scale. Innocence! have you not seduced that young maid?

Syl. No, Mr Goosecap, she seduced me.

Bal. So she did, I'll swear—for she proposed marriage first.

Bal. What, then you are married, child?

[*To* ROSE.

Rose. Yes, sir, to my sorrow.

Bal. Who was witness?

Bul. That was I—I danced, threw the stocking, and spoke jokes by their bedside, I'm sure.

Bal. Who was the minister?

Bul. Minister! we are soldiers, and want no minister—they were married by the articles of war.

Bal. Hold thy prating, fool——Your appearance, sir, promises some understanding; pray, what does this fellow mean?

Syl. He means marriage, I think—but that, you know, is so odd a thing, that hardly any two people under the sun agree in the ceremony; some make it a sacrament, others a convenience, and others make it a jest; but among soldiers 'tis most sacred—our sword you know is our honour, that we lay down—the hero jumps over it first, and the amazon after—leap, rogue; follow, whore—the drum beats a ruff, and so to bed: that's all: the ceremony is concise.

Bal. And the prettiest ceremony, so full of pastime and prodigality——

Bal. What! are you a soldier?

Bul. Ay, that I am—Will your worship lend me your cane, and I'll shew you how I can exercise?

Bal. Take it. [*Strikes him over the head.*] Pray, sir, what commission may you bear?

[*To* SYLVIA.

Syl. I'm called captain, sir, by all the coffee-

men, drawers, whores, and groom-porters in London; for I wear a red-coat, a sword, piquet in my head, and dice in my pocket.

Scale. Your name, pray, sir?

Syl. Captain Pinch: I cock my hat with a pinch, I take snuff with a pinch, pay my whores with a pinch; in short, I can do any thing at a pinch, but fight and fill my belly.

Bal. And pray, sir, what brought you into Shropshire?

Syl. A pinch, sir: I know you country gentlemen want wit, and you know that we town gentlemen want money; and so———

Bal. I understand you, sir—Here, constable—

Enter Constable.

Take this gentleman into custody till further orders.

Rose. Pray your worship don't be uncivil to him, for he did me no hurt; he's the most harmless man in the world, for all he talks so.

Scale. Come, come, child; I'll take care of you.

Syl. What, gentlemen, rob me of my freedom and my wife at once! 'tis the first time they ever went together.

Bal. Hark'e, constable. [*Whispers him.*

Const. It shall be done, sir—come along, sir.

[*Exeunt Constable,* BULLOCK, *and* SYLVIA.

Bal. Come, Mr Scale, we'll manage the spark presently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—MELINDA'S *apartment.*

Enter MELINDA *and* WORTHY.

Mel. So far the prediction is right; 'tis ten exactly. [*Aside.*] And pray, sir, how long have you been in this travelling humour?

Wor. 'Tis natural, madam, for us to avoid what disturbs our quiet.

Mel. Rather the love of change, which is more natural, may be the occasion of it.

Wor. To be sure, madam, there must be charms in variety, else neither you nor I should be so fond of it.

Mel. You mistake, Mr Worthy; I am not so fond of variety as to travel for't; nor do I think it prudence in you to run yourself into a certain expence and danger, in hopes of precarious pleasures.

Wor. What pleasures I may receive abroad are indeed uncertain; but this I am sure of, I shall meet with less cruelty among the most barbarous of nations, than I have found at home.

Mel. Come, sir, you and I have been jangling a great while; I fancy if we made up our accounts we should the sooner come to an agreement.

Wor. Sure, madam, you won't dispute your being in my debt——My fears, sighs, vows, promises, assiduities, anxieties, jealousies, have run on for a whole year without any payment.

Mel. A year! oh, Mr Worthy! what you owe to me is not to be paid under a seven years' servitude. How did you use me the year before! when, taking the advantage of my innocence and necessity, you would have made me your mistress, that is, your slave—Remember the wicked insinuations, artful baits, deceitful arguments, cunning pretences; then your impudent behaviour, loose expressions, familiar letters, rude visits; remember those, those, Mr Worthy.

Wor. I do remember, and am sorry I made no better use of them. [*Aside.*] But you may remember, madam, that——

Mel. Sir, I'll remember nothing—'tis your interest that I should forget. You have been barbarous to me, I have been cruel to you; put that and that together, and let one balance the other——Now, if you will begin upon a new score, lay aside your adventuring airs, and behave yourself handsomely till Lent be over, here's my hand, I'll use you as a gentleman should be.

Wor. And If I don't use you as a gentlewoman should be, may this be my poison!

[*Kissing her hand.*

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Madam, the coach is at the door.

Mel. I am going to Mr Balance's country-house to see my cousin Sylvia; I have done her an injury, and can't be easy till I've asked her pardon.

Wor. I dare not hope for the honour of waiting on you.

Mel. My coach is full; but if you'll be so gallant as to mount your own horse and follow us, we shall be glad to be overtaken; and if you bring captain Plume with you, we shan't have the worse reception.

Wor. I'll endeavour it.

[*Exit, leading* MELINDA.

SCENE III.—*The market place.*

Enter PLUME *and* KITE.

Plume. A baker, a tailor, a smith, butchers, carpenters, and journeymen-shoemakers, in all thirty-nine—

Kite. The butcher, sir, will have his hands full, for we have two sheep-stealers among us—I hear of a fellow, too, committed just now for stealing of horses.

Plume. We'll dispose of him among the dragoons——Have we never a poulterer among us?

Kite. Yes, sir; the king of the gipsies is a very good one; he has an excellent hand at a goose or a turkey—Here's captain Brazen, sir. I must go look after the men. [*Exit* KITE.

Enter BRAZEN, *reading a letter.*

Braz. Um, um, um! the canonical hour——Um, um, very well—My dear Plume! give me a buss.

Plume. Half a score if you will, my dear! What hast got in thy hand, child?

Braz. 'Tis a project for laying out a thousand pounds.

Plume. Were it not requisite to project first how to get it in?

Braz. You can't imagine, my dear, that I want twenty thousand pounds. I have spent twenty times as much in the service———but if this twenty thousand pounds should not be in specie——

Plume. What twenty thousand?

Braz. Hearkʼe— [*Whispers.*

Plume. Married!

Braz. Presently; we're to meet about half a mile out of town at the waterside——and so forth—[*Reads.*]—Lookʼe there, my dear dog! [*Shews the bottom of the letter to* PLUME.

Plume. Melinda! and by this light her own hand! Once more if you please, my dear—Her hand exactly—Just now, you say?

Braz. This minute; I must be gone.

Plume. Have a little patience, and I'll go with you.

Braz. No, no, I see a gentleman coming this way that may be inquisitive; tis Worthy—do you know him?

Plume. By sight only.

Braz. Have a care, the very eyes discover secrets. [*Exit.*

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. To boot and saddle, captain; you must mount.

Plume. Whip and spur, Worthy, or you won't mount.

Wor. But I shall; Melinda and I are agreed; she's gone to visit Sylvia; we are to mount and follow; and, could we carry a parson with us, who knows what might be done for us both?

Plume. Don't trouble your head; Melinda has secured a parson already.

Wor. Already! do you know more than I?

Plume. Yes, I saw it under her hand—Brazen and she are to meet half a mile hence at the water-side, there to take boat, I suppose, to be ferryed over to the Elysian Fields, if there be any such thing, in matrimony.

Wor. I parted with Melinda just now; she assured me she hated Brazen, and that she resolved to discard Lucy for daring to write letters to him in her name.

Plume. Nay, nay, there's nothing of Lucy in this—I tell ye I saw Melinda's hand as surely as this is mine.

Wor. But I tell you she's gone this minute to Justice Balance's country-house.

Plume. But I tell you she's gone this minute to the water-side.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Madam Melinda has sent word that you need not trouble yourself to follow her, because her journey to justice Balance's is put off, and she's gone to take the air another way.

[*To* WORTHY.

Wor. How! her journey put off?

Plume. That is, her journey was a put-off to you.

Wor. 'Tis plain, plain—But how, where, when is she to meet Brazen?

Plume Just now, I tell you; half a mile hence, at the water-side.

Wor. Up or down the water?

Plume. That I don't know.

Wor. I'm glad my horses are ready—Jack, get them out.

Plume. Shall I go with you?

Wor. Not an inch—I shall return presently. [*Exit.*

Plume. You'll find me at the hall: the justices are sitting by this time, and I must attend them.

SCENE IV.—*A court of justice.*

BALANCE, SCALE, *and* SCRUPLE, *upon the bench; Constable*, KITE, *mob.*—KITE *and Constable advance.*

Kite. Pray, who are those honourable gentlemen upon the bench?

Const. He, in the middle, is justice Balance; he, on the right, is justice Scale; and he, on the left, is justice Scruple; and I am Mr Constable; four very honest gentlemen.

Kite. O dear, sir! I am your most obedient servant. [*Saluting the constable.*] I fancy, sir, that your employment and mine are much the same; for my business is to keep people in order, and, if they disobey, to knock them down; and then, we are both staff-officers.

Const. Nay, I'm a serjeant myself—of the militia—Come, brother, you shall see me exercise. Suppose this a musket; now, I'm shouldered. [*Puts his staff on his right shoulder.*

Kite. Ay, you are shouldered pretty well for a constable's staff; but, for a musket, you must put it on the other shoulder, my dear!

Const. Adso! that's true—Come, now give the word of command.

Kite. Silence.

Const. Ay, ay; so we will—we will be silent.

Kite. Silence, you dog, silence!

[*Strikes him over the head with his halberd.*

Const. That's the way to silence a man, with a witness! What do you mean, friend?

Kite. Only to exercise you, sir.

Const. Your exercise differs so much from ours, that we shall ne'er agree about it; if my own captain had given me such a rap, I had taken the law of him.

Enter PLUME.

Bal. Captain, you're welcome.

Plume. Gentlemen, I thank you.

Scrup. Come, honest captain, sit by me. [PLUME *ascends, and sits upon the bench.*] Now, produce your prisoners—Here, that fellow there, set him up. Mr Constable, what have you to say against this man?

Const. I have nothing to say against him, an please you.

Bal. No? what made you bring him hither?

Const. I don't know, an please your worship.

Scale. Did not the contents of your warrant direct you what sort of men to take up?

Const. I can't tell, an please ye; I can't read.

Scrup. A very pretty constable, truly! I find we have no business here.

Kite. May it please the worshipful bench, I desire to be heard in this case, as being the counsel for the king.

Bal. Come, serjeant, you shall be heard, since nobody else will speak; we won't come here for nothing.

Kite. This man is but one man, the country may spare him, and the army wants him; besides, he's cut out by nature for a grenadier; he's five feet ten inches high; he shall box, wrestle, or dance the Cheshire round with any man in the country; he get's drunk every Sabbath-day, and he beats his wife.

Wife. You lie, sirrah, you lie; an please your worship, he's the best natured pains-taking'st man in the parish, witness my five poor children.

Scrup. A wife and five children! you constable, you rogue, how durst you impress a man that has a wife and five children?

Scale. Discharge him, discharge him.

Bal. Hold, gentlemen! Hark'e, friend, how do you maintain your wife and five children?

Plume. They live upon wild-fowl and venison, sir; the husband keeps a gun, and kills all the hares and partridges within five miles round.

Bal. A gun! nay, if he be so good at gunning, he shall have enough on't. He may be of use against the French; for he shoots flying, to be sure.

Scrup. But his wife and children, Mr Balance.

Wife. Ay, ay, that's the reason you would send him away; you know I have a child every year, and you are afraid that they should come upon the parish at last.

Plume. Look'e there, gentlemen, the honest woman has spoke it at once; the parish had better maintain five children this year, than six or seven the next. That fellow, upon this high feeding, may get you two or three beggars at a birth.

Wife. Look'e, Mr Captain, the parish shall get nothing by sending him away; for I won't lose my tecming-time, if there be a man left in the parish.

Bal. Send that woman to the house of correction—— and the man——

Kite. I'll take care of him, if you please.

[*Takes him down.*

Scale. Here, you constable, the next. Set up that black-faced fellow; he has a gunpowder look; what can you say against this man, constable?

Const. Nothing, but that he's a very honest man.

Plume. Pray, gentlemen, let me have one honest man in my company, for the novelty's sake.

Bal. What are you, friend?

Mob. A collier; I work in the coal-pits.

Scrup. Look'e, gentlemen, this fellow has a trade; and the act of parliament here expresses that we are to impress no man that has any visible means of a livelihood.

Kite. May it please your worship, this man has no visible means of a livelihood, for he works under ground.

Plume. Well said, Kite; besides, the army wants miners.

Bal. Right, and had we an order of government for it, we could raise you, in this and the neighbouring county of Stafford, five hundred colliers, that would run you under ground, like moles, and do more service in a siege than all the miners in the army.

Scrup. Well, friend, what have you to say for yourself?

Mob. I'm married.

Kite. Lack-a-day! so am I.

Mob. Here's my wife, poor woman.

Bal. Are you married, good woman?

Wom. I'm married in conscience.

Kite. May it please your worship, she's with child in conscience.

Scale. Who married you, mistress?

Wom. My husband: we agreed that I should call him husband, to avoid passing for a whore, and that he should call me wife, to shun going for a soldier.

Scrup. A very pretty couple! Pray, captain, will you take them both?

Plume. What say you, Mr Kite? will you take care of the woman?

Kite. Yes, sir; she shall go with us to the seaside, and there, if she has a mind to drown herself, we'll take care nobody shall hinder her.

Bal. Here, constable, bring in my man. [*Exit Const.*] Now, captain, I'll fit you with a man such as you never listed in your life.

Enter Constable and SYLVIA.

Oh, my friend Pinch! I'm very glad to see you.

Syl. Well, sir, and what then?

Scale. What then! is that your respect to the bench?

Syl. Sir, I don't care a farthing for you nor your bench neither.

Scrup. Look'e, gentlemen, that's enough; he's a very impudent fellow, and fit for a soldier.

Scale. A notorious rogue, I say, and very fit for a soldier.

Const. A whoremaster, I say, and therefore fit to go.

Bal. What think you, captain?

Plume. I think he's a very pretty fellow, and therefore fit to serve.

Syl. Me for a soldier! send your own lazy lubberly sons at home; fellows that hazard their necks every day in the pursuit of a fox, yet dare not peep abroad to look an enemy in the face.

Const. May it please your worships, I have a woman at the door to swear a rape against this rogue.

Syl. Is it your wife or daughter, booby? I ravished them both yesterday.

Bal. Pray, captain, read the articles of war; we'll see him listed immediately.

Plume. [*Reads.*] Articles of war against mutiny and desertion, &c.

Syl. Hold, sir——Once more, gentlemen, have a care what you do, for you shall severely smart for any violence you offer to me; and you, Mr Balance, I speak to you particularly, you shall heartily repent it.

Plume. Look'e, young spark, say but one word more, and I'll build a horse for you as high as the cieling, and make you ride the most tiresome journey that ever you made in your life.

Syl. You have made a fine speech, good captain Huff-cap! but you had better be quiet; I shall find a way to cool your courage.

Plume. Pray, gentlemen, don't mind him, he's distracted.

Syl. 'Tis false; I am descended of as good a family as any in your county; my father is as good a man as any upon your bench; and I am heir to twelve hundred pounds a-year.

Bal. He's certainly mad. Pray, captain, read the articles of war.

Syl. Hold, once more. Pray, Mr Balance, to you I speak; suppose I were your child, would you use me at this rate?

Bal. No, faith! were you mine, I would send you to Bedlam first, and into the army afterwards.

Syl. But, consider my father, sir; he's as good, as generous, as brave, as just a man, as ever served his country. I'm his only child; perhaps, the loss of me may break his heart.

Bal. He's a very great fool, if it does. Captain, if you don't list him this minute, I'll leave the court.

Plume. Kite, do you distribute the levy-money to the men while I read.

Kite. Ay, sir. Silence, gentlemen.

[PLUME *reads the articles of war.*

Bal. Very well; now, captain, let me beg the favour of you not to discharge this fellow upon any account whatsoever. Bring in the rest.

Const. There are no more, an't please your worship.

Bal. No more! there were five two hours ago.

Syl. 'Tis true, sir, but this rogue of a constable let the rest escape for a bribe of eleven shillings a man, because he said the act allowed him but ten; so the odd shilling was clear gains.

All Just. How?

Syl. Gentlemen, he offered to let me go away for two guineas, but I had not so much about me: this is truth, and I'm ready to swear it.

Kite. And I'll swear it: give me the book; 'tis for the good of the service.

Mob. May it please your worship, I gave him half a crown to say that I was an honest man; but, now, since that your worships have made me a rogue, I hope I shall have my money again.

Bal. 'Tis my opinion, that this constable be put into the captain's hands; and if his friends don't bring four good men for his ransom by to-morrow night, captain, you shall carry him to Flanders.

Scale. Scrup. Agreed, agreed.

Plume. Mr Kite, take the constable into custody.

Kite. Ay, ay, sir. [*To the constable.*] Will you please to have your office taken from you, or will you handsomely lay down your staff, as your betters have done before you?

[*Constable drops his staff.*

Bal. Come, gentlemen, there needs no great ceremony in adjourning this court. Captain, you shall dine with me.

Kite. Come, Mr Militia Serjeant, I shall silence you now, I believe, without your taking the law of me? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*A room in* BALANCE'S *house.*

Enter BALANCE *and Steward.*

Stew. We did not miss her till the evening, sir; and then, searching for her in the chamber that was my young master's, we found her clothes there; but the suit that your son left in the press, when he went to London, was gone.

Bal. The white, trimmed with silver?

Stew. The same.

Bal. You han't told that circumstance to any body?

Stew. To none but your worship.

Bal. And be sure you don't. Go into the dining-room, and tell captain Plume that I beg to speak with him.

Stew. I shall. [*Exit.*

Bal. Was ever man so imposed upon! I had her promise, indeed, that she would never dispose of herself without my consent—I have consented with a witness! given her away as my act and deed—and this, I warrant, the captain thinks will pass. No, I shall never pardon him the villany, first of robbing me of my daughter, and then the mean opinion he must have of me to think that I could be so wretchedly imposed upon: her extravagant passion might encourage

her in the attempt, but the contrivance must be his. I'll know the truth presently.

Enter PLUME.

Pray, captain, what have you done with our young gentleman soldier?

Plume. He's at my quarters, I suppose, with the rest of my men.

Bal. Does he keep company with the common soldiers?

Plume. No; he's generally with me.

Bal. He lies with you, I presume.

Plume. No, faith! I offered him part of my bed—but the young rogue fell in love with Rose, and has lain with her, I think, since she came to town.

Bal. So that, between you both, Rose has been finely managed.

Plume. Upon my honour, sir, she had no harm from me.

Bal. All's safe, I find—Now, captain, you must know, that the young fellow's impudence in court was well-grounded; he said I should heartily repent his being listed, and so I do from my soul.

Plume. Ay! for what reason?

Bal. Because he is no less than what he said he was; born of as good a family as any in this county, and he is heir to twelve hundred pounds a-year.

Plume. I'm very glad to hear it—for I wanted but a man of that quality to make my company a perfect representative of the whole commons of England.

Bal. Won't you discharge him?

Plume. Not under a hundred pounds sterling.

Bal. You shall have it, for his father is my intimate friend.

Plume. Then you shall have him for nothing.

Bal. Nay, sir, you shall have your price.

Plume. Not a penny, sir; I value an obligation to you much above an hundred pounds.

Bal. Perhaps, sir, you shan't repent your generosity——Will you please to write his discharge in my pocket-book?—[*Gives his book.*]—In the mean time, we'll send for the gentleman. Who waits there?

Enter a Servant.

Go to the captain's lodging, and inquire for Mr Wilful; tell him his captain wants him here immediately.

Ser. Sir, the gentleman's below at the door, inquiring for the captain.

Plume. Bid him come up. Here's the discharge, sir.

Bal. Sir, I thank you—'Tis plain he had no hand in't. [*Aside.*

Enter SYLVIA.

Syl. I think, captain, you might have used me better, than to leave me yonder among your swearing, drunken crew; and you, Mr Justice, might have been so civil as to have invited me to dinner; for I have eaten with as good a man as your worship.

Plume. Sir, you must charge our want of respect upon our ignorance of your quality—— But now, you are at liberty——I have discharged you.

Syl. Discharged me!

Bal. Yes, sir; and you must once more go home to your father.

Syl. My father! then I am discovered—Oh, sir!—[*Kneeling.*]—I expect no pardon.

Bal. Pardon! no, no, child; your crime shall be your punishment: here, captain, I deliver her over to the conjugal power for her chastisement. Since you will be a wife, be you a husband, a very husband—When she tells you of her love, upbraid her with her folly; be modishly ungrateful, because she has been unfashionably kind; and use her worse than you would any body else, because you cannot use her so well as she deserves.

Plume. And are you Sylvia, in good earnest?

Syl. Earnest! I have gone too far to make it a jest, sir.

Plume. And do you give her to me in good earnest?

Bal. If you please to take her, sir.

Plume. Why, then, I have saved my legs and arms, and lost my liberty; secure from wounds, I am prepared for the gout: farewell subsistence, and welcome taxes—Sir, my liberty, and the hope of being a general, are much dearer to me than your twelve hundred pounds a-year—— But to your love, madam, I resign my freedom, and to your beauty my ambition——greater in obeying at your feet, than commanding at the head of an army.

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. I am sorry to hear, Mr Balance, that your daughter is lost.

Bal. So am not I, sir, since an honest gentleman has found her.

Enter MELINDA.

Mel. Pray, Mr Balance, what's become of my cousin Sylvia?

Bal. Your cousin Sylvia is talking yonder, with your cousin Plume.

Mel. And Worthy. How!

Syl. Do you think it strange, cousin, that a woman should change? but I hope you'll excuse a change that has proceeded from constancy. I altered my outside, because I was the same within; and only laid by the woman to make sure of my man: that's my history.

Mel. Your history is a little romantic, cousin; but, since success has crowned your adventures, you will have the world on your side, and I shall be willing to go with the tide, provided

you'll pardon an injury I offered you, in the letter to your father.

Plume. That injury, madam, was done to me, and the reparation I expect, shall be made to my friend: Make Mr Worthy happy, and I shall be satisfied.

Mel. A good example, sir, will go a great way——When my cousin is pleased to surrender, 'tis probable I shan't hold out much longer.

Enter BRAZEN.

Braz. Gentlemen, I am yours——Madam, I am not yours.

Mel. I'm glad on't, sir.

Braz. So am I—You have got a pretty house, here, Mr Laconic.

Bal. 'Tis time to right all mistakes——My name, sir, is Balance.

Braz. Balance! Sir, I am your most obedient —I know your whole generation—Had not you an uncle that was governor of the Leeward Islands some years ago?

Bal. Did you know him?

Braz. Intimately, sir—He played at billiards to a miracle—You had a brother, too, that was a captain of a fire-ship—poor Dick!—he had the most engaging way with him of making punch—and then his cabin was so neat—but his poor boy Jack was the most comical bastard—Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! a pickled dog, I shall never forget him.

Plume. Have you got your recruits, my dear?

Braz. Not a stick, my dear!

Plume. Probably I shall furnish you.

Enter ROSE *and* BULLOCK.

Rose. Captain, captain, I have got loose once more, and have persuaded my sweetheart Cartwheel, to go with us; but you must promise not to part with me again.

Syl. I find Mrs Rose has not been pleased with her bed-fellow.

Rose. Bed-fellow! I don't know whether I had a bed-fellow or not.

Syl. Don't be in a passion, child; I was as little pleased with your company, as you could be with mine.

Bul. Pray, sir, donna be offended at my sister; she's something underbred; but, if you please, I'll lie with you in her stead.

Plume. I have promised, madam, to provide for this girl: now, will you be pleased to let her wait upon you, or shall I take care of her?

Syl. She shall be my charge, sir; you may find it business enough to take care of me.

Bul. Aye, and of me, captain; for wauns! if ever you lift your hands against me, I'll desert—

Plume. Captain Brazen shall take care of that. My dear! instead of the twenty thousand pounds you talked of, you shall have the twenty brave recruits that I have raised, at the rate they cost me——My commission I lay down, to be taken up by some braver fellow, that has more merit, and less good fortune——whilst I endeavour, by the example of this worthy gentleman, to serve my king and country at home.

With some regret I quit the active field,
Where glory full reward for life does yield;
But the recruiting trade, with all its train
Of endless plague, fatigue, and endless pain,
I gladly quit, with my fair spouse to stay,
And raise recruits the matrimonial way.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

BEAUX STRATAGEM.

BY

FARQUHAR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

AIMWELL, } *two gentlemen of broken fortunes.*
ARCHER, }
SULLEN, *a country blockhead.*
SIR C. FREEMAN, *a gentleman from London.*
FOIGARD, *a French priest.*
GIBBET, *a highwayman.*
HOUNSLOW, } *his companions.*
BAGSHOT, }
BONIFACE, *landlord of the inn.*
SCRUB, *servant to* MR SULLEN.

WOMEN.

LADY BOUNTIFUL, *an old civil country gentlewoman, that cures all distempers.*
DORINDA, LADY BOUNTIFUL'S *daughter.*
MRS SULLEN, *her daughter-in-law.*
GIPSEY.
CHERRY, *daughter to* BONIFACE.

Scene—Litchfield.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An inn.*

Enter BONIFACE *running. Bar-bell rings.*

Bon. CHAMBERLAIN, maid, Cherry, daughter Cherry! All asleep, all dead?

Enter CHERRY, *running.*

Cher. Here, here. Why d'ye bawl so, father? D'ye think we have no ears?

Bon. You deserve to have none, you young minx—the company of the Warrington coach has stood in the hall this hour, and nobody to shew them to their chambers.

Cher. And let them wait, father; there's neither red-coat in the coach, nor footman behind it.

Bon. But they threaten to go to another inn to-night.

Cher. That they dare not, for fear the coachman should overturn them to-morrow. [*Ringing.*] Coming, coming: here's the London coach arrived.

Enter several people with trunks, band-boxes, with other luggage, and cross the stage.

Bon. Welcome, ladies.

Cher. Very welcome, gentlemen. Chamberlain, shew the Lion and the Rose.

[*Exit* CHERRY *with the Company.*

Enter AIMWELL, *in a riding habit;* ARCHER, *as footman, carrying a portmanteau.*

Bon. This way, this way, gentlemen.

Aim. Set down the things; go to the stable, and see my horses well rubbed.

Arch. I shall, sir. [*Exit.*

Aim. You're my landlord, I suppose?

Bon. Yes, sir, I'm old Will Boniface, pretty well known upon this road, as the saying is.

Aim. O, Mr Boniface, your servant.

Bon. O, sir—What will your honour please to drink, as the saying is?

Aim. I have heard your town of Litchfield much famed for ale: I think I'll taste that.

Bon. Sir, I have now in my cellar ten ton of the best ale in Staffordshire: 'tis smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as brandy, and will be just fourteen years old the fifth day of next march, old style.

Aim. You're very exact, I find, in the age of your ale.

Bon. As punctual, sir, as I am in the age of my children: I'll shew you such ale——Here, tapster, broach number 1706, as the saying is.—Sir, you shall taste my anno domini——I have lived in Litchfield, man and boy, above eight-and-fifty years, and, I believe, have not consumed eight-and-fifty ounces of meat.

Aim. At a meal, you mean, if one may guess your sense by your bulk.

Bon. Not in my life, sir: I have fed purely upon ale: I have eat my ale, drank my ale, and I always sleep upon ale.

Enter tapster, with a tankard.

Now, sir, you shall see—[*Filling it out.*] Your worship's health: Ha! delicious, delicious——fancy it Burgundy; only fancy it, and 'tis worth ten shillings a quart.

Aim. [*Drinks.*] 'Tis confounded strong.

Bon. Strong! It must be so, or how should we be strong that drink it?

Aim. And have you lived so long upon this ale, landlord.

Bon. Eight-and-fifty years, upon my credit, sir; but it killed my wife, poor woman! as the saying is.

Aim. How came that to pass?

Bon. I don't know how, sir; she would not let the ale take its natural course, sir; she was for qualifying it every now and then with a dram, as the saying is; and an honest gentleman, that came this way from Ireland, made her a present of a dozen bottles of usquebaugh——but the poor woman was never well after; but, however, I was obliged to the gentleman, you know.

Aim. Why, was it the usquebaugh that killed her?

Bon. My lady Bountiful said so——she, good lady, did what could be done: she cured her of three tympanies, but the fourth carried her off; but she's happy, and I'm contented, as the saying is.

Aim. Who's that lady Bountiful, you mention-ed?

Bon. Odds my life, sir, we'll drink her health. [*Drinks.*] My lady Bountiful is one of the best of women: her last husband, sir Charles Bountiful, left her worth a thousand pounds a-year; and, I believe, she lays out one half on't in charitable uses, for the good of her neighbours; she cures rheumatisms, ruptures, and broken shins, in men: green-sickness, obstructions, and fits of the mother in women; the king's evil, chin-cough, and chilblains in children: in short, she has cured more people in and about Litchfield within ten years, than the doctors have killed in twenty, and that's a bold word.

Aim. Has the lady been any other way useful in her generation?

Bon. Yes, sir; she has a daughter, by sir Charles, the finest woman in all our country, and the greatest fortune; she has a son, too, by her first husband, squire Sullen, who married a fine lady from London t'other day; if you please, sir, we'll drink his health.

Aim. What sort of a man is he?

Bon. Why, sir, the man's well enough; says little, thinks less, and does—nothing at all, faith; but he's a man of great estate, and values nobody.

Aim. A sportsman, I suppose?

Bon. Yes, sir, he's a man of pleasure: he plays at whist, and smokes his pipe eight-and-forty hours together sometimes.

Aim. A fine sportsman truly! and married, you say?

Bon. Ay, and to a curious woman, sir. But he's a—He wants it here, sir.

[*Pointing to his forehead.*

Aim. He has it there, you mean.

Bon. That's none of my business; he's my landlord; and so a man, you know, would not—But ecod, he's no better than——sir, my humble service to you. [*Drinks.*] Though I value not a farthing what he can do to me; I pay him his rent at quarter-day; I have a good running trade; I have but one daughter, and I can give her—But no matter for that.

Aim. You're very happy, Mr Boniface. Pray, what other company have you in town?

Bon. A power of fine ladies; and then we have the French officers.

Aim. O, that's right; you have a good many of those gentlemen: pray, how do you like their company?

Bon. So well, as the saying is, that I could wish we had as many more of them: they're full of money, and pay double for every thing they have; they know, sir, that we paid good round taxes for the taking of them, and so they are willing to reimburse us a little: one of them lodges in my house.

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. Landlord, there are some French gentlemen below that ask for you.

Bon. I'll wait on them——Does your master stay long in town, as the saying is?

[*To* ARCH

Arch. I can't tell, as the saying is.

Bon. Come from London?

Arch. No.

Bon. Going to London, mayhap?

Arch. No.

Bon. An odd fellow this! [*Bar-bell rings.*] I beg your worship's pardon; I'll wait on you in half a minute. [*Exit.*

Aim. The course is clear, I see——Now, my dear Archer, welcome to Litchfield.

Arch. I thank thee, my dear brother-in iniquity.

Aim. Iniquity! prithee leave canting; you need not change your style with your dress.

Arch. Don't mistake me, Aimwell; for 'tis still my maxim, that there's no scandal like rags, nor any crime so shameful as poverty. Men must not be poor; idleness is the root of all evil; the world's wide enough, let them bustle: fortune has taken the weak under her protection, but men of sense are left to their industry.

Aim. Upon which topic we proceed, and, I think, luckily hitherto. Would not any man swear now, that I am a man of quality, and you my servant, when, if our intrinsic value were known———

Arch. Come, come, we are the men of intrinsic value, who can strike our fortunes out of ourselves; whose worth is independent of accidents in life, or revolutions in government: we have heads to get money, and hearts to spend it.

Aim. As to our hearts, I grant ye, they are as willing tits as any within twenty degrees; but I can have no great opinion of our heads, from the service they have done us hitherto, unless it be, that they brought us from London hither to Litchfield, made me a lord, and you my servant.

Arch. That's more than you could expect already. But what money have we left?

Aim. But two hundred pounds.

Arch. And our horses, clothes, rings, &c.——Why, we have very good fortunes now for moderate people: and let me tell you, that this two hundred pounds, with the experience that we are now masters of, is a better estate than the ten thousand we have spent—our friends, indeed, began to suspect that our pockets were low; but we came off with flying colours, shewed no signs of want, either in word or deed.

Aim. Aye, and our going to Brussels was a good pretence enough for our sudden disappearing; and, I warrant you, our friends imagine that we are gone a volunteering.

Arch. Why, 'faith, if this project fails, it must e'en come to that. I am for venturing one of the hundreds, if you will, upon this knight errantry; but, in case it should fail, we'll reserve the other to carry us to some counterscarp, where we may die as we lived, in a blaze.

Aim. With all my heart; and we have lived justly, Archer; we can't say that we have spent our fortunes, but that we have enjoyed them.

Arch. Right; so much pleasure for so much money; we have had our penny-worths; and, had I millions, I would go to the same market again. O London, London! Well, we have had our share, and let us be thankful: past pleasures, for aught I know, are best, such as we are sure of: those to come may disappoint us. But you command for the day, and so I submit. At Nottingham, you know, I am to be master.

Aim. And at Lincoln I again.

Arch. Then, at Norwich, I mount, which, I think, shall be our last stage; for, if we fail there, we'll embark for Holland, bid adieu to Venus, and welcome Mars.

Aim. A match!

Enter BONIFACE.

Mum.

Bon. What will your worship please to have for supper?

Aim. What have you got?

Bon. Sir, we have a delicate piece of beef in the pot, and a pig at the fire.

Aim. Good supper-meat, I must confess——I can't eat beef, landlord.

Arch. And I have pig.

Aim. Hold your prating, sirrah! Do you know who you are? [*Aside.*

Bon. Please to bespeak something else; I have every thing in the house.

Aim. Have you any veal?

Bon. Veal! sir, we had a delicate loin of veal on Wednesday last.

Aim. Have you got any fish, or wild-fowl?

Bon. As for your fish, truly, sir, we are an inland town, and indifferently provided with fish, that's the truth on't; but, then, for wild-fowl! we have a delicate couple of rabbits.

Aim. Get me the rabbits fricasseed.

Bon. Fricasseed! Lard, sir, they'll eat much better smothered with onions.

Arch. Pshaw! Rot your onions.

Aim. Again, sirrah! Well, landlord, what you please; but, hold—I have a small charge of money, and your house is so full of strangers, that I believe it may be safer in your custody than mine; for, when this fellow of mine gets drunk, he minds nothing—Here, sirrah, reach me the strong box.

Arch. Yes sir—this will give us reputation. [*Aside. Brings the box*

Aim. Here, landlord, the locks are sealed down, both for your security and mine; it holds somewhat above two hundred pounds: if you doubt it, I'll count them to you after supper; but be sure you lay it where I may have it at a minute's warning; for my affairs are a little dubious at present; perhaps I may be gone in half an hour; perhaps I may be your guest till the best part of that be spent; and, pray, order your ostler to keep my horses ready saddled: but one thing above the rest, I must beg that you will let this fellow have none of your anno do-

mini, as you call it; for hes the most insufferable sot—— Here, sirrah, light me to my chamber.

Arch. Yes, sir. [*Exit, lighted by* ARCHER.

Bon. Cherry, daughter Cherry!

Enter CHERRY.

Cher. D'ye call, father?

Bon. Aye, child; you must lay by this box for the gentleman; 'tis full of money.

Cher. Money! is all that money? why sure, father, the gentleman comes to be chosen parliament-man. Who is he?

Bon. I don't know what to make of him; he talks of keeping his horses ready saddled, and of going perhaps at a minute's warning, or of staying perhaps till the best part of this be spent.

Cher. Aye! ten to one, father, he's a highwayman!

Bon. A highwayman! Upon my life, girl, you have hit it, and this box is some new purchased booty. Now, could we find him out, the money were ours.

Cher. He don't belong to our gang.

Bon. What horses have they?

Cher. The master rides upon a black.

Bon. A black! ten to one the man upon the black mare! and, since he don't belong to our fraternity, we may betray him with a safe conscience. I don't think it lawful to harbour any rogues but my own. Look'e, child, as the saying is, we must go cunningly to work; proofs we must have. The gentleman's servant loves drink; I'll ply him that way; and ten to one he loves a wench; you must work him t'other way.

Cher. Father, would you have me give my secret for his?

Bon. Consider, child, there's two hundred pounds to boot. [*Ringing without.*] Coming, coming——Child, mind your business.

[*Exit* BONIFACE.

Cher. What a rogue is my father! My father! I deny it——My mother was a good, generous, free-hearted woman, and I can't tell how far her good-nature might have extended for the good of her children. This landlord of mine, for I think I can call him no more, would betray his guest, and debauch his daughter into the bargain—by a footman, too!

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. What footman, pray, mistress, is so happy as to be the subject of your contemplation?

Cher. Whoever he is, friend, he'll be but little the better for it.

Arch. I hope so, for I'm sure you did not think of me.

Cher. Suppose I had?

Arch. Why, then, you're but even with me; for the minute I came in, I was considering in what manner I should make love to you.

Cher. Love to me, friend!

Arch. Yes, child.

Cher. Child! Manners; if you kept a little more distance, friend, it would become you much better.

Arch. Distance! good-night, sauce-box.

[*Going.*

Cher. A pretty fellow! I like his pride—Sir; pray, sir; you see, sir, [ARCHER *returns.*] I have the credit to be trusted with your master's fortune here, which sets me a degree above his footman. I hope, sir, you an't affronted?

Arch. Let me look you full in the face, and I'll tell you whether you can affront me or no.—'Sdeath, child, you have a pair of delicate eyes, and you don't know what to do with them.

Cher. Why, sir, don't I see every body?

Arch. Aye; but if some women had them, they would kill every body. Prithee, instruct me; I would fain make love to you, but I don't know what to say.

Cher. Why, did you never make love to any body before?

Arch. Never to a person of your figure, I can assure you, madam; my addresses have always been confined to persons within my own sphere; I never aspired so high before. [ARCHER *sings.*

But you look so bright
And dressed so tight,
That a man would swear you're right,
As arm was e'er laid over.
Such an air
You freely wear
To ensnare,
As makes each guest a lover:
Since, then, my dear, I'm your guest,
Prythee, give me of the best
Of what is ready drest.
Since, then, my dear, &c.

Cher. What can I think of this man? [*Aside.*] Will you give me that song, sir?

Arch. Ay, my dear, take it while it is warm. [*Kisses her.*] Death and fire! her lips are honeycombs.

Cher. And I wish there had been a swarm of bees, too, to have stung you for your impudence.

Arch. There's a swarm of Cupids, my little Venus, that has done the business much better.

Cher. This fellow is misbegotten as well as I. [*Aside.*] What's your name, sir?

Arch. Name! I gad, I have forgot it. [*Aside.*] Oh, Martin.

Cher. Where was you born?

Arch. In St Martin's parish.

Cher. What was your father?

Arch. Of——of——St Martin's parish.

Cher. Then, friend, good night.

Arch. I hope not.

Cher. You may depend upon't.

Arch. Upon what?

Cher. That you're very impudent.

Arch. That you are very handsome.
Cher. That you're a footman.
Arch. That you're an angel.
Cher. I shall be rude.
Arch. So shall I.
Cher. Let go my hand.
Arch. Give me a kiss. [*Kisses her.*
[BONIFACE *calls without*, CHERRY, CHERRY !]

Cher. I'm———My father calls ! you plaguy devil, how durst you stop my breath so !—— Offer to follow me one step, if you dare. [*Exit.*

Arch. A fair challenge, by this light ! this is a pretty fair opening of an adventure ; but we are knight-errants, and so fortune be our guide. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A *gallery in* LADY BOUNTIFUL'S *house.*

MRS SULLEN *and* DORINDA *meeting.*

Dor. MORROW, my dear sister; are you for church this morning?

Mrs Sul. Any where to pray ; for heaven alone can help me : but I think, Dorinda, there's no form of prayer in the liturgy against bad husbands.

Dor. But there's a form of law at Doctor's Commons; and I swear, sister Sullen, rather than see you thus continually discontented, I would advise you to apply to that: for, besides the part that I bear in your vexatious broils, as being sister to the husband, and friend to the wife, your examples give me such an impression of matrimony, that I shall be apt to condemn my person to a long vacation all its life. But supposing, madam, that you brought it to a case of separation, what can you urge against your husband? My brother is, first, the most constant man alive.

Mrs Sul. The most constant husband, I grant ye.

Dor. He never sleeps from you.

Mrs Sul. No, he always sleeps with me.

Dor. He allows you a maintenance suitable to your quality.

Mrs Sul. A maintenance ! Do you take me, madam, for an hospital child, that I must sit down and bless my benefactors for meat, drink, and clothes? As I take it, madam, I brought your brother ten thousand pounds, out of which I might expect some pretty things called pleasures.

Dor. You share in all the pleasures the country affords.

Mrs Sul. Country pleasures ! Racks and torments ! Dost think, child, that my limbs were made for leaping of ditches, and clambering over stiles? Or, that my parents, wisely foreseeing my future happiness in country pleasures, had early instructed me in rural accomplishments, of drinking fat ale, playing at whist, and smoking tobacco with my husband? or of spreading of plasters, brewing of diet drinks, and stilling rosemary-water, with the good old gentlewoman, my mother-in-law?

Dor. I'm sorry, madam, that it is not more in our power to divert you. I could wish, indeed, that our entertainments were a little more polite, or your taste a little less refined ; but pray, madam, how came the poets and philosophers, that laboured so much in hunting after pleasure, to place it at last in a country life?

Mrs Sul. Because they wanted money, child, to find out the pleasures of the town. Did you ever hear of a poet or philosopher worth ten thousand pounds? If you can shew me such a man, I'll lay you fifty pounds you'll find him somewhere within the weekly bills. Not that I disapprove rural pleasures, as the poets have painted them in their landscapes; every Phillis has her Corydon ; every murmuring stream, and every flowery mead, gives fresh alarm to love. Besides, you'll find that their couples were never married. But yonder I see my Corydon, and a sweet swain it is, Heaven knows ! Come, Dorinda, don't be angry ; he's my husband, and your brother, and, between both, is he not a sad brute?

Dor. I have nothing to say to your part of him ; you're the best judge.

Mrs Sul. O, sister, sister, sister ! if ever you marry, beware of a sullen, silent sot; one that's always musing, but never thinks.—There's some diversion in a talking blockhead; and since a woman must wear chains, I would have the pleasure of hearing them rattle a little. Now you shall see; but take this, by the way; he came home this morning at his usual hour of four, wakened me out of a sweet dream of something else, by tumbling over the tea-table, which he broke all to pieces. After his man and he had rolled about the room, like sick passengers in a storm, he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon into a fishmonger's basket; his feet cold as ice : his breath hot as a furnace; and his hands and his face as greasy as his flannel night cap—Oh, matrimony ! matrimony !—He tosses up the clothes with a barbarous swing over his shoulders, disorders the whole economy of my bed, leaves me half-naked, and my whole night's comfort is the tuneable serenade of that wakeful nightingale his nose.—O, the pleasure of counting the melancholy clock by a snoring husband !——But now, sister, you shall see how handsomely, being a well-bred man, he will beg my pardon.

Enter SULLEN.

Sul. My head aches consummedly.

Mrs Sul. Will you be pleased, my dear, to drink tea with us this morning? it may do your head good.

Sul. No.

Dor. Coffee, brother?

Sul. Pshaw!

Mrs Sul. Will you please dress, and go to church with me? the air may help you.

Sul. Scrub!

Enter SCRUB.

Scrub. Sir!

Sul. What day o' the week is this?

Scrub. Sunday, an't please your worship.

Sul. Sunday! Bring me a dram; and, d'ye hear, set out the venison-pasty, and a tankard of strong beer upon the hall-table; I'll go to breakfast. [*Going.*

Dor. Stay, stay, brother; you shan't get off so; you were very naughty last night, and must make your wife reparation. Come, come, brother; won't you ask pardon?

Sul. For what?

Dor. For being drunk last night.

Sul. I am afford it, can't I?

Mrs Sul. But I can't, sir.

Sul. Then you may let it alone.

Mrs Sul. But I must tell you, sir, that this is not to be borne.

Sul. I'm glad on't.

Mrs Sul. What is the reason, sir, that you use me thus inhumanly?

Sul. Scrub!

Scrub. Sir!

Sul. Get things ready to shave my head.

[*Exit* SULLEN.

Mrs Sul. Have a care of coming near his temples, Scrub, for fear you meet something there that may turn the edge of your razor.—[*Exit* SCRUB.]—Inveterate stupidity! Did you ever know so hard, so obstinate a spleen as his? Oh, sister, sister! I shall never have any good of the beast, till I get him to town; London, dear London, is the place for managing and breaking a husband.

Dor. And has not a husband the same opportunities there for humbling a wife?

Mrs Sul. No, no, child; 'tis a standing maxim in conjugal discipline, that, when a man would enslave his wife, he hurries her into the country; and, when a lady would be arbitrary with her husband, she wheedles her booby up to town. A man dare not play the tyrant in London, because there are so many examples to encourage the subject to rebel. O, Dorinda, Dorinda! A fine woman may do any thing in London. O' my conscience, she may raise an army of forty thousand men!

Dor. I fancy, sister, you have a mind to be trying your power that way here, in Litchfield; you have drawn the French count to your colours already.

Mrs Sul. The French are a people that can't live without their gallantries.

Dor. And some English that I know, sister, are not averse to such amusements.

Mrs Sul. Well, sister, since the truth must out, it may do as well now, as hereafter. I think one way to rouse my lethargic, sottish husband, is to give him a rival; security begets negligence in all people, and men must be alarmed to make them alert in their duty. Women are, like pictures, of no value in the hands of a fool, till he hears men of sense bid high for the purchase.

Dor. This might do, sister, if my brother's understanding were to be convinced into a passion for you; but, I believe, there's a natural aversion on his side; and I fancy, sister, that you don't come much behind him, if you dealt fairly.

Mrs Sul. I own it; we are united contradictions, fire and water. But I could be contented, with a great many other wives, to humour the censorious vulgar, and give the world an appearance of living well with my husband, could I bring him but to dissemble a little kindness, to keep me in countenance.

Dor. But how do you know, sister, but that, instead of rousing your husband, by this artifice, to a counterfeit kindness, he should awake in a real fury?

Mrs Sul. Let him. If I can't entice him to the one, I would provoke him to the other.

Dor. But how must I behave myself between ye?

Mrs Sul. You must assist me.

Dor. What, against my own brother?

Mrs Sul. He's but half a brother, and I'm your entire friend. If I go a step beyond the bounds of honour, leave me; till then, I expect you should go along with me in every thing.—— The count is to dine here to-day.

Dor. 'Tis a strange thing, sister, that I can't like that man.

Mrs Sul. You like nothing; your time is not come. Love and death have their fatalities, and strike home, one time or other. You'll pay for all, one day, I warrant ye. But come; my lady's tea is ready, and 'tis almost church-time.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Inn.*

Enter ARIMWELL *dressed, and* ARCHER.

Aim. And was she the daughter of the house?

Arch. The landlord is so blind as to think so; but, I dare swear, she has better blood in her veins.

Aim. Why dost thou think so?

Arch. Because the baggage has a pert *je ne scai quoi*; she reads plays, keeps a monkey, and is troubled with vapours.

Aim. By which discoveries, I guess that you know more of her.

Arch. Not yet, faith. The lady gives herself airs, forsooth; nothing under a gentleman.

Aim. Let me take her in hand.

Arch. Say one word more of that, and I'll declare myself, spoil your sport there, and every where else. Look ye, Aimwell; every man in his own sphere.

Aim. Right; and therefore you must pimp for your master.

Arch. In the usual forms, good sir, after I have served myself—But to our business. You are so well dressed, Tom, and make so handsome a figure, that I fancy you may do execution in a country church; the exterior part strikes first, and you're in the right to make that impression favourable.

Aim. There's something in that, which may turn to advantage. The appearance of a stranger in a country church, draws as many gazers as a blazing star: no sooner he comes into the cathedral, but a train of whispers runs buzzing round the congregation in a moment. Who is he? Whence comes he? Do you know him?—Then I, sir, tips me the verger half-a-crown; he pockets the simony, and inducts me into the best pew in the church; I pull out my snuff-box, turn myself round, bow to the bishop, or the dean, if he be the commanding officer, single out a beauty, rivet both my eyes to hers, set my nose a bleeding by the strength of imagination, and shew the whole church my concern, by my endeavouring to hide it. After the sermon, the whole town gives me to her for a lover, and, by persuading the lady that I am dying for her, the tables are turned, and she in good earnest falls in love with me.

Arch. There's nothing in this, Tom, without a precedent; but, instead of rivetting your eyes to a beauty, try to fix them upon a fortune; that's our business at present.

Aim. Pshaw! No woman can be a beauty without a fortune. Let me alone for a marksman.

Arch. Tom!

Aim. Aye!

Arch. When were you at church, before, pray?

Aim. Um—I was there at the coronation.

Arch. And how can you expect a blessing by going to church now?

Aim. Blessing! Nay, Frank, I ask but for a wife.

[*Exit* AIMWELL.

Arch. Truly, the man is not very unreasonable in his demands.

[*Exit* ARCHER, *at the opposite door.*

Enter BONIFACE *and* CHERRY.

Bon. Well, daughter, as the saying is, have you brought Martin to confess?

Cher. Pray, father, don't put me upon getting any thing out of a man; I'm but young, you know, father, and don't understand wheedling.

Bon. Young! Why, you jade, as the saying is, can any woman wheedle that is not young? Your mother was useless at five-and-twenty.—Would you make your mother a whore, and me a cuckold, as the saying is! I tell you, his silence confesses it, and his master spends his money so freely, and is so much a gentleman every manner of way, that he must be a highwayman.

Enter GIBBET *in a cloak.*

Gib. Landlord, landlord, is the coast clear?

Bon. O, Mr Gibbet, what's the news?

Gib. No matter, ask no questions, all's fair and honourable; here, my dear Cherry—[*Gives her a bag.*]—Two hundred sterling pounds, as good as ever hanged or saved a rogue; lay them by with the rest; and here—three wedding—or mourning rings; 'tis much the same, you know. Here, two silver hilted swords; I took these from fellows that never shew any part of their swords but the hilts. Here is a diamond necklace, which the lady hid in the privatest place in the coach, but I found it out. This gold watch I took from a pawnbroker's wife; it was left in her hands by a person of quality; there's the arms upon the case.

Cher. But who had you the money from?

Gib. Ah! Poor woman, I pitied her; from a poor lady just eloped from her husband. She had made up her cargo, and was bound for Ireland, as hard as she could drive; she told me of her husband's barbarous usage, and so, faith, I left her half-a-crown. But I had almost forgot, my dear Cherry; I have a present for you.

Cher. What is't?

Gib. A pot of ceruse, my child, that I took out of a lady's under-petticoat pocket.

Cher. What, Mr Gibbet, do you think that I paint?

Gib. Why, you jade, your betters do. I'm sure the lady, that I took it from, had a coronet upon her handkerchief——Here, take my cloak, and go secure the premises.

Cher. I will secure them. [*Exit.*

Bon. But, hark ye, where's Hounslow and Bagshot?

Gib. They'll be here to-night.

Bon. D'ye know of any other gentleman o' the pad on this road?

Gib. No.

Bon. I fancy that I have two that lodge in the house just now.

Gib. The devil! how d'ye smoke them?

Bon. Why, the one is gone to church.

Gib. To church! That's suspicious, I must confess.

Bon. And the other is now in his master's chamber: he pretends to be a servant to the

other; we'll call him out, and pump him a little.

Gib. With all my heart.

Bon. Mr Martin! Mr Martin!

Enter ARCHER, *combing a periwig, and singing.*

Gib. The roads are consumed deep; I'm as dirty as old Brentford at Christmas.——A good pretty fellow, that; whose servant are you, friend?

Arch. My master's.

Gib. Really?

Arch. Really.

Gib. That's much.—That fellow has been at the bar, by his evasions.—But pray, sir, what is your master's name?

Arch. Tall, all, dall! [*Sings, and combs the periwig.*] This is the most obstinate curl——

Gib. I ask you his name?

Arch. Name, sir?—Tall, all, dall!—I never asked him his name in all my life—Tall, all, dall!

Bon. What think you now?

Gib. Plain, plain; he talks now, as if he were before a judge. But pray, friend, which way does your master travel?

Arch. A horseback.

Gib. Very well, again; an old offender—Right—But I mean, does he go upwards or downwards?

Arch. Downwards, I fear, sir—Tall, lall!

Gib. I'm afraid thy fate will be a contrary way.

Bon. Ha, ha, ha! Mr Martin, you're very arch.—This gentleman is only travelling towards Chester, and would be glad of your company, that's all.——Come, captain, you'll stay to-night, I suppose; I'll show you a chamber.——Come, captain.

Gib. Farewell, friend—— [*Exeunt.*

Arch. Captain, your servant.—Captain! a pretty fellow! 'sdeath! I wonder that the officers of the army don't conspire to beat all scoundrels in red, but their own.

Enter CHERRY.

Cher. Gone, and Martin here? I hope he did not listen: I would have the merit of the discovery all my own, because I would oblige him to love me. [*Aside.*] Mr Martin, who was that man with my father?

Arch. Some recruiting serjeant, or whipped-out trooper, I suppose.

Cher. All's safe, I find. [*Aside.*

Arch. Come, my dear; have you conned over the catechise I taught you last night?

Cher. Come, question me.

Arch. What is love?

Cher. Love is, I know not what; it comes, I know not how; goes, I know not when.

Arch. Very well, an apt scholar. [*Chucks her under the chin.*] Where does love enter?

Cher. Into the eyes.

Arch. And where go out?

Cher. I won't tell you.

Arch. What are the objects of that passion?

Cher. Youth, beauty, and clean linen.

Arch. The reason?

Cher. The two first are fashionable in nature, and the third at court.

Arch. That's my dear! What are the signs and tokens of that passion?

Cher. A stealing look, a stammering tongue, words improbable, designs impossible, and actions impracticable.

Arch. That's my good child; kiss me——What must a lover do to obtain his mistress?

Cher. He must adore the person that disdains him; he must bribe the chambermaid that betrays him; and court the footman that laughs at him.—He must, he must——

Arch. Nay, child, I must whip you, if you don't mind your lesson: he must treat his——

Cher. O! aye. He must treat his enemies with respect, his friends with indifference, and all the world with contempt; he must suffer much, and fear more; he must desire much, and hope little; in short, he must embrace his ruin, and throw himself away.

Arch. Had ever man so hopeful a pupil as mine! Come, my dear; why is love called a riddle?

Cher. Because, being blind, he leads those that see; and, though a child, he governs a man.

Arch. Mighty well!—And why is love pictured blind?

Cher. Because the painters, out of their weakness, or the privilege of their art, chose to hide those eyes they could not draw.

Arch. That's my dear little scholar; kiss me again——And why should love, that's a child, govern a man?

Cher. Because that a child is the end of love.

Arch. And so ends love's catechism.——And now, my dear, we'll go in, and make my master's bed?

Cher. Hold, hold, Mr Martin——you have taken a great deal of pains to instruct me, and what d'ye think I have learned by it?

Arch. What?

Cher. That your discourse and your habit are contradictions, and it would be nonsense in me to believe you a footman any longer.

Arch. 'Oons, what a witch it is!

Cher. Depend upon this, sir, nothing in that garb shall ever tempt me: for though I was born to servitude, I hate it.——Own your condition, swear you love me, and then——

Arch. And then we shall go make my master's bed?

Cher. Yes.

Arch. You must know, then, that I am born a gentleman; my education was liberal; but I went to London a younger brother, fell into the hands of sharpers, who stript me of my money; my

friends disowned me, and now my necessity brings me to what you see.

Cher. Then take my hand——promise to marry me before you sleep, and I'll make you master of two thousand pounds.

Arch. How!

Cher. Two thousand pounds that I have this minute in my own custody; so throw off your livery this instant, and I'll go find a parson.

Arch. What said you? a parson?

Cher. What! do you scruple?

Arch. Scruple! no, no; but—two thousand pounds, you say?

Cher. And better.

Arch. 'Sdeath! what shall I do?——But hark-ye, child; what need you make me master of yourself and money, when you may have the same pleasure out of me, and still keep your fortune in your own hands?

Cher. Then you wont marry me?

Arch. I would marry you, but——

Cher. O, sweet sir, I'm your humble servant; you're fairly caught. Would you persuade me that any gentleman, who could bear the scandal of wearing a livery, would refuse two thousand pounds, let the condition be what it would—No, no, sir—But I hope you'll pardon the freedom I have taken, since it was only to inform myself of the respect that I ought to pay to you.

[*Going.*

Arch. Fairly bit, by Jupiter!—Hold, hold! and have you actually two thousand pounds?

Cher. Sir, I have my secrets, as well as you—when you please to be more open, I shall be more free; and be assured, that I have discoveries that will match yours, be they what they will.——In the mean while, be satisfied, that no discovery I make shall ever hurt you; but beware of my father.—— [*Exit.*

Arch. So—we're like to have as many adventures in our inn, as Don Quixotte had in his.—Let me see—two thousand pounds! If the wench would promise to die when the money were spent, i'gad, one would marry her: but the fortune may go off in a year or two, and the wife may live—Lord knows how long! Then an innkeeper's daughter! Aye, that's the devil—there my pride brings me off.

For whatsoe'er the sages charge on pride,
The angels' fall, and twenty faults beside;
On earth, I'm sure, 'mong us of mortal calling,
Pride saves man oft, and woman, too, from falling. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Lady* BOUNTIFUL'S *house.*

Enter MRS SULLEN *and* DORINDA.

Mrs Sul. Ha, ha, ha! my dear sister! let me embrace thee; now we are friends, indeed; for I shall have a secret of yours as a pledge for mine——Now you'll be good for something; I shall have you conversible in the subjects of the sex.

Dor. But do you think that I am so weak as to fall in love with a fellow at first sight?

Mrs Sul. Pshaw! now you spoil all; why should not we be as free in our friendships as the men? I warrant you, the gentleman has got to his confidant already, has avowed his passion, toasted your health, called you ten thousand angels, has run over your lips, eyes, neck, shape, air, and every thing, in a description that warms their mirth to a second enjoyment.

Dor. Your hand, sister: I an't well.

Mrs Sul So—she's breeding already—Come, child, up with it—hem a little—so—Now, tell me, don't you like the gentleman that we saw at church just now?

Dor. The man's well enough.

Mrs Sul. Well enough! Is he not a demi-god, a Narcissus, a star, the man i' the moon?

Dor. O, sister, I'm extremely ill.

Mrs Sul. Shall I send to your mother, child, for a little cephalic plaster, to put to the soles of your feet? Or shall I send to the gentleman for something for you?—Come, unbosom yourself—the man is perfectly a pretty fellow; I saw him when he first came into church.

Dor. I saw him too, sister, and with an air that shone, methought, like rays about his person.

Mrs Sul. Well said; up with it.

Dor. No forward coquette behaviour, no air to set him off, no studied looks, nor artful posture——but nature did it all——

Mrs Sul. Better and better——One touch more—Come——

Dor. But then his looks—did you observe his eyes?

Mrs Sul. Yes, yes, I did——his eyes; well, what of his eyes?

Dor. Sprightly, but not wandering; they seemed to view, but never gazed on any thing but me—and then his looks so humble were, and yet so noble, that they aimed to tell me, that he could with pride die at my feet, though he scorned slavery any where else.

Mrs Sul. The physic works purely——How d'ye find yourself now, my dear?

Dor. Hem! Much better, my dear—Oh, here comes our Mercury!

Enter SCRUB.

Well, Scrub, what news of the gentleman?

Scrub. Madam, I have brought you a whole packet of news.

Dor. Open it quickly; come.

Scrub. In the first place, I enquired who the gentleman was? They told me he was a stranger. Secondly, I asked what the gentleman was? They answered and said, that they never saw him before. Thirdly, I enquired what countryman he was? They replied, 'twas more than they knew. Fourthly, I demanded whence he came? Their answer was, they could not tell. And, fifthly, I asked whither he went? And they replied, they knew nothing of the matter——And this is all I could learn.

Mrs Sul. But what do the people say? Can't they guess?

Scrub. Why some think he's a spy, some guess he's a mountebank, some say one thing, some another; but, for my own part, I believe he's a jesuit.

Dor. A jesuit! why a jesuit?

Scrub. Because he keeps his horses always ready saddled, and his footman talks French.

Mrs Sul. His footman!

Scrub. Ay, he and the count's footman were gabbering French like two intriguing ducks in a mill-pond; and I believe they talked of me, for they laughed consumedly.

Dor. What sort of livery has the footman?

Scrub. Livery! Lord, madam, I took him for a captain, he's so bedizened with lace; and then he has tops to his shoes, up to his mid-leg, a silver-headed cane dangling at his knuckles:—he carries his hands in his pockets, and walks just so—[*Walks in a French air.*] and has a fine long perriwig, tied up in a bag—Lord, madam, he's clear another sort of a man than I.

Mrs Sul. That may easily be——But what shall we do now, sister?

Dor. I have it——This fellow has a world of simplicity, and some cunning; the first hides the latter by abundance——Scrub!

Scrub. Madam.

Dor. We have a great mind to know who this gentleman is, only for our satisfaction.

Scrub. Yes, madam, it would be a satisfaction, no doubt.

Dor. You must go and get acquainted with his footman, and invite him hither to drink a bottle of your ale, because you're butler today.

Scrub. Yes, madam; I am butler every Sunday.

Mrs Sul. O brave sister! o' my conscience, you understand the mathematics already—'Tis the best plot in the world! Your mother, you know, will be gone to church, my spouse will be got to the alehouse with his scoundrels, and the house will be our own—so we drop in by accident, and ask the fellow some questions ourselves. In the country, you know, any stranger is company, and we're glad to take up with the butler in a country dance, and happy if he will do us the favour.

Scrub. Oh, madam, you wrong me; I never refused your ladyship the favour in my life.

Enter GIPSEY.

Gip. Ladies, dinner's upon table.

Dor. Scrub, we'll excuse your waiting——Go where we ordered you.

Scrub. I shall.

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Inn.*

Enter AIMWELL *and* ARCHER.

Arch. Well, Tom, I find you're a marksman.

Aim. A marksman! who so blind could be as not discern a swan among the ravens?

Arch. Well, but hark'e, Aimwell.

Aim. Aimwell! call me Oroondates, Cesario, Amadis, all that romance can in a lover paint, and then I'll answer. Oh, Archer! I read her thousands in her looks; she looked like Ceres in her harvest; corn, wine, and oil, milk, honey, gardens, groves, and purling streams, played on her plenteous face.

Arch. Her face! her pocket, you mean! the corn, wine, and oil lie there. In short, she has twenty thousand pounds; that's the English on't.

Aim. Her eyes———

Arch. Are demi-cannons, to be sure; so I won't stand their battery. [*Going.*

Aim. Pray, excuse me; my passion must have vent.

Arch. Passion! what a plague! d'ye think these romantic airs will do our business? were my temper as extravagant as yours, my adventures have something more romantic by half.

Aim. Your adventures?

Arch. Yes.

'The nymph, that with her twice ten hundred pounds,
'With brazen engine hot, and coif clear starched,
'Can fire the guest in warming of the bed'——

There's a touch of sublime Milton for you, and the subject but an innkeeper's daughter! I can play with a girl as an angler does with his fish; he keeps it at the end of his line, runs it up the stream, and down the stream, till at last he brings it to hand, tickles the trout, and so whips it into his basket.

Enter BONIFACE.

Bon. Mr Martin, as the saying is——yonder's an honest fellow below, my lady Bountiful's butler, who begs the honour that you would go home with him, and see his cellar.

Arch. Do my baise-mains to the gentleman, and tell him I will do myself the honour to wait on him immediately, as the saying is.

[*Exit, bowing obsequiously.*

Aim. What do I hear? soft Orpheus play, and fair Toftida sing!

Arch. Pshaw! Damn your raptures! I tell you here's a pump going to be put into the vessel, and the ship will get into harbour, my life on't. You say there's another lady very handsome there?

Aim. Yes, faith.

Arch. I'm in love with her already.

Aim. Can't you give me a bill upon Cherry in the mean time?

Arch. No, no, friend; all her corn, wine, and oil is ingrossed to my market. And, once more, I warn you, to keep your anchorage clear of mine; for if you fall foul of me, by this light, you shall go to the bottom!—What! make a prize of my little frigate, while I'm upon the cruize for you? You're a pretty fellow indeed! [*Exit* ARCH.

Enter BONIFACE.

Aim. Well, well, I won't.——Landlord, have you any tolerable company in the house? I don't care for dining alone.

Bon. Yes, sir; there's a captain below, as the saying is, that arrived about an hour ago.

Aim. Gentlemen of his coat are welcome every where; will you make a compliment for me, and tell him, I should be glad of his company, that's all.

Bon. Who shall I tell him, sir, would——

Aim. Ha! that stroke was well thrown in—— I'm only a traveller, like himself, and would be glad of his company, that's all.

Bon. I obey your commands, as the saying is. [*Exit* BON.

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. 'Sdeath! I had forgot; what title will you give yourself?

Aim. My brother's, to be sure; he would never give me any thing else; so I'll make bold with his honour this bout. You know the rest of your cue?

Arch. Ay, ay. [*Exit* ARCH.

Enter GIBBET.

Gib. Sir, I'm yours.

Aim. 'Tis more than I deserve, sir, for I don't know you.

Gib. I don't wonder at that, sir, for you never saw me before——I hope. [*Aside.*

Aim. And pray, sir, how came I by the honour of seeing you now?

Gib. Sir, I scorn to intrude upon any gentleman—but my landlord———

Aim. O, sir, I ask your pardon; you're the captain he told me of?

Gib. At your service, sir.

Aim. What regiment, may I be so bold?

Gib. A marching regiment, sir; an old corps.

Aim. Very old, if your coat be regimental.—[*Aside.*]—You have served abroad, sir?

Gib. Yes, sir, in the plantations; 'twas my lot to be sent into the worst service; I would have quitted it, indeed, but a man of honour, you know—Besides, 'twas for the good of my country that I should be abroad——Any thing for the good of one's country—I'm a Roman for that.

Aim. One of the first, I'll lay my life. [*Aside.*] You found the West Indies very hot, sir?

Gib. Ay, sir, too hot for me.

Aim. Pray, sir, ha'nt I seen your face at Will's coffee-house?

Gib. Yes, sir, and at White's, too.

Aim. And where's your company, now, captain?

Gib. They an't come yet.

Aim. Why, d'ye expect them here?

Gib. They'll be here to-night, sir.

Aim. Which way do they march?

Gib. Across the country.—The devil's in't if I han't said enough to encourage him to declare—but I'm afraid he's not right, I must tack about. [*Aside.*

Aim. Is your company to quarter at Litchfield?

Gib. In this house, sir.

Aim. What, all?

Gib. My company is but thin, ha, ha, ha! we are but three, ha, ha, ha!

Aim. You're merry, sir?

Gib. Ay, sir; you must excuse me. Sir, I understand the world, especially the art of travelling. I don't care, sir, for answering questions directly upon the road—for I generally ride with a charge about me.

Aim. Three or four, I believe. [*Aside.*

Gib. I am credibly informed, that there are highwaymen upon this quarter; not, sir, that I could suspect a gentleman of your figure——But truly, sir, I have got such a way of evasion upon the road, that I don't care for speaking truth to any man.

Aim. Your caution may be necessary—Then, I presume, you're no captain?

Gib. Not I, sir; captain is a good travelling name, and so I take it; it stops a great many foolish inquiries that are generally made about gentlemen that travel: it gives a man an air of something, and makes the drawers obedient—— And thus far I am a captain, and no farther.

Aim. And, pray, sir, what is your true profession?

Gib. O, sir, you must excuse me—upon my word, sir, I don't think it safe to tell you.

Aim. Ha, ha! upon my word, I commend you.

Enter BONIFACE.

Well, Mr Boniface, what's the news?

Bon. There's another gentleman below, as the saying is, that, hearing you were but two, would be glad to make the third man, if you'd give him leave.

Aim. What is he?

Bon. A clergyman, as the saying is.

Aim. A clergyman! Is he really a clergyman? or is it only his travelling name, as my friend, the captain, has it?

Bon. O, sir, he's a priest, and chaplain to the French officers in town.

Aim. Is he a Frenchman?

Bon. Yes, sir, born at Brussels.

Gib. A Frenchman, and a priest! I won't be seen in his company, sir; I have a value for my reputation, sir.

Aim. Nay, but captain, since we are by ourselves—Can he speak English, landlord?

Bon. Very well, sir; you may know him, as the saying is, to be a foreigner, by his accent, and that's all.

Aim. Then he has been in England before?

Bon. Never, sir, but he's master of languages, as the saying is; he talks Latin; it does me good to hear him talk Latin.

Aim. Then you understand Latin, Mr Boniface?

Bon. Not I, sir, as the saying is; but he talks it so very fast, that I'm sure it must be good.

Aim. Pray, desire him to walk up.

Bon. Here he is, as the saying is.

Enter FOIGARD.

Foig. Save you, gentlemens bote.

Aim. A Frenchman!—sir, your most humble servant.

Foig. Och, dear joy, I am your most faithful shervant, and yours alsho.

Gib. Doctor, you talk very good English; but you have a mighty twang of the foreigner.

Foig. My English is very well for the vords, but we foreigners, you know, cannot bring our tongues about the pronunciation so soon.

Aim. A foreigner! a downright Teague, by this light! [*Aside.*] Were you born in France, doctor?

Foig. I was educated in France, but I was borned at Brussels: I am a subject of the king of Spain, joy.

Gib. What king of Spain, sir? Speak.

Foig. Upon my shoul, joy, I cannot tell you as yet.

Aim. Nay, captain, that was too hard upon the doctor; he's a stranger.

Foig. O let him alone, dear joy; I'm of a nation that is not easily put out of countenance.

Aim. Come, gentlemen, I'll end the dispute—Here, landlord, is dinner ready?

Bon. Upon the table, as the saying is.

Aim. Gentlemen——pray——that door.——

Bon. No, no, fait, the captain must lead.

Aim. No, doctor, the church is our guide.

Gib. Ay, ay, so it is.

[*Exit foremost, they follow.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to a gallery in* LADY BOUNTIFUL'S *house.*

Enter ARCHER *and* SCRUB *singing, and hugging one another;* SCRUB *with a tankard in his hand.* GIPSEY *listening at a distance.*

Scrub. Tall, all, dall!—Come, my dear boy—let's have that song once more.

Arch. No, no; we shall disturb the family——but will you be sure to keep the secret?

Scrub. Pho! upon my honour, as I'm a gentleman.

Arch. 'Tis enough——You must know, then, that my master is the lord viscount Aimwell; he fought a duel t'other day in London, wounded his man so dangerously, that he thinks fit to withdraw, till he hears whether the gentleman's wounds be mortal or not: he never was in this part of England before, so he chose to retire to this place; that's all.

Gib. And that's enough for me. [*Exit.*

Scrub. And where were you when your master fought?

Arch. We never know of our masters' quarrels.

Scrub. No! if our masters in the country here receive a challenge, the first thing they do is to tell their wives; the wife tells the servants, the servants alarm the tenants, and in half an hour you shall have the whole country up in arms.

Arch. To hinder two men from doing what they have no mind for——But if you should chance to talk, now, of this business?

Scrub. Talk! ah, sir, had I not learned the knack of holding my tongue, I had never lived so long in a great family.

Arch. Ay, ay, to be sure, there are secrets in all families.

Scrub. Secrets, O Lud!——but I'll say no more—Come, sit down, we'll make an end of our tankard. Here———

Arch. With all my heart: who knows but you and I may come to be better acquainted, eh?———Here's your lady's health: you have three, I think; and to be sure there must be secrets among them.

Scrub. Secrets! Ah! friend, friend!——I wish I had a friend.———

Arch. Am I not your friend? Come, you and I will be sworn brothers.

Scrub. Shall we?

Arch. From this minute———Give me a kiss! And now, brother Scrub——

Scrub. And, now, brother Martin, I will tell you a secret that will make your hair stand on end——You must know, that I am consumedly in love.

Arch. That's a terrible secret, that's the truth on't.

Scrub. That jade, Gipsey, that was with us just now in the cellar, is the arrantest whore that

ever wore a petticoat, and I'm dying for love of her.

Arch. Ha, ha, ha!——Are you in love with her person, or her virtue, brother Scrub?

Scrub. I should like virtue best, because it's more durable than beauty: for virtue holds good with some women, long and many a day after they have lost it.

Arch. In the country, I grant ye, where no woman's virtue is lost, till a bastard be found.

Scrub. Ay, could I bring her to a bastard, I should have her all to myself; but I dare not put it upon that lay, for fear of being sent for a soldier—Pray, brother, how do you gentlemen in London like that same pressing act?

Arch. Very ill, brother Scrub———'Tis the worst that ever was made for us; formerly, I remember the good days when we could dun our masters for our wages, and if they refused to pay us, we could have a warrant to carry them before a justice; but now, if we talk of eating, they have a warrant for us, and carry us before three justices.

Scrub. And to be sure we go, if we talk of eating; for the justices won't give their own servants a bad example. Now, this is my misfortune——I dare not speak in the house, while that jade, Gipsey, dings about like a fury——Once I had the better end of the staff.

Arch. And how comes the change now?

Scrub. Why, the mother of all this mischief is a priest.

Arch. A priest!

Scrub. Ay, a damned son of a whore of Babylon, that came over hither to say grace to the French officers, and eat up our provisions——There's not a day goes over his head without a dinner or supper in this house.

Arch. How came he so familiar in the family?

Scrub. Because he speaks English, as if he had lived here all his life, and tells lies, as if he had been a traveller from his cradle.

Arch. And this priest, I'm afraid, has converted the affections of your Gipsey.

Scrub. Converted! ay, and perverted, my dear friend—for I'm afraid he has made her a whore and a papist—But this is not all; there's the French count and Mrs Sullen; they're in confederacy, and for some private end of their own, too, to be sure.

Arch. A very hopeful family, yours, brother Scrub! I suppose the maiden lady has her lover, too?

Scrub. Not that I know——She's the best of them, that's the truth on't: but they take care to prevent my curiosity, by giving me so much business, that I am a perfect slave:—What d'ye think is my place in this family?

Arch. Butler, I suppose.

Scrub. Ah, Lord help your silly head!—I'll tell you—Of a Monday, I drive the coach; of a Tuesday, I drive the plough; on Wednesday, I follow the hounds; on Thursday, I dun the tenants; on Friday, I go to market; on Saturday, I draw warrants; and on Sunday, I draw beer.

Arch. Ha, ha, ha! if variety be a pleasure in life, you have enough on't, my dear brother—But what ladies are those?

Scrub. Ours, ours; that upon the right hand is Mrs Sullen, and the other Mrs Dorinda—Don't mind them; sit still, man—

Enter MRS SULLEN *and* DORINDA.

Mrs Sul. I have heard my brother talk of my lord Aimwell; but they say that his brother is the finer gentleman.

Dor. That's impossible, sister.

Mrs Sul. He's vastly rich, and very close, they say.

Dor. No matter for that; if I can creep into his heart, I'll open his breast, I warrant him: I have heard say, that people may be guessed at by the behaviour of their servants; I could wish we might talk to that fellow.

Mrs Sul. So do I; for I think he's a very pretty fellow: come this way; I'll throw out a lure for him presently.

[*They walk a turn to the opposite side of the stage.* MRS SULLEN *drops her fan;* ARCHER *runs, takes it up, and gives it to her.*]

Arch. Corn, wine, and oil, indeed!—But I think the wife has the greatest plenty of flesh and blood; she should be my choice—Ay, ay, say you so—Madam——your ladyship's fan.

Mrs Sul. O sir, I thank you——What a handsome bow the fellow made!

Dor. Bow! Why, I have known several footmen come down from London, set up here for dancing-masters, and carry off the best fortunes in the country.

Arch. [*Aside.*] That project, for aught I know, had been better than ours—Brother Scrub, why don't you introduce me?

Scrub. Ladies, this is the strange gentleman's servant that you saw at church to-day; I understood he came from London; and so I invited him to the cellar, that he might shew me the newest flourish in whetting my knives.

Dor. And I hope you have made much of him?

Arch. O yes, madam; but the strength of your ladyship's liquor is a little too potent for the constitution of your humble servant.

Mrs Sul. What, then, you don't usually drink ale?

Arch. No, madam; my constant drink is tea, or a little wine and water; 'tis prescribed me by the physician, for a remedy against the spleen.

Scrub. O la! O la!—a footman have the spleen—

Mrs Sul. I thought that distemper had been only proper to people of quality.

Arch. Madam, like all other fashions, it wears out, and so descends to their servants; though,

in a great many of us, I believe it proceeds from some melancholy particles in the blood, occasioned by the stagnation of wages.

Dor. How affectedly the fellow talks!—How long, pray, have you served your present master?

Arch. Not long: my life has been mostly spent in the service of the ladies.

Mrs Sul. And, pray, which service do you like best?

Arch. Madam, the ladies pay best; the honour of serving them is sufficient wages; there is a charm in their looks, that delivers a pleasure with their commands, and gives our duty the wings of inclination.

Mrs Sul. That flight was above the pitch of a livery: and, sir, would not you be satisfied to serve a lady again?

Arch. As groom of the chambers, madam; but not as a footman.

Mrs Sul. I suppose you served as footman before?

Arch. For that reason, I would not serve in that post again; for my memory is too weak for the load of messages that the ladies lay upon their servants in London: my lady Howd'ye, the last mistress I served, called me up one morning, and told me, Martin, go to my lady Allnight with my humble service; tell her I was to wait on her ladyship yesterday, and left word with Mrs Rebecca, that the preliminaries of the affair she knows of are stopt till we know the concurrence of the person that I know of, for which there are circumstances wanting which we shall accommodate at the old place; but that, in the mean time, there is a person about her ladyship, that from several hints and surmises, was accessary at a certain time to the disappointments that naturally attend things, that to her knowledge are of more importance———

Mrs Sul. } Ha, ha! where are you going,
Dor. } sir?

Arch. Why, I han't half done.

Scrub. I should not remember a quarter of it.

Arch. The whole how d'ye was about half an hour long; so, happened to misplace two syllables, and was turned off, and rendered incapable———

Dor. The pleasantest fellow, sister, I ever saw. But, friend, if your master be married—I presume you still serve a lady?

Arch. No, madam; I take care never to come into a married family; the commands of the master and mistress are always so contrary, that 'tis impossible to please both.

Dor. There's a main point gained.—My lord is not married, I find. [*Aside.*

Mrs Sul. But, I wonder, friend, that in so many good services, you had not a better provision made for you?

Arch. I don't know how, madam—I am very well as I am.

Mrs Sul. Something for a pair of gloves.

[*Offering him money.*

Arch. I humbly beg leave to be excused. My master, madam, pays me; nor dare I take money from any other hand, without injuring his honour, and disobeying his commands.

Scrub. Brother Martin, brother Martin!

Arch. What do you say, brother Scrub?

Scrub. Take the money, and give it to me.

[*Exeunt* ARCHER *and* SCRUB.

Dor. This is surprising! Did you ever see so pretty a well-bred fellow!

Mrs Sul. The devil take him for wearing the livery!

Dor. I fancy, sister, he may be some gentleman, a friend of my lord's, that his lordship has pitched upon for his courage, fidelity, and discretion, to bear him company in this dress, and who, ten to one, was his second.

Mrs Sul. It is so, it must be so, and it shall be so!—For I like him.

Dor. What! better than the count?

Mrs Sul. The count happened to be the most agreeable man upon the place; and so I chose him to serve me in my design upon my husband ——But I should like this fellow better in a design upon myself.

Dor. But now, sister, for an interview with this lord, and this gentleman; how shall we bring that about?

Mrs Sul. Patience! you country ladies give no quarter, if once you be entered.—Would you prevent their desires, and give the fellows no wishing time?—Look'e, Dorinda, if my lord Aimwell loves you, or deserves you, he'll find a way to see you; and there we must leave it——My business comes now upon the tapis——Have you prepared your brother?

Dor. Yes, yes.

Mrs Sul. And how did he relish it?

Dor. He said little, mumbled something to himself, and promised to be guided by me—but here he comes—

Enter SULLEN.

Sul. What singing was that I heard just now?

Mrs Sul. The singing in your head, my dear; you complained of it all day.

Sul. You're impertinent.

Mrs Sul. I was ever so, since I became one flesh with you.

Sul. One flesh! rather two carcases joined unnaturally together.

Mrs Sul. Or rather, a living soul coupled to a dead body.

Dor. So, this is fine encouragement for me!

Sul. Yes, my wife shews what you must do.

Mrs Sul. And my husband shews you what you must suffer.

Sul. 'Sdeath! why can't you be silent?

Mrs Sul. 'Sdeath! why can't you talk?

Sul. Do you talk to any purpose?

Mrs Sul. Do you think to any purpose?

Sul. Sister, heark'e—[*Whispers.*]—I shan't be home till it be late. [*Exit* SUL.

Mrs Sul. What did he whisper to ye?

Dor. That he would go round the back way, come into the closet, and listen as I directed him.—But let me beg you once more, dear sister, to drop this project: for, as I told you before, instead of awaking him to kindness, you may provoke him to rage; and, then, who knows how far his brutality may carry him?

Mrs Sul. I'm provided to receive him, I warrant you. Away! [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter DORINDA, *meeting* MRS SULLEN *and* LADY BOUNTIFUL.

Dor. NEWS, dear sister; news, news!

Enter ARCHER, *running.*

Arch. Where, where is my lady Bountiful?—Pray, which is the old lady of you three!

Lady Boun. I am.

Arch. O, madam! the fame of your ladyship's charity, goodness, benevolence, skill, and ability, have drawn me hither to implore your ladyship's help in behalf of my unfortunate master, who is this moment breathing his last.

Lady Boun. Your master! Where is he?

Arch. At your gate, madam: drawn by the appearance of your handsome house to view it nearer, and walking up the avenue, he was taken ill of a sudden, with a sort of I know not what: but down he fell, and there he lies.

Lady Boun. Here, Scrub, Gipsey! all run; get my easy-chair down stairs, put the gentleman in it, and bring him in quickly, quickly.

Arch. Heaven will reward your ladyship for this charitable act.

Lady Boun. Is your master used to these fits?

Arch. O yes, madam, frequently.——I have known him have five or six of a night.

Lady Boun. What's his name?

Arch. Lord, madam, he's a dying! a minute's care or neglect may save or destroy his life.

Lady Boun. Ah, poor gentleman! Come, friend, shew me the way, I'll see him brought in myself. [*Exit with* ARCHER.

Dor. O, sister! my heart flutters about strangely; I can hardly forbear from running to his assistance.

Mrs Sul. And I'll lay my life he deserves your assistance more than he wants it. Did not I tell you, that my lord would find a way to come at you? Love's his distemper, and you must be the physician; put on all your charms, summon all your fire into your eyes, plant the whole artillery of your looks against his breast, and down with him.

Dor. O, sister, I'm but a young gunner! I shall be afraid to shoot, for fear the piece should recoil, and hurt myself.

Mrs Sul. Never fear! you shall see me shoot before you, if you will.

Dor. No, no, dear sister; you have missed your mark so unfortunately, that I shan't care for being instructed by you.

Enter AIMWELL *in a chair, carried by* ARCHER *and* SCRUB, LADY BOUNTIFUL, GIPSEY; AIMWELL *counterfeiting a swoon.*

Lady Boun. Here, here, let's see the hartshorn drops—Gipsey, a glass of fair water, his fit's very strong———Bless me, how his hands are clenched!

Arch. For shame, ladies, what d'ye do! Why don't you help us?——Pray, madam, [*To* DORINDA.] take his hand, and open it, if you can, whilst I hold his head.

[DORINDA *takes his hand.*

Dor. Poor gentleman!—Oh—he has got my hand within his, and squeezes it unmercifully—

Lady Boun. 'Tis the violence of his convulsion, child.

Arch. O, madam! he's perfectly possessed in these cases.—He'll bite you, if you don't have care.

Dor. Oh, my hand! my hand!

Lady Boun. What's the matter with the foolish girl? I have got this hand open, you see, with a great deal of ease.

Arch. Aye, but, madam, your daughter's hand is somewhat warmer than your ladyship's, and the heat of it draws the force of the spirits that way.

Mrs Sul. I find, friend, you're very learned in these sort of fits.

Arch. 'Tis no wonder, madam; for I am often troubled with them myself; I find myself extremely ill at this minute.

[*Looking hard at* MRS SULLEN.

Mrs Sul. [*Aside.*] I fancy I could find a way to cure you.

Lady Boun. His fit holds him very long.

Arch. Longer than usual, madam.

Lady Boun. Where did his illness take him first, pray?

Arch. To-day at church, madam.

Lady Boun. In what manner was he taken?

Arch. Very strangely, my lady. He was of a sudden touched with something in his eyes, which, at the first, he only felt, but could not tell whether 'twas pain or pleasure.

Lady Boun. Wind, nothing but wind. Your master should never go without a bottle to smell to——Oh! he recovers—the lavender water—

some feathers to burn under his nose—Hungary water to rub his temples—O, he comes to himself! Hem a little, sir; hem——Gipsey, bring the cordial water.

[AIMWELL *seems to awake in amaze.*

Dor. How do you, sir?

Aim. Where am I? [*Rising.*

Sure I have passed the gulph of silent death,
And now am landed on the Elysian shore—
Behold the goddess of those happy plains,
Fair Proserpine—Let me adore thy bright divinity.

[*Kneels to* DORINDA, *and kisses her hand.*

Mrs Sul. So, so, so! I knew where the fit would end.

Aim. Eurydice, perhaps——

How could thy Orpheus keep his word,
And not look back on thee?
No treasure but thyself could sure have bribed him
To look one minute off thee.

Lady Boun. Delirious, poor gentleman!

Arch. Very delirious, madam, very delirious.

Aim. Martin's voice, I think.

Arch. Yes, my lord. How does your lordship?

Lady Boun. Lord! did you mind that, girls?

Aim. Where am I?

Arch. In very good hands, sir. You were taken just now with one of your old fits, under the trees, just by this good lady's house; her ladyship had you taken in, and has miraculously brought you to yourself, as you see——

Aim. I am so confounded with shame, madam, that I can now only beg pardon—and refer my acknowledgments for your ladyship's care, till an opportunity offers of making some amends. I dare to be no longer troublesome. Martin, give two guineas to the servants. [*Going.*

Dor. Sir, you may catch cold by going so soon into the air; you don't look, sir, as if you were perfectly recovered.

[*Here* ARCHER *talks to* LADY BOUNTIFUL *in dumb shew.*]

Aim. That I shall never be, madam; my present illness is so rooted, that I must expect to carry it to my grave.

Lady Boun. Come, sir, your servant has been telling me that you're apt to relapse, if you go into the air—Your good manners shan't get the better of ours—You shall sit down again, sir—Come, sir, we don't mind ceremonies in the country—Here, Gipsey, bring the cordial water——Here, sir, my service t'ye—You shall taste my water; 'tis a cordial, I can assure you, and of my own making. [AIMWELL *drinks.*] Drink it off, sir. And how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

Aim. Somewhat better——though very faint still.

Lady Boun. Aye, aye; people are always faint after those fits. Come, girls, you shall shew the gentleman the house: 'tis but an old family building, sir; but you had better walk about, and cool by degrees, than venture immediately to the air: but you'll find some tolerable pictures.—— Dorinda, shew the gentleman the way. [*Exit.*] I must go to the poor woman below.

Dor. This way, sir.

Aim. Ladies, shall I beg leave for my servant to wait on you, for he understands pictures very well.

Mrs Sul. Sir, we understand originals as well as he does pictures, so he may come along.

[*Exeunt* DORINDA, MRS SULLEN, ARCHER. AIMWELL *leads* DORINDA.

Enter FOIGARD *and* SCRUB, *meeting.*

Foig. Save you, master Scrub!

Scrub. Sir, I won't be saved your way—I hate a priest: I abhor the French; and I defy the devil. Sir, I am a bold Briton, and will spill the last drop of my blood to keep out popery and slavery.

Foig. Master Scrub, you would put me down in politics, and so I would be speaking with Mrs Gipsey.

Scrub. Good Mr Priest, you can't speak with her; she's sick, sir; she's gone abroad, sir; she's——dead two months ago, sir.

Enter GIPSEY.

Gip. How now, impudence! How dare you talk so saucily to the doctor? Pray, sir, don't take it ill; for the common people of England are not so civil to strangers, as——

Scrub. You lie, you lie; 'tis the common people, such as you are, that are civilest to strangers.

Gip. Sirrah, I have a good mind to—Get you out, I say.

Scrub. I won't.

Gip. You won't, sauce-box—Pray, doctor, what is the captain's name that came to your inn last night?

Scrub. The captain! ah, the devil! there she hampers me again; the captain has me on one side, and the priest on t'other—So, between the gown and the sword, I have a fine time on't.

[*Going.*

Gip. What, sirrah, won't you march?

Scrub. No, my dear, I won't march—but I'll walk: And I'll make bold to listen a little, too.

[*Goes behind the scene, and listens.*

Gip. Indeed, doctor, the count has been barbarously treated, that's the truth on't.

Foig. Ah, Mrs Gipsey, upon my shoul, now gra, his complainings would mollify the marrow in your bones, and move the bowels of your commiseration; he weeps, and he dances, and he fistles, and he swears, and he laughs, and he stamps, and he sings; in conclusion, joy, he's afflicted, *à la François*, and a stranger would not know whider to cry or to laugh with him.

Gip. What would you have me do, doctor?

Foig. Noting, joy, but only hide the count in Mrs Sullen's closet, when it is dark.

Gip. Nothing! Is that nothing? It would be both a sin and a shame, doctor.

Foig. Here are twenty louisdores, joy, for your shame; and I will give you an absolution for the shin.

Gip. But won't that money look like a bribe?

Foig. Dat is according as you shall tauk it.—If you receive the money before-hand, 'twill be, logice, a bribe: but if you stay till afterwards, 'twill be only a gratification.

Gip. Well, doctor, I'll take it logice. But what must I do with my conscience, sir?

Foig. Leave dat wid me, joy; I am your priest, gra; and your conscience is under my hands.

Gip. But should I put the count into the closet——

Foig. Vell, is dere any shin for a man's being in a closhet? One may go to prayers in a closhet.

Gip. But if the lady should come into her chamber, and go to bed?

Foig. Vell, and is dere any shin in going to-bed, joy?

Gip. Aye, but if the parties should meet, doctor?

Foig. Vell, den—the parties must be responsible. Do you begone after putting the count into the closhet; and leave the shins wid themselves. I will come with the count to instruct you in your chamber.

Gip. Well, doctor, your religion is so pure—Methinks I'm so easy after an absolution, and can sin afresh with so much security, that I'm resolved to die a martyr to't—Here's the key of the garden-door; come in the back way, when 'tis late—I'll be ready to receive you; but don't so much as whisper, only take hold of my hand; I'll lead you, and do you lead the count, and follow me. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SCRUB.

Scrub. What witchcraft now have these two imps of the devil been a hatching here? There's twenty louisdores; I heard that, and saw the purse: but I must give room to my betters.

Enter MRS SULLEN *and* ARCHER.

Mrs Sul. Pray, sir, [*To* ARCHER.] how d'ye like that piece?

Arch. O, 'tis Leda—You find, madam, how Jupiter came disguised to make love——

Mrs Sul. Pray, sir, what head is that in the corner there?

Arch. O, madam, 'tis poor Ovid in his exile.

Mrs Sul. What was he banished for?

Arch. His ambitious love, madam. [*Bowing.*] His misfortune touches me.

Mrs Sul. Was he successful in his amours?

Arch. There he has left us in the dark——He was too much a gentleman to tell.

Mrs Sul. If he were secret, I pity him.

Arch. If he were successful, I envy him.

Mrs Sul. How d'ye like that Venus over the chimney?

Arch. Venus! I protest, madam, I took it for your picture; but, now I look again, 'tis not handsome enough.

Mrs Sul. Oh, what a charm is flattery! If you would see my picture, there it is, over the cabinet—How d'ye like it?

Arch. I must admire any thing, madam, that has the least resemblance of you—But, methinks, madam—[*He looks at the picture and* MRS SULLEN, *three or four times by turns.*] Pray, madam, who drew it?

Mrs Sul. A famous hand, sir.

[*Here* AIMWELL *and* DORINDA *go off.*

Arch. A famous hand, madam!—Your eyes, indeed, are featured here; but where's the sparkling moisture, shining fluid, in which they swim? The picture, indeed, has your dimples; but where's the swarm of killing Cupids that should ambush there? The lips too are figured out; but where's the carnation dew, the pouting ripeness, that tempts the taste in the original?

Mrs Sul. Had it been my lot to have matched with such a man! [*Aside.*

Arch. Your breasts too, presumptuous man! what! paint Heaven! A-propos, madam, in the very next picture is Salmoneus, that was struck dead with lightning, for offering to imitate Jove's thunder. I hope you served the painter so, madam.

Mrs Sul. Had my eyes the power of thunder, they should employ their lightning better.

Arch. There's the finest bed in that room, madam; I suppose 'tis your ladyship's bed-chamber.

Mrs Sul. And what then, sir?

Arch. I think the quilt is the richest that I ever saw—I can't, at this distance, madam, distinguish the figures of the embroidery. Will you give me leave, madam?

Mrs Sul. The devil take his impudence——Sure, if I gave him an opportunity, he durst not be rude. I have a great mind to try———— [*Going, returns.*] 'Sdeath! what am I doing?—And alone too! Sister, sister!

Arch. I'll follow her close——

For where a Frenchman durst attempt to storm,
A Briton sure may well the work perform.

[*Going.*

Enter SCRUB.

Scrub. Martin! Brother Martin!

Arch. O brother Scrub, I beg your pardon, I was not a going: here's a guinea my master ordered you.

Scrub. A guinea! hi, hi, hi! a guinea! eh—by this light it is a guinea; but, I suppose, you expect twenty shillings in change.

Arch. Not at all; I have another for Gipsey.

Scrub. A guinea for her! Fire and faggot for the witch——Sir, give me that guinea; and I'll discover a plot.

Arch. A plot!

Scrub. Ay, sir; a plot, a horrid plot—First, it must be a plot, because there's a woman in't: secondly it must be a plot, because there's a priest in't: thirdly, it must be a plot, because there's French gold in't: and fourthly, it must be a plot, because I don't know what to make on't.

Arch. Nor any body else, I'm afraid, brother Scrub.

Scrub. Truly I'm afraid so, too; for, where there's a priest and a woman, there's always a mystery, and a riddle—This I know, that here has been the doctor with a temptation in one hand, and an absolution in the other, and Gipsey has sold herself to the devil; I saw the price paid down; my eyes shall take their oath on't.

Arch. And is all this bustle about Gipsey?

Scrub. That's not all; I could hear but a word here and there; but I remember they mentioned a count, a closet, a back-door, and a key.

Arch. The count! did you hear nothing of Mrs Sullen?

Scrub. I did hear some word that sounded that way: but whether it was Sullen or Dorinda, I could not distinguish.

Arch. You have told this matter to nobody, brother?

Scrub. Told! No, sir, I thank you for that; I'm resolved never to speak one word, pro nor con, till we have a peace.

Arch. You're in the right, brother Scrub. Here's a treaty a-foot between the count and the lady.—The priest and the chamber-maid are plenipotentiaries.—It shall go hard but I'll find a way to be included in the treaty. Where's the doctor now?

Scrub. He and Gipsey are this moment devouring my lady's marmalade in the closet.

Aim. [*From without.*] Martin, Martin!

Arch. I come, sir; I come.

Scrub. But you forget the other guinea, brother Martin.

Arch. Here, I give it with all my heart.

Scrub. And I take it with all my soul. [*Exeunt severally.*] Ecod, I'll spoil your plotting, Mrs Gipsey: and if you should set the captain upon me, these two guineas will buy me off. [*Exit.*

Enter MRS SULLEN *and* DORINDA, *meeting.*

Mrs Sul. Well, sister.

Dor. And well, sister.

Mrs Sul. What's become of my lord?

Dor. What's become of his servant?

Mrs Sul. Servant! He's a prettier fellow, and a finer gentleman, by fifty degrees, than his master.

Dor. O' my conscience, I fancy you could beg that fellow at the gallows foot.

Mrs Sul. O' my conscience I could, provided I could put a friend of yours in his room.

Dor. You desired me, sister, to leave you, when you transgressed the bounds of honour.

Mrs Sul. Thou dear, censorious, country girl—What dost mean? You can't think of the man without the bed-fellow, I find.

Dor. I don't find any thing unnatural in that thought; while the mind is conversant with flesh and blood, it must conform to the humours of the company.

Mrs Sul. How a little love and conversation improve a woman! Why, child, you begin to live. You never spoke before.

Dor. Because I was never spoke to before: my lord has told me that I have more wit and beauty than any of the sex; and, truly, I begin to think the man is sincere.

Mrs Sul. You're in the right, Dorinda; pride is the life of a woman, and flattery is our daily bread. But I'll lay you a guinea that I had finer things said to me than you had.

Dor. Done! What did your fellow say to ye?

Mrs Sul. My fellow took the picture of Venus for mine.

Dor. But my lover took me for Venus herself.

Mrs Sul. Common cant! Had my spark called me a Venus directly, I should have believed him to be a footman in good earnest.

Dor. But my lover was upon his knees to me.

Mrs Sul. And mine was upon his tiptoes to me.

Dor. Mine vowed to die for me.

Mrs Sul. Mine swore to die with me.

Dor. Mine kissed my hand ten thousand times.

Mrs Sul. Mine has all that pleasure to come.

Dor. Mine spoke the softest, moving things.

Mrs Sul. Mine had his moving things, too.

Dor. Mine offered marriage.

Mrs Sul. O Lard! D'ye call that a moving thing?

Dor. The sharpest arrow in his quiver, my dear sister: Why, my twenty thousand pounds may lie brooding here these seven years, and hatch nothing at last but some ill-natured clown like yours: Whereas, if I marry my lord Aimwell, there will be a title, place, and precedence, the park, the play, and the drawing-room, splendour, equipage, noise, and flambeaux—Hey! my lady Aimwell's servants there!—Lights, lights, to the stairs!—My lady Aimwell's coach, put forward!—Stand by; make room for her ladyship!—Are not these things moving? What, melancholy of a sudden!

Mrs Sul. Happy, happy, sister! Your angel has been watchful for your happiness, whilst mine has slept regardless of his charge—Long

smiling years of circling joys for you; but not one hour for me! [*Weeps.*

Dor. Come, my dear, we'll talk on something else.

Mrs Sul. O Dorinda! I own myself a woman, full of my sex, a gentle, generous soul—easy and yielding to soft desires; a spacious heart, where love, and all his train, might lodge: And must the fair apartment of my breast be made a stable for a brute to lie in?

Dor. Meaning your husband, I suppose?

Mrs Sul. Husband! No—Even husband is too soft a name for him——But come, I expect my brother here to-night, or to-morrow: He was abroad when my father married me; perhaps he'll find a way to make me easy.

Dor. Will you promise not to make yourself easy, in the mean time, with my lord's friend?

Mrs Sul. You mistake me, sister: it happens with us, as among the men, the greatest talkers are the greatest cowards: and there's a reason for it; those spirits evaporate in prattle, which might do more mischief if they took another course——Though, to confess the truth, I do love that fellow; and if I met him drest as he should be, and I undrest as I should be——— Look'e, sister, I have no supernatural gifts;—— I can't swear I could resist the temptation—— though I can safely promise to avoid it; and that's as much as the best of us can do.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter AIMWELL *and* ARCHER, *laughing.*

Arch. And the awkward kindness of the good motherly old gentlewoman——

Aim. And the coming easiness of the young one. 'Sdeath! 'tis a pity to deceive her.

Arch. Nay, if you adhere to those principles, stop where you are.

Aim. I can't stop, for I love her to distraction.

Arch. 'Sdeath, if you love her a hair's breadth beyond discretion, you must go no farther.

Aim. Well, well, any thing to deliver us from sauntering away our idle evenings at White's, Tom's, or Will's, and be stinted to bare looking at our old acquaintance, the cards, because our impotent pockets can't afford us a guinea for the mercenary drabs; and ten thousand such rascally tricks—had we outlived our fortunes among our acquaintance—But now——

Arch. Aye, now is the time to prevent all this. Strike while the iron is hot. This priest is the luckiest part of our adventure; he shall marry you, and pimp for me.

Aim. But I should not like a woman that can be so fond of a Frenchman.

Arch. Alas, sir, necessity has no law; the lady may be in distress. But, if the plot lies as I suspect——I must put on the gentleman. But here comes the doctor. I shall be ready.

[*Exit* ARCHER.

Enter FOIGARD.

Foig. Save you, noble friend.

Aim. O sir, your servant. Pray, doctor, may I crave your name?

Foig. Fat naam is upon me? My naam i Foigard, joy.

Aim. Foigard! a very good name for a clergyman. Pray, doctor Foigard, were you ever in Ireland?

Foig. Ireland! no, joy. Fat sort of place is dat saam Ireland? Dey say, de people are catched dere when dey are young.

Aim. And some of them here, when they are old—as for example—[*Takes* FOIGARD *by the shoulder.*]—Sir, I arrest you as a traitor against the government; you're a subject of England, and this morning shewed me a commission, by which you served as chaplain in the French army. This is death by our law, and your reverence must hang for it.

Foig. Upon my shoul, noble friend, dis is strange news you tell me; fader Foigard a subject of England! the son of a burgomaster of Brussels a subject of England! Ubooboo.———

Aim. The son of a bog-trotter in Ireland! sir, your tongue will condemn you before any bench in the kingdom.

Foig. And is my tongue all your evidensh, joy?

Aim. That's enough.

Foig. No, no, joy; for I will never speak English no more.

Aim. Sir, I have other evidence. Here, Martin, you know this fellow?

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. [*In a brogue.*]—Saave you, my dear cussen, how does your health?

Foig. Ah! upon my shoul dere is my countryman, and his brogue will hang mine.—[*Aside.*]—Mynhere, Ick wet neat watt hey zacht, Ick Universton ewe neat, sacramant.

Aim. Altering your language won't do, sir; this fellow knows your person, and will swear to your face.

Foig. Faash! Fey, is dere brogue upon my faash, too?

Arch. Upon my soulvation dere ish, joy—— But, cussen Mackshane, vill you not put a remembrance upon me?

Foig. Mackshane! By St Paatrick, dat is my naame shure enough! [*Aside.*

Aim. I fancy, Archer, you have it.

Foig. The devil hang you, joy——By fat acquaintance are you my cussen?

Arch. O, de devil hang yourshelf, joy; you know we were little boys togeder upon de school, and your foster-moder's son was married upon my nurse's shister, joy; and so we are Irish cussens.

Foig. De devil take de relation! Vel, joy, and fat school was it?

Arch. I think it was——Aay——'Twas Tipperary.

Foig. Now, upon my shoul, joy, 'twas Kilkenny.

Aim. That's enough for us——Self-confession ——Come, sir, we must deliver you into the hands of the next magistrate.

Arch. He sends you to goal, you're tried next assizes, and away you go swing into purgatory.

Foig. And is it so wid you, cussen?

Arch. It vil be so vid you, cussen, if you don't immediately confess the secret between you and Mrs Gipsey——Look'e, sir, the gallows or the secret, take your choice.

Foig. The gallows! Upon my shoul, I hate that shame gallows, for it is a diseashe dat is fatal to our family—Vel, den, dere is noting, shentlemens, but Mrs Sullen would speak wid de count in her chamber at midnight, and dere is no harm, joy, for I am to conduct the count to the plaash myself.

Arch. As I guessed——Have you communicated the matter to the count?

Foig. I have not sheen him since.

Arch. Right again; why then, doctor,—you shall conduct me to the lady, instead of the count.

Foig. Fat, my cussen to the lady! Upon my shoul, gra, dat's too much upon the brogue.

Arch. Come, come, doctor; consider we have got a rope about your neck, and if you offer to squeak, we'll stop your wind-pipe, most certainly; we shall have another job for you in a day or two, I hope.

Aim. Here's company coming this way; let's into my chamber, and there concert our affairs farther.

Arch. Come, my dear cussen, come along.

Foig. Arra, the devil taake our relashion.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter BONIFACE, HOUNSLOW, *and* BAGSHOT, *at one door,* GIBBET *at the opposite.*

Gib. Well, gentlemen, 'tis a fine night for our enterprize.

Houns. Dark as hell.

Bag. And blows like the devil; our landlord here has shew'd us the window where we must break in, and tells us the plate stands in the wainscot cupboard in the parlour.

Bon. Ay, ay, Mr Bagshot, as the saying is, knives and forks, cups and cans, tumblers and tankards——There's one tankard, as the saying is, that's near upon as big as me; it was a present to the squire from his god-mother, and smells of nutmeg and toast like an East India ship.

Houns. Then you say we must divide at the stair head.

Bon. Yes, Mr Hounslow, as the saying is—— At one end of the gallery lies my lady Bountiful and her daughter; and, at the other, Mrs Sullen—As for the squire——

Gib. He's safe enough; I have fairly entered him, and he's more than half seas over already ——But such a parcel of scoundrels are got about him there, that, e'gad, I was ashamed to be seen in their company.

Bon. 'Tis now twelve, as the saying is—Gentlemen, you must set out at one.

Gib. Hounslow, do you and Bagshot see our arms fixed, and I'll come to you presently.

Houns. & *Bag.* We will. [*Exeunt.*

Gib. Well, my dear Bonny, you assure me that Scrub is a coward?

Bon. A chicken, as the saying is——You'll have no creature to deal with but the ladies.

Gib. And I can assure you, friend, there's a great deal of address and good-manners in robbing a lady; I am the most a gentleman that way that ever travelled the road—But, my dear Bonny, this prize will be a galleon, a Vigo business——I warrant you we shall bring off three or four thousand pound.

Bon. In plate, jewels, and money, as the saying is, you may.

Gib. Why then, Tyburn, I defy thee! I'll get up to town, sell off my horse and arms, buy myself some pretty employment in the law, and be as snug and as honest as e'er a long gown of 'em all.

Bon. And what think you, then, of my daughter Cherry for a wife?

Gib. Look'e, my dear Bonny—Cherry is the goddess I adore, as the song goes; but it is a maxim, that man and wife should never have it in their power to hang one another; for, if they should, the Lord have mercy upon them both!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Continues. Knocking without.*

Enter BONIFACE.

Bon. Coming, coming!——A coach, and six foaming horses at this time o'night! Some great man, as the saying is, for he scorns to travel with other people.

Enter SIR CHARLES FREEMAN.

Sir Cha. What, fellow! a public house, and a-bed when other people sleep!

Bon. Sir, I an't a-bed, as the saying is.

Sir Cha. I see that, as the saying is! Is Mr Sullen's family a-bed, think'e?

Bon. All but the 'squire himself, sir, as the saying is; he's in the house.

Sir Cha. What company has he?

Bon. Why, sir, there's the constable, Mr Gage, the exciseman, the hunch-back'd barber, and two or three other gentlemen.

Sir Cha. I find my sister's letters gave me the true picture of her spouse.

Enter SULLEN, *drunk.*

Bon. Sir, here's the 'squire.

Sul. The puppies left me asleep——sir.

Sir Cha. Well, sir.

Sul. Sir, I am an unfortunate man—I have three thousand pounds a-year, and can't get a man to drink a cup of ale with me.

Sir Cha. That's very hard.

Sul. Ay, sir—And unless you have pity upon me, and smoke a pipe with me, I must e'en go home to my wife, and I had rather go to the devil by half.

Sir Cha. But I presume, sir, you won't see your wife to-night, she'll be gone to bed——you don't use to lie with your wife in that pickle?

Sul. What! not lie with my wife! why, sir, do you take me for an atheist, or a rake?

Sir Cha. If you hate her, sir, I think you had better lie from her.

Sul. I think so, too, friend——But I am a justice of peace, and must do nothing against the law.

Sir Cha. Law! As I take it, Mr Justice, nobody observes law for law's sake, only for the good of those for whom it was made.

Sul. But if the law orders me to send you to gaol, you must lie there, my friend.

Sir Cha. Not unless I commit a crime to deserve it.

Sul. A crime? Oons, an't I married?

Sir Cha. Nay, sir, if you call marriage a crime, you must disown it for a law.

Sul. Eh!—I must be acquainted with you, sir——But, sir, I should be very glad to know the truth of this matter.

Sir Cha. Truth, sir, is a profound sea; and few there be that dare wade deep enough to find the bottom on't. Besides, sir, I'm afraid the line of your understanding mayn't be long enough.

Sul. Look'e, sir, I have nothing to say to your sea of truth; but if a good parcel of land can entitle a man to a little truth, I have as much as any he in the county.

Bon. I never heard your worship, as the saying is, talk so much before.

Sul. Because I never met with a man that I liked before.

Bon. Pray, sir, as the saying is, let me ask you one question: Are not man and wife one flesh?

Sir Cha. You and your wife, Mr Guts, may be one flesh, because you are nothing else—But rational creatures have minds that must be united.

Sul. Minds!

Sir Cha. Ay, minds, sir. Don't you think that the mind takes place of the body?

Sul. In some people.

Sir Cha. Then, the interest of the master must be consulted before that of the servant.

Sul. Sir, you shall dine with me to-morrow.—Oons, I always thought we were naturally one.

Sir Cha. Sir, I know that my two hands are naturally one, because they love one another, kiss one another, help one another in all the actions of life; but I could not say so much if they were always at cuffs.

Sul. Then 'tis plain that we are two.

Sir Cha. Why don't you part with her, sir?

Sul. Will you take her, sir?

Sir Cha. With all my heart.

Sul. You shall have her to-morrow morning, and a venison pasty into the bargain.

Sir Cha. You'll let me have her fortune, too?

Sul. Fortune! why, sir, I have no quarrel to her fortune—I hate only the woman, sir; and none but the woman shall go.

Sir Cha. But her fortune, sir——

Sul. Can you play at whist, sir?

Sir Cha. No, truly, sir.

Sul. Not at all-fours?

Sir Cha. Neither.

Sul. Oons! where was this man bred? [*Aside.*] Burn me, sir, I can't go home; 'tis but two o'clock.

Sir Cha. For half an hour, sir, if you please—But you must consider 'tis late.

Sul. Late! that's the reason I can't go to bed ——Come, sir—— [*Exeunt.*

Enter CHERRY, *runs across the stage, and knocks at* AIMWELL'S *chamber-door. Enter* AIMWELL, *in his night-cap and gown.*

Aim. What's the matter? You tremble, child; you're frighted.

Cher. No wonder, sir; but, in short, sir, this

very minute a gang of rogues are gone to rob my lady Bountiful's house.

Aim. How!

Cher. I dogged them to the very door, and left them breaking in.

Aim. Have you alarmed any body else with the news.

Cher. No, no, sir; I wanted to have discovered the whole plot, and twenty other things, to your man Martin; but I have searched the whole house, and can't find him; where is he?

Aim. No matter, child; will you guide me immediately to the house?

Cher. With all my heart, sir; my lady Bountiful is my god-mother, and I love Mrs Dorinda so well——

Aim. Dorinda! the name inspires me; the glory and the danger shall be all my own. Come, my life, let me but get my sword. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the bed-chamber in* LADY BOUNTIFUL'S *house.*

Enter MRS SULLEN *and* DORINDA, *undressed; a table and lights.*

Dor. 'Tis very late, sister; no news of your spouse, yet?

Mrs Sul. No, I'm condemned to be alone till towards four, and then, perhaps, I may be executed with his company.

Dor. Well, my dear, I'll leave you to your rest; you'll go directly to bed, I suppose?

Mrs Sul. I don't know what to do; hey-ho!

Dor. That's a desiring sigh, sister.

Mrs Sul. This is a languishing hour, sister.

Dor. And might prove a critical minute, if the pretty fellow were here.

Mrs Sul. Here! what, in my bed-chamber, at two o'clock in the morning, I undressed, the family asleep, my hated husband abroad, and my lovely fellow at my feet?——O gad, sister!

Dor. Thoughts are free, sister, and them I allow you. So, my dear, good-night. [*Exit.*

Mrs Sul. A good rest to my dear Dorinda—Thoughts are free! they are so? Why, then, suppose him here, dressed like a youthful, gay, and burning bridegroom, [*Here* ARCHER *steals out of the closet.*] with tongue enchanting, eyes bewitching, knees imploring. [*Turns a little on one side, and sees* ARCHER *in the posture she describes.*] Ah! [*Shrieks, and runs to the other side of the stage.*] Have my thoughts raised a spirit? What are you, sir, a man or a devil?

Arch. A man, a man, madam! [*Rising.*

Mrs Sul. How shall I be sure of it?

Arch. Madam, I'll give you demonstration this minute. [*Takes her hand.*

Mrs Sul. What, sir, do you intend to be rude?

Arch. Yes, madam, if you please.

Mrs Sul. In the name of wonder, whence came ye?

Arch. From the skies, madam——I'm a Jupiter in love, and you shall be my Alcmena.

Mrs Sul. How came you in?

Arch. I flew in at the window, madam; your cousin Cupid lent me his wings, and your sister Venus opened the casement.

Mrs Sul. I'm struck dumb with admiration.

Arch. And I with wonder. [*Looks passionately at her.*] How beautiful she looks! the teeming jolly spring smiles in her blooming face; and when she was conceived, her mother smelt to roses, looked on lillies—

Lillies unfold their white, their fragrant charms,
When the warm sun thus darts into their arms.
[*Runs to her.*

Mrs Sul. Ah! [*Shrieks.*

Arch. Oons, madam, what do you mean?——You'll raise the house.

Mrs Sul. Sir, I'll wake the dead before I'll bear this. What! approach me with the freedom of a keeper? I am glad on't. Your impudence has cured me.

Arch. If this be impudence, [*Kneels.*] I leave to your partial self; no panting pilgrim, after a tedious, painful voyage, e'er bowed before his saint with more devotion.

Mrs Sul. Now, now, I'm ruined if he kneels. [*Aside.*] Rise, thou prostrate engineer; not all thy undermining skill shall reach my heart.——Rise, and know I am a woman without my sex; I can love to the tenderness of wishes, sighs, and tears——But go no farther—Still to convince you that I'm more than woman, I can speak my frailty, confess my weakness, even for you—But———

Arch. For me! [*Going to lay hold on her.*

Mrs Sul. Hold, sir; build not upon that—for my most mortal hatred follows, if you disobey what I command you now—leave me this minute—if he denies, I'm lost.
[*Aside.*

Arch. Then you'll promise——

Mrs Sul Any thing another time.

Arch. When shall I come?

Mrs Sul. To-morrow; when you will.

Arch. Your lips must seal the promise.

Mrs Sul Pshaw!

Arch. They must they must. [*Kisses her.*]—Raptures, and paradise! And why not now, my angel? The time, the place, silence and secrecy, all conspire—And, now, the conscious stars have pre-ordained this moment for my happiness.
[*Takes her in his arms.*

Mrs Sul. You will not, cannot, sure.

Arch. If the sun rides fast, and disappoints not mortals of to-morrow's dawn, this night shall crown my joys.

Mrs Sul. You shall kill me first.

Arch. I'll die with you.
[*Carrying her off.*

Mrs Sul. Thieves! thieves! murder———

Enter SCRUB *in his breeches, and one shoe on.*

Scrub. Thieves! thieves! murder! popery!

Arch. Ha! the very timorous stag will kill in rutting time.

[*Draws, and Offers to stab* SCRUB.

Scrub. [*Kneeling.*] O pray, sir, spare all I have, and take my life.

Mrs Sul. [*Holding* ARCHER'S *hand.*] What does the fellow mean?

Scrub. O, madam, down upon your knees, your marrow-bones—he's one of them.

Mrs Sul. Of whom?

Scrub. One of the rogues—I beg your pardon, one of the honest gentlemen that just now are broke into the house.

Arch. How!

Mrs Sul. I hope you did not come to rob me?

Arch. Indeed I did, madam; but I would have taken nothing but what you might very well have spared; but your crying thieves has waked this dreaming fool, and so he takes them for granted.

Scrub. Granted! 'tis granted, sir; take all we have.

Mrs Sul. The fellow looks as if he were broke out of Bedlam.

Scrub. Oons, madam, they are broke into the house with fire and sword; I saw them; heard them; they'll be here this minute.

Arch. What? thieves?

Scrub. Under favour, sir, I think so.

Mrs Sul. What shall we do, sir?

Arch. Madam, I wish your ladyship a good night.

Mrs Sul. Will you leave me?

Arch. Leave you! Lord, madam, did you not command me to be gone just now, upon pain of your immortal hatred?

Mrs Sul. Nay, but pray, sir—

[*Takes hold of him.*

Arch. Ha, ha, ha! now comes my turn to be ravished—You see, madam, you must use men one way or another: but take this by the way, good madam, that none but a fool will give you the benefit of his courage, unless you'll take his love along with it—How are they armed, friend?

Scrub. With sword and pistol, sir.

Arch. Hush!—I see a dark lanthorn coming through the gallery——Madam, be assured I will protect you, or lose my life.

Mrs Sul. Your life! No, sir, they can rob me of nothing that I value half so much; therefore, now, sir, let me intreat you to be gone.

Arch. No, madam, I'll consult my own safety for the sake of yours; I'll work by stratagem. Have you courage enough to stand the appearance of them?

Mrs Sul. Yes, yes, since I have escaped your hands, I can face any thing.

Arch. Come hither, brother Scrub; don't you know me?

Scrub. Eh? my dear brother, let me kiss thee!

[*Kisses* ARCH.

Arch. This way—Here——

[ARCH. *and* SCRUB *hide behind the bed.*

Enter GIBBET, *with a dark lanthorn in one hand, and a pistol in the other.*

Gib. Ay, ay, this is the chamber, and the lady alone.

Mrs Sul. Who are you, sir! What would you have? D'ye come to rob me?

Gib. Rob you! Alack-a-day, madam, I'm only a younger brother, madam; and so, madam, if you make a noise, I'll shoot you through the head. But don't be afraid, madam. [*Laying his lanthorn and pistol upon the table.*] These rings, madam; don't be concerned, madam; I have a profound respect for you, madam; your keys, madam; don't be frighted, madam; I'm the most of a gentleman——[*Searching her pockets.*] This necklace, madam; I never was rude to any lady! I have a veneration—for this necklace—[*Here* ARCHER, *having come round, and seized the pistol, takes* GIBBET *by the collar, trips up his heels, and claps the pistol to his breast.*]

Arch. Hold, profane villain, and take the reward of thy sacrilege!

Gib. Oh! pray, sir, don't kill me; I an't prepared.

Arch. How many are there of them, Scrub?

Scrub. Five and forty, sir.

Arch. Then I must kill the villain, to have him out of the way.

Gib. Hold! hold, sir! we are but three, upon my honour.

Arch. Scrub, will you undertake to secure him?

Scrub. Not I, sir! kill him, kill him!

Arch. Run to Gipsey's chamber, there you'll find the doctor; bring him hither presently.

[*Exit* SCRUB, *running.*

Come, rogue, if you have a short prayer, say it.

Gib. Sir, I have no prayer at all; the government has provided a chaplain to say prayers for us on these occasions.

Mrs Sul. Pray, sir, don't kill him—you fright me as much as him.

Arch. The dog shall die, madam, for being the occasion of my disappointment—Sirrah, this moment is your last.

Gib. Sir, I'll give you two hundred pounds to spare my life.

Arch. Have you no more, rascal?

Gib. Yes, sir, I can command four hundred; but I must reserve two of them to save my life at the sessions.

Enter SCRUB *and* FOIGARD.

Arch. Here, doctor; I suppose Scrub and you, between you, may manage him. Lay hold of him. [FOIG. *lays hold of* GIB.

Gib. What! turned over to the priest already!

——Look'e, doctor, you come before your time; I an't condemned yet, I thank ye.

Foig. Come, my dear joy; I vil secure your body and your shoul, too; I vil make you a good Catholic, and give you an absolution.

Gib. Absolution! Can you procure me a pardon, doctor?

Foig. No, joy.

Gib. Then you and your absolution may go to the devil.

Arch. Convey him into the cellar: there bind him: take the pistol, and, if he offers to resist, shoot him through the head—and come back to us with all the speed you can.

Scrub. Ay, ay; come, doctor, do you hold him fast, and I'll guard him. [*Exeunt.*

Mrs Sul. But how came the doctor?

Arch. In short, madam—[*Shrieking without.*] 'Sdeath! the rogues are at work with the other ladies; I'm vexed I parted with the pistol; but I must fly to their assistance—Will you stay here, madam, or venture yourself with me?

Mrs Sul. Oh, dear sir, with you.

[*Takes him by the arm, and exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to another apartment in the house.*

Enter HOUNSLOW, *dragging in* LADY BOUNTIFUL, *and* BAGSHOT, *hauling in* DORINDA; *the rogues with swords drawn.*

Houn. Come, come, your jewels, mistress.

Bag. Your keys, your keys, old gentlewoman.

Enter AIMWELL.

Aim. Turn this way, villains! I durst engage an army in such a cause.

[*He engages them both.*

Enter ARCHER *and* MRS SULLEN.

Arch. Hold, hold, my lord! every man his bird, pray. [*They engage man to man; the rogues are thrown down, and disarmed.*] Shall we kill the rogues?

Aim. No, no, we'll bind them.

Arch. Ay, ay; here, madam, lend me your garter. [*To* MRS SULLEN, *who stands by him.*

Mrs Sul. The devil's in this fellow; he fights, loves, and banters, all in a breath. Here's a cord, that the rogues brought with them, I suppose.

Arch. Right, right; the rogue's destiny; a rope to hang himself—Come, come, my lord, this is but a scandalous sort of an office. [*Binding the rogues together.*] If our adventures should end in this sort of hangman work—but I hope there is something in prospect that——

Enter SCRUB.

Well, Scrub, have you secured your Tartar?

Scrub. Yes, sir, I left the priest and him disputing about religion.

Aim. And pray, carry these gentlemen to reap the benefit of the controversy.

[*Delivers the prisoners to* SCRUB, *who leads them out.*

Mrs Sul. Pray, sister, how came my lord here?

Dor. And, pray, how came that gentleman here?

Mrs Sul. I'll tell you the greatest piece of villainy. [*They talk apart.*

Aim. I fancy, Archer, you have been more successful in your adventures than the housebreakers.

Arch. No matter for my adventure, yours is the principal—Press her this minute to marry you—now while she's hurried between the palpitation of her fear, and the joy of her deliverance; now while the tide of her spirits is at high flood—throw yourself at her feet, speak some romantic nonsense or other—confound her senses, bear down her reason, and away with her—The priest is now in the cellar, and dares not refuse to do the work.

Aim. But how shall I get off without being observed?

Arch. You a lover, and not find a way to get off! Let me see.

Aim. You bleed, Archer.

Arch. 'Sdeath, I'm glad on't; this wound will do the business. I'll amuse the old lady and Mrs Sullen, about dressing my wound, while you carry off Dorinda.

Enter LADY BOUNTIFUL.

Lady Boun. Gentlemen, could we understand how you would be gratified for the services——

Arch. Come, come, my lady, this is no time for compliments; I'm wounded, madam.

Lady Boun. and Mrs Sul. How, wounded!

Dor. I hope, sir, you have received no hurt!

Aim. None but what you may cure—

[*Makes love in dumb shew.*

Lady Boun. Let me see your arm, sir—I must have some powder-sugar to stop the blood—O me!—an ugly gash; upon my word, sir, yo must go to bed.

Arch. Ay, my lady, a bed would do very well—Madam [*To* MRS SULLEN] will you do me the favour to conduct me to a chamber.

Lady Boun. Do, do, daughter, while I get the lint, and the probe, and the plaster ready.

[*Runs out one way,* AIM. *carries off* DOR. *another.*]

Arch. Come, madam, why don't you obey your mother's commands?

Mrs Sul. How can you, after what is past, have the confidence to ask me?

Arch. And, if you go to that, how can you, after what is past, have the confidence to deny me?—Was not this blood shed in your defence, and my life exposed for your protection? Look'e, madam, I'm none of your romantic fools that fight giants and monsters for nothing; my valour

is downright Swiss; I am a soldier of fortune, and must be paid.

Mrs Sul. 'Tis ungenerous in you, sir, to upbraid me with your services.

Arch. 'Tis ungenerous in you, madam, not to reward them.

Mrs Sul. How! at the expence of my honour?

Arch. Honour! Can honour consist with ingratitude? If you would deal like a woman of honour, do like a man of honour. D'ye think I would deny you in such a case?

Enter GIPSEY.

Gip. Madam, my lady ordered me to tell you, that your brother is below at the gate.

Mrs Sul. My brother! Heavens be praised! —Sir, he shall thank you for your services; he has it in his power.

Arch. Who is your brother, madam?

Mrs Sul. Sir Charles Freeman. You'll excuse me, sir; I must go and receive him.

[*Exit* MRS SUL.

Arch. Sir Charles Freeman! 'Sdeath and hell! my old acquaintance. Now, unless Aimwell has made good use of his time, all our fair machine goes souse into the sea like the Edistone.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to the gallery in the same house.*

Enter AIMWELL *and* DORINDA.

Dor. Well, well, my lord, you have conquered. Your late generous action will, I hope, plead for my easy yielding; though, I must own, your lordship had a friend in the fort before.

Aim. The sweets of Hybla dwell upon her tongue——Here, doctor———

Enter FOIGARD, *with a book.*

Foig. Are you prepared, bote?

Dor. I'm ready: but first, my lord, one word—I have a frightful example of a hasty marriage in my own family; when I reflect upon't, it shocks me. Pray, my lord, consider a little—

Aim. Consider! Do you doubt my honour, or my love?

Dor. Neither. I do believe you equally just as brave—And were your whole sex drawn out for me to choose, I should not cast a look upon the multitude, if you were absent—But, my lord, I'm a woman: colours, concealments, may hide a thousand faults in me—Therefore, know me better first; I hardly dare affirm I know myself in any thing except my love.

Aim. Such goodness who could injure? I find myself unequal to the task of villain. She has gained my soul, and made it honest like her own —I cannot hurt her. [*Aside.*] Doctor, retire. [*Exit* FOIGARD.] Madam, behold your lover and your proselyte, and judge of my passion by my conversion—I'm all a lie, nor dare I give a fiction to your arms; I'm all a counterfeit, except my passion.

Dor. Forbid it, Heaven! A counterfeit!

Aim. I am no lord, but a poor needy man, come with a mean and scandalous design, to prey upon your fortune——but the beauties of your mind and person have so won me from myself, that, like a trusty servant, I prefer the interest of my mistress to my own.

Dor. Sure I have had the dream of some poor mariner: a sleeping image of a welcome port, and wake involved in storms—Pray, sir, who are you?

Aim. Brother to the man whose title I usurped, but stranger to his honour or fortune.

Dor. Matchless honesty!—Once I was proud, sir, of your wealth and title; but now, am prouder that you want it. Now I can shew my love was justly levelled, and had no aim but love. Doctor, come in.

Enter FOIGARD *at one door,* GIPSEY *at another, who whispers* DORINDA.

Your pardon, sir; we sha'nt want you now, sir. You must excuse me—I'll wait on you presently.

[*Exit with* GIPSEY.

Foig. Upon my shoul, now, dis is foolish.

[*Exit.*

Aim. Gone! and bid the priest depart—It has an ominous look.

Enter ARCHER.

Arch. Courage, Tom—shall I wish you joy?

Aim. No.

Arch. Oons! man, what ha' you been doing?

Aim. O, Archer! my honesty, I fear, has ruined me.

Arch. How?

Aim. I have discovered myself.

Arch. Discovered! and without my consent! What! have I embarked my small remains in the same bottom with yours, and you dispose of all without my partnership?

Aim. O, Archer, I own my fault.

Arch. After conviction—'Tis then too late for pardon——You may remember, Mr Aimwell, that you proposed this folly—As you begun, so end it—Henceforth, I'll hunt my fortune single. So farewell.

Aim. Stay, my dear Archer, but a minute!

Arch. Stay! What, to be despised, exposed, and laughed at! No, I would sooner change conditions with the worst of the rogues we just now bound, than bear one scornful smile from the proud knight that once I treated as my equal.

Aim. What knight?

Arch. Sir Charles Freeman, brother to the lady that I had almost——But no matter for that; 'tis a cursed night's work, and so I leave you to make the best on't.

Aim. Freeman!——One word, Archer. Still I have hopes; methought, she received my confession with pleasure.

Arch. 'Sdeath! who doubts it?

Aim. She consented after to the match; and still I dare believe she will be just.

Arch. To herself, I warrant her, as you should have been.

Aim. By all my hopes, she comes, and smiling comes!

Enter DORINDA, *mighty gay.*

Dor. Come, my dear lord—I fly with impatience to your arms———The minutes of my absence were a tedious year. Where's this priest?

Enter FOIGARD.

Arch. Oons, a brave girl!

Dor. I suppose, my lord, this gentleman is privy to our affairs?

Arch. Yes, yes, madam, I'm to be your father.

Dor. Come, priest, do your office.

Arch. Make haste, make haste; couple them any way. [*Takes* AIMWELL'S *hand.*] Come, madam, I'm to give you———

Dor. My mind's altered; I won't.

Arch. Eh———

Aim. Im confounded.

Foig. Upon my shoul, and so is myshelf.

Arch. What's the matter now, madam?

Dor. Look'e, sir, one generous action deserves another———This gentleman's honour obliged him to hide nothing from me; my justice engages me to conceal nothing from him; in short, sir, you are the person that you thought you counterfeited; you are the true lord viscount Aimwell, and I wish your lordship joy. Now, priest, you may be gone; if my lord is now pleased with the match, let his lordship marry me in the face of the world.

Aim. Archer, what does she mean?

Dor. Here's a witness for my truth.

Enter SIR CHARLES *and* MRS SULLEN.

Sir Cha. My dear lord Aimwell, I wish you joy.

Aim. Of what?

Sir Cha. Of your honour and estate. Your brother died the day before I left London; and all your friends have writ after you to Brussels; among the rest I did myself the honour.

Arch. Hark'e, sir knight, don't you banter now?

Sir Cha. 'Tis truth, upon my honour.

Aim. Thanks to the pregnant stars that formed this accident.

Arch. Thanks to the womb of time that brought it forth; away with it!

Aim. Thanks to my guardian angel that led me to the prize—— [*Taking* DORINDA'S *hand.*

Arch. And double thanks to the noble sir Charles Freeman. My lord, I wish you joy——My lady, I wish you joy———'Sdeath, I'm grown strangely airy upon this matter—My lord, how d'ye?—A word, my lord. Don't you remember something of a previous agreement that entitles me to the moiety of this lady's fortune, which, I think, will amount to ten thousand pounds!

Aim. Not a penny, Archer. You would have cut my throat just now, because I would not deceive this lady.

Arch. Ay, and I'll cut your throat still, if you should deceive her now.

Aim. That's what I expect; and, to end the dispute, the lady's fortune is twenty thousand pounds; we'll divide stakes; take the twenty thousand pounds, or the lady!

Dor. How! Is your lordship so indifferent?

Arch. No, no, madam; his lordship knows very well that I'll take the money; I leave you to his lordship, and so we're both provided for.

Enter FOIGARD.

Foig. Arra fait, de people do say you be all robbed, joy.

Aim. The ladies have been in some danger, sir, as you saw.

Foig. Upon my shoul, our inn be robbed, too.

Aim. Our inn! By whom?

Foig. Upon my shalvation, our landlord has robbed himself, and run away wid de money.

Arch. Robbed himself?

Foig. Ay, fait! and me, too, of a hundred pounds!

Arch. Robbed you of a hundred pounds!

Foig. Yes, fait, honey! that I did owe to him.

Aim. Our money's gone, Frank.

Arch. Rot the money, my wench is gone—— *Sçavez vous quelquechose de Mademoiselle* Cherry?

Enter a fellow, with a strong box and letter.

Fel. Is there one Martin here!

Arch. Ay, ay—who wants him?

Fel. I have a box here, and a letter, for him.

Arch. [*Taking the box.*] Ha, ha, ha! what's here? Legerdemain! By this light, my lord, our money again! But this unfolds the riddle. [*Opening the letter, reads.*] Hum, hum, hum——O, 'tis for the public good, and must be communicated to the company.

'MR MARTIN,

'My father, being afraid of an impeachment 'by the rogues that are taken to-night, is gone 'off; but if you can procure him a pardon, he'll 'make great discoveries, that may be useful to 'the country. Could I have met you, instead of 'your master, to-night, I would have delivered 'myself into your hands, with a sum that much 'exceeds that in your strong box, which I have 'sent you, with an assurance to my dear Martin, 'that I shall ever be his most faithful friend, till 'death, CHERRY BONIFACE.

There's a billet-doux for you!——As for the father, I think he ought to be encouraged; and for the daughter—pray, my lord, persuade your bride to take her into her service instead of Gipsey.

Aim. I can assure you, madam, your deliverance was owing to her discovery.

Dor. Your command, my lord, will do without the obligation. I'll take care of her.

Sir Cha. This good company meets opportunely in favour of a design I have in behalf of my unfortunate sister. I intend to part her from her husband—Gentlemen, will you assist me?

Arch. Assist you! 'Sdeath, who would not?

Foig. Ay; upon my shoul, we'll all ashist.

Enter SULLEN.

Sul. What's all this? They tell me, spouse, that you had like to have been robbed.

Mrs Sul. Truly, spouse, I was pretty near it, had not these two gentlemen interposed.

Sul. How came these gentlemen here?

Mrs Sul. That's his way of returning thanks, you must know.

Foig. Ay; but upon my conscience, de question be a-propos for all dat.

Sir Cha. You promised last night, sir, that you would deliver your lady to me this morning.

Sul. Humph.

Arch. Humph! What do you mean by humph?—Sir, you shall deliver her——In short, sir, we have saved you and your family; and, if you are not civil, we'll unbind the rogues, join with them, and set fire to your house——What does the man mean? Not part with his wife!

Foig. Arra, not part wid your wife! Upon my shoul, de man dosh not understand common shivility.

Mrs Sul. Hold, gentlemen; all things here must move by consent. Compulsion would spoil us. Let my dear and I talk the matter over, and you shall judge it between us.

Sul. Let me know first, who are to be our judges.——Pray, sir, who are you?

Sir Cha. I am sir Charles Freeman, come to take away your wife.

Sul. And you, good sir?

Aim. Thomas, viscount Aimwell, come to take away your sister.

Sul. And you, pray, sir?

Arch. Francis Archer, esq. come——

Sul. To take away my mother, I hope—Gentlemen, you're heartily welcome. I never met with three more obliging people since I was born—And now, my dear, if you please, you shall have the first word.

Arch. And the last, for five pounds. [*Aside.*

Mrs Sul. Spouse,

Sul. Rib.

Mrs Sul. How long have you been married?

Sul. By the almanack, fourteen months;—but, by my account, fourteen years.

Mrs Sul. 'Tis thereabout, by my reckoning.

Foig. Upon my conshience, dere accounts vil agree.

Mrs Sul. Pray, spouse, what did you marry for?

Sul. To get an heir to my estate.

Sir Cha. And have you succeeded?

Sul. No.

Arch. The condition fails of his side——Pray, madam, what did you marry for?

Mrs Sul. To support the weakness of my sex, by the strength of his, and to enjoy the pleasures of an agreeable society.

Sir Cha. Are your expectations answered?

Mrs Sul. No.

Foig. Arra, honeys! a clear cause, a clear cause!

Sir Cha. What are the bars to your mutual contentment?

Mrs Sul. In the first place, I can't drink ale with him.

Sul. Nor can I drink tea with her.

Mrs Sul. I can't hunt with you.

Sul. Nor can I dance with you.

Mrs Sul. I hate cocking and racing.

Sul. I abhor ombre and piquet.

Mrs Sul. Your silence is intolerable.

Sul. Your prating is worse.

Mrs Sul. Have we not been a perpetual offence to each other——a gnawing vulture at the heart?

Sul. A frightful goblin to the sight?

Mrs Sul. A porcupine to the feeling?

Sul. Perpetual wormwood to the taste?

Mrs Sul. Is there on earth a thing we can agree in?

Sul. Yes——to part.

Mrs Sul. With all my heart.

Sul. Your hand.

Mrs Sul. Here.

Sul. These hands joined us, these shall part us——Away———

Mrs Sul. East.

Sul. West.

Mrs Sul. North.

Sul. South; far as the poles asunder.

Foig. Upon my shoul, a very pretty sheremony!

Sir Cha. Now, Mr Sullen, there wants only my sister's fortune to make us easy.

Sul. Sir Charles, you love your sister, and I love her fortune: every one to his fancy.

Arch. Then you won't refund?

Sul. Not a stiver.

Arch. What is her portion?

Sir Cha. Twenty thousand pounds, sir.

Arch. I'll pay it. My lord, I thank him, has enabled me, and, if the lady pleases, she shall go home with me. This night's adventure has proved strangely lucky to us all—For captain Gibbet, in his walk, has made bold, Mr Sullen, with your study and escritore, and has taken out all the writings of your estate, all the articles of marriage with your lady, bills, bonds, leases, receipts to an infinite value; I took them from him, and will deliver them to sir Charles.

[*Gives him a parcel of papers and parchments.*

Sul. How, my writings! my head aches consumedly. Well, gentlemen, you shall have her

fortune, but I can't talk. If you have a mind, sir Charles, to be merry, and celebrate my sister's wedding, and my divorce, you may command my house; but my head aches consumedly! Scrub, bring me a dram.

Arch. 'Twould be hard to guess which of these parties is the better pleased, the couple joined, or the couple parted; the one rejoicing in hopes of an untasted happiness, and the other in their deliverance from an experienced misery.

'Both happy in their several states we find;
'These parted by consent, and those conjoined.
'Consent, if mutual, saves the lawyer's fee;
'Consent is law enough to set you free.'

THE

BRITISH DRAMA.

THE

BRITISH DRAMA;

COMPREHENDING

THE BEST PLAYS

IN

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

COMEDIES.

VOL. II.—PART II.

LONDON,
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1804.

THE

BRITISH DRAMA.

THE

BUSY BODY.

BY

MRS CENTLIVRE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR GEORGE AIRY, *a gentleman of four thousand a-year, in love with* MIRANDA.
SIR FRANCIS GRIPE, *guardian to* MIRANDA *and* MARPLOT, *father to* CHARLES, *in love with* MIRANDA.
CHARLES, *friend to* SIR GEORGE, *in love with* ISABINDA.
SIR JEALOUS TRAFFICK, *a merchant that had lived some time in Spain, father to* ISABINDA.
MARPLOT, *a sort of silly fellow, cowardly, but very inquisitive to know every body's business.*
WHISPER, *servant to* CHARLES.

WOMEN.

MIRANDA, *an heiress, worth thirty thousand pounds, really in love with* SIR GEORGE, *but pretends to be so with her guardian,* SIR FRANCIS.
ISABINDA, *daughter to* SIR JEALOUS, *in love with* CHARLES, *but designed for a Spanish merchant by her father.*
PATCH, *her woman.*
SCENTWELL, *woman to* MIRANDA.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

SIR GEORGE AIRY *meeting* CHARLES.

Cha. Ha! Sir George Airy a birding thus early! what forbidden game roused you so soon? for no lawful occasion could invite a person of your figure abroad, at such unfashionable hours.

Sir Geo. There are some men, Charles, whom fortune has left free from inquietudes, who are diligently studious to find out ways and means to make themselves uneasy.

Cha. Is it possible that any thing in nature can ruffle the temper of a man whom the four seasons of the year compliment with as many thousand pounds, nay, and a father at rest with his ancestors?

Sir Geo. Why, there it is now! a man, that wants money, thinks none can be unhappy that has it; but, my affairs are in such a whimsical posture, that it will require a calculation of my nativity to find if my gold will relieve me or not.

Cha. Ha, ha, ha! never consult the stars about that; gold has a power beyond them; gold unlocks the midnight councils; gold outdoes the wind, becalms the ship, or fills her sails; gold is omnipotent below; it makes whole armies fight or fly; it buys even souls; and bribes wretches to betray their country: then, what can thy business be that gold won't serve thee in?

Sir Geo. Why, I'm in love.

Cha. In love!——Ha, ha, ha, ha! in love!—

Ha, ha, ha, ha! with what, prithee? a cherubin?

Sir Geo. No; with a woman.

Cha. A woman! good. Ha, ha, ha, ha! and gold not help thee?

Sir Geo. But, suppose I'm in love with two—

Cha. Ay, if thou'rt in love with two hundred, gold will fetch them, I warrant thee, boy. But who are they? who are they? come!

Sir Geo. One is a lady, whose face I never saw; but witty to a miracle; the other, beautiful as Venus——

Cha. And a fool—

Sir Geo. For aught I know; for I never spoke to her; but you can inform me. I am charmed by the wit of the one, and die for the beauty of the other.

Cha. And, pray, which are you in quest of now?

Sir Geo. I prefer the sensual pleasure; I'm for her I've seen, who is thy father's ward, Miranda.

Cha. Nay, then, I pity you; for the Jew, my father, will no more part with her and thirty thousand pounds, than he would with a guinea to keep me from starving.

Sir Geo. Now, you see gold can't do every thing, Charles.

Cha. Yes; for 'tis her gold that bars my father's gate against you.

Sir Geo. Why, if he be this avaricious wretch, how cam'st thou by such a liberal education?

Cha. Not a souse out of his pocket, I assure you: I had an uncle who defrayed that charge; but, for some little wildness of youth, though he made me his heir, left dad my guardian till I came to years of discretion, which, I presume, the old gentleman will never think I am; and now he has got the estate into his clutches, it does me no more good than if it lay in Prester John's dominions.

Sir Geo. What! canst thou find no stratagem to redeem it?

Cha. I have made many essays to no purpose. Though want, the mistress of invention, still tempts me on, yet still the old fox is too cunning for me.—I am upon my last project, which, if it fails, then, for my last refuge, a brown musquet.

Sir Geo. What is't? can I assist thee?

Cha. Not yet; when you can, I have confidence enough in you to ask it.

Sir Geo. I am always ready. But what does he intend to do with Miranda? is she to be sold in private, or will he put her up by way of auction, at who bids most? if so, egad I'm for him; my gold, as you say, shall be subservient to my pleasure.

Cha. To deal ingenuously with you, sir George, I know very little of her or home; for, since my uncle's death, and my return from travel, I have never been well with my father: he thinks my expences too great, and I, his allowance too little; he never sees me, but he quarrels; and, to avoid that, I shun his house as much as possible. The report is, he intends to marry her himself.

Sir Geo. Can she consent to it?

Cha. Yes, faith! so they say: but, I tell you, I am wholly ignorant of the matter. Miranda and I are like two violent members of a contrary party; I can scarce allow her beauty, though all the world does; nor she me civility for that contempt. I fancy she plays the mother-in-law already; and sets the old gentleman on to do mischief.

Sir Geo. Then, I have your free consent to get her?

Cha. Ay; and my helping hand, if occasion be.

Sir Geo. Poh! yonder's a fool coming this way; let's avoid him.

Cha. What? Marplot? No, no; he's my instrument; there's a thousand conveniences in him: he'll lend me his money, when he has any; run of my errands, and be proud of it; in short, he'll pimp for me, lie for me, drink for me, do any thing but fight for me; and that I trust to my own arm for.

Sir Geo. Nay, then, he's to be endured; I never knew his qualifications before.

Enter MARPLOT, *with a patch across his face.*

Mar. Dear Charles, your's—Ha! Sir George Airy! the man in the world I have an ambition to be known to! [*Aside.*] Give me thy hand, dear boy!

Cha. A good assurance! But hark ye, how came your beautiful countenance clouded in the wrong place?

Mar. I must confess 'tis a little *mal-a-propos*; but no matter for that. A word with you, Charles. Prithee, introduce me to sir George—he is a man of wit, and I'd give ten guineas to——

Cha. When you have them, you mean?

Mar. Ay, when I have them; pugh, pox, you cut the thread of my discourse——I would give ten guineas, I say, to be ranked in his acquaintance. Well, 'tis a vast addition to a man's fortune, according to the rout of the world, to be seen in the company of leading men; for, then, we are all thought to be politicians, or whigs, or jacks, or highflyers, or lowflyers, or levellers—and so forth; for, you must know, we all herd in parties now.

Cha. Then, a fool for diversion is out of fashion, I find?

Mar. Yes, without it be a mimicking fool; and they are darlings every where. But, prithee, introduce me.

Cha. Well, on condition you'll give us a true account how you came by that mouruing nose, I will.

Mar. I'll do it.

Cha. Sir George, here's a gentleman has a passionate desire to kiss your hand.

Sir Geo. Oh, I honour men of the sword! And, I presume, this gentleman is lately come from Spain or Portugal—by his scars.

Mar. No, really, sir George, mine sprung from civil fury. Happening last night into the groom porter's—I had a strong inclination to go ten guineas with a sort of a, sort of a—kind of a milksop, as I thought. A pox of the dice! he flung out, and my pockets being empty, as Charles knows they often are, he proved a surly North Briton, and broke my face for my deficiency.

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! and did not you draw?

Mar. Draw, sir! Why, I did but lay my hand upon my sword, to make a swift retreat, and he roared out—Now the deel a ma saul, sir, gin ye touch yer steel Ise whip mine through yer wem.

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha!

Cha. Ha, ha, ha, ha! Safe was the word. So, you walked off, I suppose.

Mar. Yes, for I avoid fighting, purely to be serviceable to my friends, you know———

Sir Geo. Your friends are much obliged to you, sir: I hope you'll rank me in that number.

Mar. Sir George, a bow from the side-box, or to be seen in your chariot, binds me ever yours.

Sir Geo. Trifles; you may command them, when you please.

Cha. Provided he may command you.

Mar. Me! Why, I live for no other purpose ——Sir George, I have the honour to be caressed by most of the reigning toasts of the town: I'll tell them you are the finest gentleman——

Sir Geo. No, no; prithee, let me alone to tell the ladies—my parts—Can you convey a letter upon occasion, or deliver a message with an air of business, ha?

Mar. With the assurance of a page, and the gravity of a statesman.

Sir Geo. You know Miranda?

Mar. What! My sister ward? Why, her guardian is mine; we are fellow-sufferers. Ah, he is a covetous, cheating, sanctified, curmudgeon: that sir Francis Gripe is a damned old—hypocritical———

Cha. Hold, hold; I suppose, friend, you forget that he is my father?

Mar. Egad, and so I did, Charles—I ask your pardon, Charles, but it is for your sake I hate him. Well, I say the world is mistaken in him; his out-side piety makes him every man's executor, and his inside cunning makes him every heir's gaoler. Egad, Charles, I'm half persuaded that thou'rt some ward, too, and never of his getting—for never were two things so unlike as you and your father; he scrapes up every thing, and thou spendest every thing; every body is indebted to him, and thou art indebted to every body.

Cha. You are very free, Mr Marplot.

Mar. Aye, I give and take, Charles—you may be as free with me, you know.

Sir Geo. A pleasant fellow.

Cha. The dog is diverting, sometimes, or there would be no enduring his impertinence. He is pressing to be employed, and willing to execute; but some ill fate generally attends all he undertakes, and he oftener spoils an intrigue than helps it.

Mar. I have always your good word; but if I miscarry, 'tis none of my fault; I follow my instructions.

Cha. Yes, witness the merchant's wife.

Mar. Pish, pox! that was an accident.

Sir Geo. What was't, prithee?

Mar. Nay, Charles, now, don't expose your friend.

Cha. Why, you must know, I had lent a certain merchant my hunting horses, and was to have met his wife in his absence. Sending him along with my groom to make the compliment, and to deliver a letter to the lady at the same time; what does he do, but gives the husband the letter, and offers her the horses!

Mar. Why, to be sure, I did offer her the horses, and I remember you was even with me, for you denied the letter to be yours, and swore I had a design upon her, which my bones paid for.

Cha. Come, sir George, let's walk round, if you are not engaged, for I have sent my man upon a little earnest business, and I have ordered him to bring me the answer into the Park.

Mar. Business! and I not know it! Egad I'll watch him.

Sir Geo. I must beg your pardon, Charles; I am to meet your father.

Cha. My father!

Sir Geo. Aye, and about the oddest bargain, perhaps, you ever heard of; but I'll not impart till I know the success.

Mar. What can his business be with Sir Francis? Now would I give all the world to know it! Why the devil should not one know every man's concerns? [*Aside.*

Cha. Prosperity to it, whatever it be: I have private affairs, too: over a bottle, we'll compare notes.

Mar. Charles knows I love a glass as well as any man; I'll make one; shall it be to-night? And I long to know their secrets. [*Aside.*

Enter WHISPER.

Whis. Sir, sir, Mrs Patch says Isabinda's Spanish father has quite spoiled the plot, and she cannot meet you in the Park, but he infallibly will go out this afternoon, she says: but I must step again to know the hour.

Mar. What did Whisper say now? I shall go stark mad, if I'm not let into the secret. [*Aside.*

Cha. Curst misfortune!

Mar. Curst! What's curst, Charles?

Cha. Come along with me; my heart feels pleasure at her name. Sir George, your's; we'll meet at the old place the usual hour.

Sir Geo. Agreed. I think I see sir Francis yonder. [*Exit* SIR GEORGE.

Cha. Marplot, you must excuse me, I am engaged. [*Exit* CHARLES.

Mar. Engaged! Egad, I'll engage my life I'll know what your engagement is.

[*Exit* MARPLOT.

Enter MIRANDA, *coming out of a chair.*

Mir. Let the chair wait. My servant that dogged sir George said he was in the Park.

Enter PATCH.

Ha! Miss Patch alone! Did not you tell me you had contrived a way to bring Isabinda to the Park?

Patch. Oh, madam, your ladyship cannot imagine what a wretched disappointment we have met with! Just as I had fetched a suit of my clothes for a disguise, comes my old master into his closet, which is right against her chamber door: this struck us into a terrible fright—At length I put on a grave face, and asked him if he was at leisure for his chocolate? in hopes to draw him out of his hole; but he snapped my nose off: no, I shall be busy here, these two hours. At which my poor mistress, seeing no way of escape, ordered me to wait on your ladyship with the sad relation.

Mir. Unhappy Isabinda! Was ever any thing so unaccountable as the humour of Sir Jealous Traffick?

Patch. Oh, madam, it's his living so long in Spain. He vows he'll spend half his estate, but he'll be a parliament-man, on purpose to bring in a bill for women to wear veils, and other odious Spanish customs—he swears it is the height of impudence to have a woman seen barefaced, even at church, and scarce believes there's a true begotten child in the city.

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! how the old fool torments himself! Suppose he could introduce his rigid rules—does he think we could not match them in contrivance? No, no; let the tyrant man make what laws he will, if there's a woman under the government, I warrant she finds a way to break them. Is his mind set upon the Spaniard for his son-in-law still?

Patch. Aye, and he expects him by the next fleet, which drives his daughter to melancholy and despair. But, madam, I find you retain the same gay cheerful spirit you had when I waited on your ladyship. My lady is mighty good-humoured, too; and I have found a way to make sir Jealous believe I am wholly in his interest, when my real design is to serve her; he makes me her gaoler, and I set her at liberty.

Mir. I know thy prolific brain would be of singular service to her, or I had not parted with thee to her father.

Patch. But, madam, the report is that you are going to marry your guardian!

Mir. It is necessary such a report should be, Patch.

Patch. But is it true, madam?

Mir. That's not absolutely necessary.

Patch. I thought it was only the old strain, coaxing him still for your own, and railing at all the young fellows about town: in my mind, now, you are as ill plagued with your guardian, madam, as my lady is with her father.

Mir. No, I have liberty, wench; that she wants: what would she give now to be in this deshabille in the open air, nay more, in pursuit of the young fellow she likes? for that's my case, I assure you.

Patch. As for that, madam, she's even with you; for, though she can't come abroad, we have a way to bring him home in spite of old Argus.

Mir. Now, Patch, your opinion of my choice, for here he comes. Ha! my guardian with him! what can be the meaning of this? I'm sure sir Francis can't know me in this dress. Let me observe them. [*They withdraw.*

Enter SIR FRANCIS GRIPE *and* SIR GEORGE AIRY.

Sir Fran. Verily, sir George, thou wilt repent throwing away thy money so; for I tell thee sincerely, Miranda, my charge, does not like a young fellow; they are all vicious, and seldom make good husbands: in sober sadness, she can't abide them.

Mir. [*Peeping.*] In sober sadness, you are mistaken—What can this mean?

Sir Geo. Look'e, sir Francis; whether she can or cannot abide young fellows, is not the business: will you take the fifty guineas?

Sir Fran. In good truth I will not—for I knew thy father; he was a hearty wary man; and I cannot consent that his son should squander away what he saved to no purpose.

Mir. [*Peeping.*] Now, in the name of wonder, what bargain can he be driving about me for fifty guineas?

Patch. I wish it be not for the first night's lodging, madam.

Sir Geo. Well, sir Francis, since you are so conscientious for my father's sake, then permit me the favour gratis.

Mir. [*Peeping.*] The favour! O' my life I believe 'tis as you said, Patch!

Sir Fran. No verily; if thou dost not buy thy experience thou wilt never be wise; therefore, give me a hundred, and try thy fortune.

Sir Geo. The scruples arose, I find, from the scanty sum.—Let me see—a hundred guineas—[*Takes them out of a purse, and chinks them.*] Ha! they have a very pretty sound, and a very pleasing look—But then, Miranda——but if she should be cruel————

Mir. [*Peeping.*] As ten to one I shall——

Sir Fran. Ay, do; consider on't. He, he, he!

Sir Geo. No, I'll do't.

Patch. Do't! what, whether you will or no, madam?

Sir Geo. Come, to the point; here's the gold; sum up the conditions——

[SIR FRAN. *pulling out a paper.*]

Mir. [*Peeping.*] Ay, for Heaven's sake do, for my expectation is on the rack!

Sir Fran. Well, at your peril be it.

Sir Geo. Ay, ay; go on.

Sir Fran. Imprimis, you are to be admitted into my house in order to move your suit to Miranda, for the space of ten minutes, without let or molestation, provided I remain in the same room.

Sir Geo. But out of earshot.

Sir Fran. Well, well, I don't desire to hear what you say; ha, ha, ha! in consideration I am to have that purse and a hundred guineas.

Sir Geo. Take it—— [*Gives him the purse.*

Mir. [*Peeping.*] So! 'tis well it's no worse: I'll fit you both——

Sir Geo. And this agreement is to be performed to-day.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay; the sooner the better. Poor fool! how Miranda and I shall laugh at him!—Well, sir George, ha, ha, ha! take the last sound of your guineas, ha, ha, ha! [*Chinks them.*] [*Exit.*

Mir. [*Peeping.*] Sure he does not know I am Miranda.

Sir Geo. A very extraordinary bargain I have made truly, if she should be really in love with this old cuff now!——Psha! that's morally impossible.——But then, what hopes have I to succeed? I never spoke to her—

Mir. [*Peeping.*] Say you so? then I am safe.

Sir Geo. What though my tongue never spoke? my eyes said a thousand things, and my hopes flattered me her's answered them. If I'm lucky ——If not, it is but a hundred guineas thrown away. [MIRANDA *and* PATCH *come forward.*

Mir. Upon what, sir George?

Sir Geo. Ha! my incognita—upon a woman, madam.

Mir. They are the worst things you can deal in, and damage the soonest; your very breath destroys them, and, I fear, you'll never see your return, sir George, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Were they more brittle than china, and dropped to pieces with a touch, every atom of her I have ventured at, if she is but mistress of thy wit, balances ten times the sum. Prithee, let me see thy face!

Mir. By no means; that may spoil your opinion of my sense——

Sir Geo. Rather confirm it, madam.

Patch. So, rob the lady of your gallantry, sir.

Sir Geo. No, child; a dish of chocolate in the morning never spoils my dinner: the other lady I design a set meal; so there's no danger.

Mir. Matrimony! Ha, ha, ha! What crimes have you committed against the god of love, that he should revenge them so severely, to stamp husband on your forehead?

Sir Geo. For my folly, in having so often met you here, without pursuing the laws of nature, and exercising her command——But I resolve, ere we part now, to know who you are, where you live, what kind of flesh and blood your face is; therefore, unmask, and don't put me to the trouble of doing it for you.

Mir. My face is the same flesh and blood with my hand, sir George, which, if you'll be so rude to provoke——

Sir Geo. You'll apply it to my cheek—the ladies' favours are always welcome, but I must have that cloud withdrawn.—[*Taking hold of her.*]—Remember you are in the Park, child; and what a terrible thing would it be to lose this pretty white hand!

Mir. And how will it sound in a chocolate-house, that sir George Airy rudely pulled off a lady's mask, when he had given her his honour that he never would, directly or indirectly, endeavour to know her till she gave him leave?

Patch. I wish we were safe out.

Sir Geo. But, if that lady thinks fit to pursue, and meet me at every turn, like some troubled spirit, shall I be blamed if I inquire into the reality? I would have nothing dissatisfied in a female shape.

Mir. What shall I do? [*Pauses.*

Sir Geo. Aye, prithee, consider; for thou shalt find me very much at thy service.

Patch. Suppose, sir, the lady should be in love with you?

Sir Geo. Oh! I'll return the obligation in a moment.

Patch. And marry her?

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! that's not the way to love her, child.

Mir. If he discovers me I shall die—Which way shall I escape? Let me see— [*Pauses.*

Sir Geo. Well, madam——

Mir. I have it—Sir George, 'tis fit you should allow something; if you'll excuse my face, and turn your back, (if you look upon me I shall sink, even masked as I am) I will confess why I have engaged you so often, who I am, and where I live.

Sir Geo. Well, to shew you I'm a man of honour, I accept the conditions: let me but once know those, and the face won't be long a secret to me.

Patch. What mean you, madam?

Mir. To get off.

Sir Geo. 'Tis something indecent to turn one's back upon a lady; but you command, and I obey. [*Turns his back.*] Come, madam, begin—

Mir. First, then, it was my unhappy lot to see you at Paris [*Draws back a little way, and speaks.*], at a ball upon a birthday; your shape

and air charmed my eyes, your wit and complaisance my soul, and from that fatal night I loved you. [*Drawing back.*

And when you left the place grief seized me so,
Nor rest my heart nor sleep my eyes could know,
Last I resolved a hazardous point to try,
And quit the place in search of liberty. [*Exit.*

Sir Geo. Excellent!—I hope she's handsome—Well, now madam, to the two other things, your name, and where you live——I am a gentleman, and this confession will not be lost upon me—Nay, prithee, don't weep, but go on, for I find my heart melts in thy behalf—Speak quickly, or I shall turn about——Not yet—Poor lady! she expects I should comfort her; and, to do her justice, she has said enough to encourage me. [*Turns about.*] Ha! gone! the devil! jilted! Why, what a tale has she invented—of Paris, balls, and birth-days! Egad I'd give ten guineas to know who the gipsey is—A curse of my folly—I deserve to lose her. What woman can forgive a man that turns his back!

The bold and resolute in love and war
To conquer take the right and swiftest way;
The boldest lover soonest gains the fair,
As courage makes the rudest force obey:
Take no denial, and the dames adore ye;
Closely pursue them, and they fall before ye.
[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter SIR FRANCIS GRIPE *and* MIRANDA.

Sir Fran. HA, ha, ha, ha!

Mir. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh, I shall die with laughing—the most romantic adventure—Ha, ha, ha! What does the odious young fop mean? A hundred pieces to talk ten minutes with me! ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Fran. And I am to be by too; there's the jest! adad, if it had been in private, I should not have cared to trust the young dog.

Mir. Indeed and indeed but you might, Gardy—Now, methinks, there's nobody handsomer than you: so neat, so clean, so good-humoured, and so loving—

Sir Fran. Pretty rogue, pretty rogue! and so thou shalt find me, if thou dost prefer thy Gardy before these capercrs of the age: thou shalt outshine the queen's box on an opera night; thou shalt be the envy of the ring, (for I will carry thee to Hyde-Park) and thy equipage shall surpass the——what d'ye call them, ambassadors.

Mir. Nay, I am sure the discreet part of my sex will envy me more for the inside furniture, when you are in it, than my outside equipage.

Sir Fran. A cunning baggage i'faith thou art, and a wise one too! and, to shew thee that thou hast not chose amiss, I'll this moment disinherit my son, and settle my whole estate upon thee.

Mir. There's an old rogue now! [*Aside.*] No, Gardy, I would not have your name be so black in the world. You know my father's will runs, that I am not to possess my estate, without your consent, till I am five-and-twenty; you shall only abate the odd seven years, and make me mistress of my estate to-day, and I'll make you master of my person to-morrow.

Sir Fran. Humph! that may not be safe——No, Chargy, I'll settle it upon thee for pin-money, and that will be every bit as well, thou know'st.

Mir. Unconscionable old wretch! bribe me with my own money! Which way shall I get out of his hands. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Well, what art thou thinking, my girl, ha? how to banter sir George!

Mir. I must not pretend to banter: he knows my tongue too well. [*Aside.*] No, Gardy, I have thought of a way will confound him more than all I could say, if I should talk to him seven years.

Sir Fran. How's that? oh! I'm transported, I'm ravished, I'm mad!——

Mir. It would make you mad if you knew all. [*Aside.*] I'll not answer him a word, but be dumb to all he says.

Sir Fran. Dumb! good; ha, ha, ha! Excellent! ha, ha, ha, ha! I think I have you now, Sir George. Dumb! he'll go distracted—well, she's the wittiest rogue. Ha, ha, dumb! I can't but laugh, ha, ha! to think how damned mad he'll be when he finds he has given his money away for a dumb show; ha, ha, ha!

Mir. Nay, Gardy, if he did but know my thoughts of him, it would make him ten times madder; ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Fran. Ay, so it would, Chargy, to hold him in such derision, to scorn to answer him, to be dumb! ha, ha, ha!

Enter CHARLES.

Sir Fran. How now, sirrah! who let you in?

Cha. My necessities, sir.

Sir Fran. Your necessities are very impertinent, and ought to have sent before they entered.

Cha. Sir, I knew 'twas a word would gain admittance nowhere.

Sir Fran. Then, sirrah, how durst you rudely thrust that upon your father, which nobody else would admit?

Cha. Sure the name of a son is a sufficient plea. I ask this lady's pardon if I have intruded.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay; ask her pardon and her blessing, too, if you expect any thing from me.

Mir. I believe yours, Sir Francis, in a purse of guineas, would be more material. Your son may have business with you; I'll retire.

Sir Fran. I guess his business; but I'll dispatch him; I expect the knight every minute: you'll be in readiness?

Mir. Certainly: my expectation is more upon the wing than yours, old gentleman. [*Aside. Exit.*

Sir Fran. Well, sir?

Cha. Nay, it is very ill, sir; my circumstances are, I'm sure.

Sir Fran. And what's that to me, sir? your management should have made them better.

Cha. If you please to entrust me with the management of my estate, I shall endeavour it, sir.

Sir Fran. What, to set upon a card, and buy a lady's favour at the price of a thousand pieces; to rig out an equipage for a wench, or, by your carelessness, to enrich your steward; to fine for sheriff, or put up for a parliament-man?

Cha. I hope I should not spend it this way: however, I ask only for what my uncle left me; yours you may dispose of as you please, sir.

Sir Fran. That I shall, out of your reach, I assure you, sir. Adad, these young fellows think old men get estates for nothing but them to squander away in dicing, wenching, drinking, dressing, and so forth!

Cha. I think I was born a gentleman, sir; I'm sure my uncle bred me like one.

Sir Fran. From which you would infer, sir, that gaming, whoring, and the pox, are requisites for a gentleman.

Cha. Monstrous! when I would ask him only for a support, he falls into these unmannerly reproaches. I must, though against my will, employ invention, and, by stratagem, relieve myself. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Sirrah, what is it you mutter, sirrah? ha! [*Holds up his cane.*] I say you sha'nt have a groat out of my hands, till I please——and may be I'll never please; and what's that to you?

Cha. Nay, to be robbed, or have one's throat cut, is not much——

Sir Fran. What's that, sirrah? would you rob me, or cut my throat, ye rogue?

Cha. Heaven forbid, sir!—I said no such thing.

Sir Fran. Mercy on me! what a plague it is to have a son of one-and-twenty, who wants to elbow one out of one's life to edge himself into the estate!

Enter MARPLOT.

Mar. Egad, he's here!—I was afraid I had lost him: his secret could not be with his father; his wants are public there.—Guardian, your servant—O Charles, are you there? I know, by that sorrowful countenance of thine, the old gentleman's fist is as close as his strong box——But I'll help thee. [*Apart.*

Sir Fran. So! here's another extravagant coxcomb, that will spend his fortune before he comes to't; but he shall pay swinging interest, and so let the fool go on.—Well, what, does necessity bring you too, sir?

Mar. You have hit it, guardian——I want a hundred pounds.

Sir Fran. For what?

Mar. Pogh! for a hundred things—I can't, for my life, tell you for what.

Cha. Sir, I suppose I have received all the answer I am like to have.

Mar. Oh, the devil! if he gets out before me, I shall lose him again.

Sir Fran. Ay, sir; and you may be marching as soon as you please—I must see a change in your temper, ere you find one in mine.

Mar. Pray, sir, dispatch me; the money, sir; I'm in mighty haste.

Sir Fran. Fool, take this, and go to the cashier. I sha'nt be long plagued with thee.

[*Gives him a note.*

Mar. Devil take the cashier! I shall certainly have Charles gone before I come back.

[*Runs out.*

Cha. Well, sir, I take my leave—but remember, you expose an only son to all the miseries of wretched poverty, which too often lays the plan for scenes of mischief.

Sir Fran. Stay, Charles; I have a sudden thought come into my head, may prove to thy advantage.

Cha. Ha! does he relent?

Sir Fran. My Lady Wrinkle, worth forty thousand pounds, sets up for a handsome young husband; she praised thee t'other day; though the matchmakers can get twenty guineas for a sight of her, I can introduce thee for nothing.

Cha. My lady Wrinkle, sir! why, she has but one eye.

Sir Fran. Then she'll see but half your extravagance, sir.

Cha. Condemn me to such a piece of deformity! a toothless, dirty, wry-necked, hunch-backed hag!

Sir Fran. Hunch-backed! so much the better; then she has a rest for her misfortunes, for thou wilt load her swingingly. Now, I warrant, you think this is no offer of a father! forty thousand pounds is nothing with you!

Cha. Yes, sir, I think it is too much; a young, beautiful woman, with half the money, would be more agreeable.—I thank you, sir; but you chuse better for yourself, I find.

Sir Fran. Out of my doors, you dog! you pretend to meddle with my marriage, sirrah!

Cha. Sir, I obey: but—

Sir Fran. But me no buts—Begone, sir! dare to ask me for money again——refuse forty thousand pounds! Out of my doors, I say, without reply!

[*Exit* CHA.

Enter MARPLOT, *running.*

Mar. Ha! gone! is Charles gone, Gardy?

Sir Fran. Yes, and I desire your wise worship to walk after him.

Mar. Nay, egad I shall run; I tell you that. A pox of the cashier for detaining me so long! Where the devil shall I find him now? I shall certainly lose this secret, and I had rather by half lose my money——Where shall I find him now?——D'ye know where Charles is gone, Gardy?

Sir Fran. Gone to the devil, and you may go after him.

Mar. Ay, that I will, as fast as I can. [*Going, returns.*] Have you any commands there, Gardy? [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. What, is the fellow distracted?

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir George Airy inquires for you, sir.

Sir Fran. Desire sir George to walk up.—— Now for a trial of skill, that will make me happy, and him a fool. Ha, ha, ha! In my mind, he looks like an ass already.

Enter SIR GEORGE.

Well, sir George, do you hold in the same mind, or would you capitulate? ha, ha, ha! Look, here are the guineas; [*Chinks them.*] ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Not if they were twice the sum, sir Francis; therefore be brief, call in the lady, and take your post.

Sir Fran. Agreed. Miranda! [*Exit.*

Sir Geo. If she's a woman, and not seduced by witchcraft to this old rogue, I'll make his heart ache; for if she has but one grain of inclination about her, I'll vary a thousand shapes but find it.

Enter MIRANDA *and* SIR FRANCIS.

Sir Fran. There, sir George; try your fortune. [*Takes out his watch.*

Sir Geo. So from the eastern chambers breaks the sun, dispels the clouds, and gilds the vales below. [*Salutes her.*

Sir Fran. Hold, sir; kissing was not in our agreement.

Sir Geo. Oh! that's by way of prologue Pr'ythee, old Mammon, to thy post.

Sir Fran. Well, young Timon, 'tis now four exactly; ten minutes, remember, is your utmost limit; not a minute more.

[*Retires to the bottom of the stage.*

Sir Geo. Madam, whether you'll excuse or blame my love, the author of this rash proceeding depends upon your pleasure, as also the life of your admirer: your sparkling eyes speak a heart susceptible of love; your vivacity a soul too delicate to admit the embraces of decayed mortality.

Mir. [*Aside.*] Oh! that I durst speak——

Sir Geo. Shake off this tyrant guardian's yoke; assume yourself, and dash his bold aspiring hopes. The deity of his desires is avarice; a heretick in love, and ought to be banished by the queen of beauty. See, madam, a faithful servant kneels, and begs to be admitted in the number of your slaves.

[MIRANDA *gives him her hand to raise him.*

Sir Fran. I wish I could hear what he says now. [*Running up.*] Hold, hold, hold! no palming; that's contrary to articles———

Sir Geo. 'Sdeath, sir, keep your distance, or I'll write another article in your guts!

[*Lays his hand to his sword.*

Sir Fran. [*Going back*] A bloody-minded fellow!

Sir Geo. Not answer me! perhaps she thinks my address too grave: I'll be more free—Can you be so unconscionable, madam, to let me say all these fine things to you without one single compliment in return? View me well; am I not a proper handsome fellow, ha? can you prefer that old, dry, withered, sapless log, of sixty-five, to the vigorous, gay, sprightly love of twenty-four? With snoring only he'll awake thee; but I, with ravishing delight, would make thy senses dance in concert with the joyful minutes—Ha! not yet? Sure she's dumb!—Thus would I steal and touch thy beauteous hand, [*Takes hold of her hand.*] till, by degrees, I reach'd thy snowy breasts, then ravish kisses thus.

[*Embraces her with ecstacy.*

Mir. [*Struggles, and flings from him.*] Oh, heavens! I shall not be able to contain myself.

[*Aside.*

Sir Fran. [*Running up with his watch in his hand.*] sure she did not speak to him——There's five of the ten minutes gone, sir George—Adad, I don't like those close conferences——

Sir Geo. More interruptions!—you will have it, sir! [*Lays his hand to his sword.*

Sir Fran. [*Going back.*] No, no; you shan't have her neither. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Dumb still!—sure this old dog has enjoined her silence. I'll try another way—I must conclude, madam, that, in compliance to your guardian's humour you refuse to answer me. Consider the injustice of his injunction.—Madam, these few minutes cost me a hundred pounds—and would you answer me, I could purchase the whole day so. However, madam, you must give me leave to make the best interpretation I can for my money, and take the indication of your silence for the secret liking of my person; therefore, madam, I will instruct you how to keep your word inviolate to sir Francis, and yet answer me to every question: as, for example, when I ask any thing to which you would reply in the affirmative, gently nod your head—thus, [*Nods.*] and when in the negative, thus, [*Shakes his head.*] and in the doubtful, a tender sigh, thus, [*Sighs.*]

Mir. How every action charms me—but I'll fit him for signs, I warrant him. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! poor sir George! ha, ha, ha! [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Was it by his desire that you are dumb, madam, to all I can say? [MIRANDA *nods.*] Very well! she's tractable, I find—And is it possible that you can love him? [MIRANDA *nods.*] Miraculous! Pardon the bluntness of my questions; for my time is short. May I not hope to supplant him in your esteem? [MIRANDA *sighs.*] Good! she answers me as I could wish. —You'll not consent to marry him, then? [MIRANDA *sighs.*] How! doubtful in that?—Undone again—Humph! but that may proceed from his power to keep her out of her estate till twenty-five: I'll try that—Come, madam, I cannot think you hesitate in this affair out of any motive but your fortune—let him keep it till those few years are expired; make me happy with your person, let him enjoy your wealth.—[MIRANDA *holds up her hands.*] Why, what sign is that now? Nay, nay, madam, except you observe my lesson, I can't understand your meaning.

Sir Fran. What a vengeance! are they talking by signs? 'ad I may be fooled here. What do you mean, sir George?

Sir Geo. To cut your throat, if you dare mutter another syllable.

Sir Fran. 'Od I wish he were fairly out of my house!

Sir Geo. Pray, madam, will you answer me to the purpose? [MIRANDA *shakes her head, and points to* SIR FRANCIS.] What does she mean? she won't answer me to the purpose; or is she afraid yon old cuff should understand her signs?——ay, it must be that. I perceive, madam, you are too apprehensive of the promise you have made to follow my rules; therefore, I'll suppose your mind, and answer for you.—First for myself, madam. That I am in love with you, is an infallible truth. Now for you. [*Turns on her side.*] Indeed, sir! and may I believe it?——As certainly, madam, as that 'tis daylight, or that I die, if you persist in silence.—Bless me with the music of your voice, and raise my spirits to their proper heaven. Thus low let me intreat, ere I'm obliged to quit this place; grant me some token of a favourable reception to keep my hopes alive. [*Arises hastily, turns on her side.*] Rise, sir; and since my guardian's presence will not allow me privilege of tongue, read that, and rest assured you are not indifferent to me. [*Offers her a letter, she strikes it down.*] Ha, right woman! but no matter; I'll go on.

Sir Fran. Ha! what's that? a letter!——Ha, ha, ha! thou art baulked.

Mir. The best assurance I ever saw—— [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Ha! a letter! oh! let me kiss it with the same raptures that I would do the dear hand that touched it. [*Opens it.*] Now for a quick fancy, and a long extempore——What's here? [*Reads.*] 'Dear sir George! this virgin muse I 'consecrate to you; which, when it has received 'the addition of your voice, 'twill charm me into 'a desire of liberty to love, which you, and only 'you, can fix.' My angel! oh, you transport me! [*Kisses the letter.*] And see the power of your command! the god of love has set the verse already, the flowing numbers dance into a tune, and I'm inspired with a voice to sing it.

Mir. I'm sure thou'rt inspired with impudence enough. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. *Great love inspire him,*
Say I admire him.
Give me the lover,
That can discover
Secret devotion
From silent motion;
Then don't betray me,
But hence convey me.

[SIR GEO. *taking hold of* MIRAN.] With all my heart; this moment let's retire.

[SIR FRAN. *coming up hastily.*

Sir Fran. The time is expired, sir, and you must take your leave. There, my girl, there's the hundred pounds which thou hast won. Go, I'll be with you presently. Ha, ha, ha, ha! [*Exit* MIRAN.

Sir Geo. Adsheart, madam! you won't leave me just in the nick, will you?

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! she has nicked you, sir George, I think; ha, ha, ha! Have you any more hundred pounds to throw away upon courtship? ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. He, he, he, he! A curse of your fleering jests!—Yet, however ill I succeed, I'll venture the same wager she does not value thee a spoonful of snuff—nay, more, though you enjoined her silence to me, you'll never make her speak to the purpose with yourself.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! Did I not tell thee thou wouldst repent thy money? Did I not say she hated young fellows? ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. And I'm positive she's not in love with age.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! no matter for that, ha, ha! She's not taken with your youth, nor your rhetoric to boot; ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Whate'er her reasons are for disliking of me, I am certain she can be taken with nothing about thee.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! how he swells with envy—Poor man! poor man!—ha, ha, ha! I must beg your pardon, sir George; Miranda will be impatient to have her share of mirth. Verily, we shall laugh at thee most egregiously; ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. With all my heart, faith!——I shall laugh in my turn, too!—for, if you dare marry her, old Belzebub, you will be cuckolded most egregiously: remember that, and tremble——

She that to age her beauteous self resigns,
Shews witty management for close designs;

Then, if thou'rt graced with fair Miranda's bed,
Acteon's horns, she means, shall crown thy head. [*Exit* SIR GEO.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! he is mad!
These fluttering fops imagine they can wind,
Turn and decoy to love all womankind;
But here's a proof of wisdom in my charge,
Old men are constant, young men live at large.
The frugal hand can bills at sight defray,
When he that lavish is has naught to pay.
[*Exit* SIR FRAN.

SCENE II.—*Changes to* SIR JEALOUS TRAFFICK'S *house.*

Enter SIR JEALOUS, ISABINDA, *and* PATCH *following.*

Sir Jeal. What, in the balcony again, notwithstanding my positive commands to the contrary?—Why don't you write a bill on your forehead to shew passengers there's something to be let?——

Isa. What harm can there be in a little fresh air, sir?

Sir Jeal. Is your constitution so hot, mistress, that it wants cooling, ha? Apply the virtuous Spanish rules; banish your taste and thoughts of flesh; feed upon roots, and quench your thirst with water.

Isa. That and a close room would certainly make me die of the vapours.

Sir Jeal. No, mistress; 'tis your high-fed, lusty, rambling, rampant ladies—that are troubled with the vapours: 'tis your ratafia, persico, cinnamon, citron, and spirit of clara, cause such swimming in the brain, that carries many a guinea full tide to the doctor: but you are not to be bred this way: no galloping abroad, no receiving visits at home; for in our loose country the women are as dangerous as the men.

Patch. So I told her, sir, and that it was not decent to be seen in a balcony—but she threatened to slap my chops, and told me I was her servant, not her governess.

Sir Jeal. Did she so? but I'll make her to know that you are her duenna. O that incomparable custom of Spain! Why, here's no depending upon old women in my country—for they are as wanton at eighty, as a girl of eighteen; and a man may as safely trust to Asgil's translation, as to his great grandmother's not marrying again.

Isa. Or to the Spanish ladies' veils and duennas for the safeguard of their honour.

Sir Jeal. Dare to ridicule the cautious conduct of that wise nation, and I'll have you locked up this fortnight, without a peep-hole.

Isa. If we had but the ghostly helps in England which they have in Spain, I might deceive you if you did— Sir, 'tis not the restraint, but the innate principle, secures the reputation and honour of our sex.——Let me tell you, sir, confinement sharpens the invention, as want of sight strengthens the other senses, and is often more pernicious than the recreation that innocent liberty allows.

Sir Jeal. Say you so, mistress! who the devil taught you the art of reasoning? I assure you, they must have a greater faith than I pretend to, that can think any woman innocent who requires liberty; therefore, Patch, to your charge I give her; lock her up till I come back from Change. I shall have some sauntering coxcomb, with nothing but a red coat and a feather, think by leaping into her arms to leap into my estate—but I'll prevent them; she shall be only signior Babinetto's.

Patch. Really, sir, I wish you would employ any body else in this affair; I lead a life like a dog with obeying your commands. Come, madam, will you please to be locked up?

Isa. Aye, to enjoy more freedom than he is aware of. [*Aside.*] [*Exit with* PATCH.

Sir Jeal. I believe this wench is very true to my interest: I am happy I met with her, if I can but keep my daughter from being blown upon till Signior Babinetto arrives, who shall marry her as soon as he comes, and carry her to Spain as soon as he has married her. She has a pregnant wit, and I'd no more have her an English wife than the Grand Signior's mistress. [*Exit.*

Enter WHISPER.

Whis. So, I saw sir Jealous go out: where shall I find Mrs Patch now?

Enter PATCH.

Patch. Oh, Mr Whisper! my lady saw you out of the window, and ordered me to bid you fly, and let your master know she's now alone.

Whisp. Hush! speak softly! I go, I go! But hark ye, Mrs Patch, shall not you and I have a little confabulation, when my master and your lady are engaged?

Patch. Aye, aye; farewell.
[*Goes in, and shuts the door.*

Re-enter SIR JEALOUS TRAFFICK, *meeting* WHISPER.

Sir Jeal. Sure, whilst I was talking with Mr Tradewell, I heard my door clap. [*Seeing* WHISPER.] Ha! a man lurking about my house! Who do you want there, sir?

Whisp. Want—want? a pox! Sir Jealous! What must I say now?

Sir Jeal. Ay, want! Have you a letter or message for any body there? O' my conscience this is some he-bawd—

Whisp. Letter or message, sir?

Sir Jeal. Ay, letter or message, sir?

Whisp. No, not I, sir.

Sir Jeal. Sirrah, sirrah! I'll have you set in the stocks, if you don't tell your business immediately.

Whisp. Nay, sir, my business—is no great matter of business neither, and yet 'tis business of consequence, too.

Sir Jeal. Sirrah, don't trifle with me.

Whisp. Trifle, sir! have you found him, sir?

Sir Jeal. Found what, you rascal?

Whis. Why, Trifle is the very lap-dog my lady lost, sir! I fancied I saw him run into this house. I'm glad you've seen him—Sir, my lady will be overjoyed that I have found him.

Sir Jeal. Who is your lady, friend?

Whisp. My lady Lovepuppy, sir.

Sir Jeal. My lady Lovepuppy, sir! then, prithee, carry thyself to her, for I know of no other whelp that belongs to her; and let me catch you no more puppy-hunting about my doors, lest I have you prest into the service, sirrah.

Whis. By no means, sir—Your humble servant. I must watch whether he goes or no, before I can tell my master. [*Exit* WHISPER.

Sir Jeal. This fellow has the officious leer of a pimp, and I half suspect a design; but I'll be upon them before they think on me, I warrant them. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—CHARLES's *lodgings.*

Enter CHARLES *and* MARPLOT.

Cha. Honest Marplot! I thank thee for this supply. I expect my lawyer with a thousand pounds I have ordered him to take up, and then you shall be repaid.

Mar. Pho, pho! no more of that. Here comes sir George Airy,

Enter SIR GEORGE.

cursedly out of humour at his disappointment.—See how he looks! ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Ah, Charles! I am so humbled in my pretensions to plots upon women, that I believe I shall never have courage enough to attempt a chambermaid again—I'll tell thee———

Cha. Ha, ha, ha! I'll spare you the relation by telling you—Impatient to know your business with my father, when I saw you enter I slipt back into the next room, where I overheard every syllable.

Mar. Did you, Charles? I wish I had been with you.

Sir Geo. That I said—but I'll be hanged if you heard her answer—But, prithee, tell me, Charles, is she a fool?

Cha. I never suspected her for one; but Marplot can inform you better, if you'll allow him a judge.

Mar. A fool! I'll justify she has more wit than all the rest of her sex put together. Why, she'll rally me till I han't a word to say for myself.

Cha. A mighty proof of her wit, truly—

Mar. There must be some trick in it, sir George: egad I'll find it out, if it cost me the sum you paid for it.

Sir Geo. Do, and command me——

Mar. Enough! let me alone to trace a secret———

Enter WHISPER, *and speaks aside to his master.*

The devil! he here again? damn that fellow, he never speaks out! Is this the same, or a new secret? You may speak out; here are none but friends.

Cha. Pardon me, Marplot, 'tis a secret.

Mar. A secret! aye, or ecod I would not give a farthing for it. Sir George, won't you ask Charles what news Whisper brings?

Sir Geo. Not I, sir; I suppose it does not relate to me.

Mar. Lord lord! how little curiosity some people have! Now, my chief pleasure is in knowing every body's business.

Sir Geo. I fancy, Charles, thou hast some engagement upon thy hands?

Mar. Have you, Charles?

Sir Geo. I have a little business, too.

Mar. Have you, sir George?

Sir Geo. Marplot, if it falls in your way to bring me any intelligence from Miranda, you'll find me at the Thatched-house at six—

Mar. You do me much honour.

Cha. You guess right, sir George; wish me success.

Sir Geo. Better than attended me. Adieu! [*Exit* SIR GEORGE.

Cha. Marplot, you must excuse me———

Mar. Nay, nay; what need of any excuse amongst friends? I'll go with you.

Cha. Indeed, you must not.

Mar. No! then, I suppose it is a duel, and I will go to secure you.

Cha. Well, but tis no duel, consequently no danger; therefore, prithee be answered.

Mar. What, is't a mistress, then? Mum—you know I can be silent upon occasion.

Cha. I wish you could be civil, too: I tell you, you neither must nor shall go with me.—Farewell! [*Exit* CHARLES.

Mar. Why then—I must and will follow you. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter CHARLES.

Char. WELL, here's the house which holds the lovely prize, quiet and serene: here no noisy footmen throng to tell the world that beauty dwells within; no ceremonious visit makes the lover wait, no rival to give my heart a pang.—Who would not scale the window at midnight without fear of the jealous father's pistol, rather than fill up the train of a coquette, where every minute he is jostled out of place! [*Knocks softly.*] Mrs Patch, Mrs Patch!

Enter PATCH.

Patch. Oh, are you come, sir? All's safe.

Cha. So! in, in, then.

Enter MARPLOT.

Mar. There he goes! Who the devil lives here? except I can find out that, I am as far from knowing his business as ever. Gad I'll watch; it may be a bawdy-house, and he may have his throat cut. If there should be any mischief I can make oath he went in. Well, Charles, in spite of your endeavours to keep me out of the secret, I may save your life for aught I know. At that corner I'll plant myself; there I shall see whoever goes in or comes out. Gad I love discoveries. [*Exit* MAR.

SCENE II.

Draws, and discovers CHARLES, ISABINDA, *and* PATCH.

Isa. Patch, look out sharp; have a care of dad.

Patch. I warrant you.

Isa. Well, sir, if I may judge your love by your courage, I ought to believe you sincere; for you venture into the lion's den when you come to see me.

Cha. If you'd consent whilst the furious beast is abroad, I'd free you from the reach of his paws.

Isa. That would be but to avoid one danger by running into another; like poor wretches, who fly the burning ship, and meet their fate in the water. Come, come, Charles; I fear, if I consult my reason, confinement and plenty is better than liberty and starving. I know you would make the frolic pleasing for a little time, by saying and doing a world of tender things; but, when our small substance is exhausted, and a thousand requisites for life are wanting, Love, who rarely dwells with Poverty, would also fail us.

Cha. Faith, I fancy not; methinks my heart has laid up a stock will last for life; to back which I have taken a thousand pounds upon my uncle's estate; that surely will support us till one of our fathers relent.

Isa. There's no trusting to that, my friend. I doubt your father will carry his humour to the grave, and mine till he sees me settled in Spain.

Cha. And can you, then, cruelly resolve to stay till that cursed Don arrives, and suffer that youth, beauty, fire, and wit, to be sacrificed to the arms of a dull Spaniard, to be immured, and forbid the sight of any thing that's human?

Isa. No; when it comes to that extremity, and no stratagem can relieve us, thou shalt list for a soldier, and I'll carry thy knapsack after thee.

Cha. Bravely resolved! the world cannot be more savage than our parents, and fortune generally assists the bold; therefore consent now: why should we put it to a future hazard? who knows when we shall have another opportunity?

Isa. Oh, you have your ladder of ropes, I suppose, and the closet window stands just where it did; and if you han't forgot to write in characters, Patch will find a way for our assignations. Thus much of the Spanish contrivance my father's severity has taught me, I thank him: though I hate the nation, I admire their management in these affairs.

Enter PATCH.

Patch. Oh, madam! I see my master coming up the street.

Cha. Oh, the devil! would I had my ladder now! I thought you had not expected him till night. Why, why, why, why, what shall I do, madam?

Isa. Oh! for Heaven's sake, don't go that way; you'll meet him full in the teeth. Oh, unlucky moment!

Cha. 'Adsheart! can you shut me into no cupboard, nor ram me into a chest, ha?

Patch. Impossible, sir; he searches every hole in the house.

Isa. Undone for ever! if he sees you, I shall never see you more.

Patch. I have thought on it: run you to your chamber, madam; and, sir, come you along with me; I'm certain you may easily get down from the balcony.

Cha. My life! adieu—Lead on, guide.

[*Exeunt* PATCH *and* CHA.

Isa. Heaven preserve him! [*Exit* ISA.

SCENE III.—*Changes to the street.*

Enter SIR JEALOUS, *with* MARPLOT *behind him.*

Sir Jeal. I don't know what's the matter, but I have a strong suspicion all is not right within; that fellow's sauntering about my door, and his tale of a puppy, had the face of a lie, methought.

By St Iago, if I should find a man in the house, I'd make mince-meat of him—

Mar. Mince-meat! Ah, poor Charles! how I sweat for thee! Egad he's old—I fancy I might bully him, and make Charles have an opinion of my courage. Egad I'll pluck up, and have a touch with him.

Sir Jeal. My own key shall let me in; I'll give them no warning. [*Feeling for his key.*

Mar. What's that you say, sir?

[*Going up to* SIR JEAL.

Sir Jeal. What's that to you, sir?

[*Turns quick upon him.*

Mar. Yes, 'tis to me, sir; for the gentleman you threaten is a very honest gentleman. Look to't, for if he comes not as safe out of your house as he went in——

Sir Jeal. What, is he in, then?

Mar. Yes sir, he is in then; and, I say, if he does not come out, I have half a dozen myrmidons hard by, shall beat your house about your ears.

Sir Jeal. Ah! a combination to undo me—I'll myrmidon you, ye dog you!—Thieves! thieves!

[*Beats* MARPLOT *all the while he cries thieves.*

Mar. Murder! murder! I was not in your house, sir.

Enter Servant.

Ser. What's the matter, sir?

Sir Jeal. The matter, rascal! you have let a man into my house; but I'll flea him alive. Follow me; I'll not leave a mousehole unsearched. If I find him, by St Iago, I'll equip him for the opera. [*Exit* SIR JEAL.

Mar. A deuce of his cane! there's no trusting to age—What shall I do to relieve Charles? egad I'll raise the neighbourhood.——Murder! murder!—[CHARLES *drops down upon him from the balcony.*] Charles! faith I'm glad to see thee safe out, with all my heart!

Cha. A pox of your bawling! how the devil came you here?

Mar. Egad it's very well for you that I was here; I have done you a piece of service: I told the old thunderbolt that the gentleman that was gone in was——

Cha. Was it you that told him, sir? [*Laying hold of him.*] 'Sdeath! I could crush thee into atoms. [*Exit* CHA.

Mar. What! will you choke me for my kindness? Will my inquiring soul never leave searching into other people's affairs till it gets squeezed out of my body? I dare not follow him now for my blood, he's in such a passion. I'll to Miranda; if I can discover aught that may oblige sir George, it may be a means to reconcile me again to Charles.

Sir Jeal. [*Within.*] Look about! search! find him out!

Mar. Oh, the devil! there's old Crabstick again! [*Exit* MAR.

Enter SIR JEALOUS *and his Servants.*

Sir Jeal. Are you sure you have searched every where?

Ser. Yes, from the top of the house to the bottom.

Sir Jeal. Under the beds, and over the beds?

Ser. Yes, and in them too, but found nobody, sir.

Sir Jeal. Why, what could this rogue mean?

Enter ISABINDA *and* PATCH.

Patch. Take courage, madam; I saw him safe out. [*Aside to* ISA.

Isa. Bless me! what's the matter, sir?

Sir Jeal. You know best—Pray, where's the man that was here just now?

Isa. What man, sir? I saw none.

Patch. Nor I, by the trust you repose in me. Do you think I would let a man come within these doors, when you are absent?

Sir Jeal. Ah, Patch! she may be too cunning for thy honesty: the very scout, that he had set to give warning, discovered it to me—and threatened me with half a dozen myrmidons——but I think I mauled the villain. These afflictions you draw upon me, mistress!

Isa. Pardon me, sir; 'tis your own ridiculous humour draws you into these vexations, and gives every fool pretence to banter you.

Sir Jeal. No, 'tis your idle conduct, your coquettish flirting into the balcony—Oh! with what joy shall I resign thee into the arms of Don Diego Babinetto!

Isa. And with what industry shall I avoid him! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Certainly that rogue had a message from somebody or other, but, being baulked by my coming, popped that sham upon me. Come along, ye sots! let's see if we can find the dog again. Patch! lock her up, d'ye hear?

[*Exit* SIR JEAL.

Patch. Yes, sir—Ay, walk till your heels ache; you'll find nobody, I promise you.

Isa. Who could that scout be whom he talks of?

Patch. Nay, I can't imagine, without it was Whisper.

Isa. Well, dear Patch! let's employ all our thoughts how to escape this horrid Don Diego; my very heart sinks at his terrible name.

Patch. Fear not, madam; Don Carlo shall be the man, or I'll lose the reputation of contriving; and then, what's a chambermaid good for?

Isa. Say'st thou so, my girl? then

'Let dad be jealous, multiply his cares;
'Whilst love instructs me to avoid the snares,
'I'll, spite of all his Spanish caution, show
'How much for love a British maid can do.'

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—SIR FRANCIS GRIPE'S *house.*

Enter SIR FRANCIS *and* MIRANDA *meeting.*

Mir. Well, Gardy, how did I perform the dumb scene?

Sir Fran. To admiration—Thou dear little rogue! let me buss thee for it: nay, adad I will, Chargy, so muzzle, and tuzzle, and hug thee; I will, i'faith, I will. [*Hugging and kissing her.*

Mir. Nay, Gardy, don't be so lavish. Who would ride post when the journey lasts for life?

Sir Fran. Ah wag, ah wag! I'll buss thee again for that. Oh, I'm transported! When, when, my dear, wilt thou convince the world of the happy day? when shall we marry, ha?

Mir. There's nothing wanting but your consent, sir Francis,

Sir Fran. My consent! what does my charmer mean?

Mir. Nay, 'tis only a whim; but I'll have every thing according to form—therefore, when you sign an authentic paper, drawn up by an able lawyer, that I have your leave to marry, the next day makes me yours, Gardy.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha! a whim indeed! why, is it not demonstration I give my leave, when I marry thee?

Mir. Not for your reputation, Gardy; the malicious world will be apt to say you trick me into marriage, and so take the merit from my choice: now, I will have the act my own, to let the idle fops see how much I prefer a man loaded with years and wisdom.

Sir Fran. Humph! Prithee leave out years, Chargy; I'm not so old, as thou shalt find. Adad I'm young: there's a caper for ye! [*Jumps.*

Mir. Oh, never excuse it; why, I like you the better for being old—but I shall suspect you don't love me, if you refuse me this formality.

Sir Fran. Not love thee, Chargy! Adad I do love thee better than, than, than, better than—what shall I say? egad better than money; i'faith I do——

Mir. That's false, I'm sure. [*Aside.*] To prove it, do this, then.

Sir Fran. Well, I will do it, Chargy, provided I bring a licence at the same time.

Mir. Ay, and a parson, too, if you please. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing to think how all the young coxcombs about town will be mortified when they hear of our marriage!

Sir Fran. So they will, so they will; ha, ha, ha!

Mir. Well, I fancy I shall be so happy with my Gardy—

Sir Fran. If wearing pearls and jewels, or eating gold, as the old saying is, can make thee happy, thou shalt be so, my sweetest, my lovely, my charming, my—verily I know not what to call thee.

Mir. You must know, Gardy, that I am so eager to have this business concluded, that I have employed my woman's brother, who is a lawyer in the Temple, to settle matters just to your liking. You are to give your consent to my marriage, which is to yourself you know: but, mum, you must take no notice of that. So then I will, that is, with your leave, put my writings into his hands; then, to-morrow, we come slap upon them with a wedding that nobody thought on, by which you seize me and my estate, and I suppose make a bonfire of your own act and deed.

Sir Fran. Nay, but Chargy, if——

Mir. Nay, Gardy, no ifs——Have I refused three northern lords, two British peers, and half a score knights, to have you put in your ifs?

Sir Fran. So thou hast indeed, and I will trust to thy management. 'Od, I'm all of a fire!

Mir. 'Tis a wonder the dry stubble does not blaze. [*Aside.*

Enter MARPLOT.

Sir Fran. How now, who sent for you, sir? What, is the hundred pound gone already?

Mar. No, sir; I don't want money, now, Gardy.

Sir Fran. No, that's a miracle! but there's one thing you want I'm sure.

Mar. Ay, what's that?

Sir Fran. Manners! What, had I no servants without?

Mar. None that could do my business, guardian, which is at present with this lady.

Mir. With me, Mr Marplot! what is it, I beseech you?

Sir Fran. Ay, sir, what is it? any thing that relates to her may be delivered to me.

Mar. I deny that.

Mir. That's more than I do, sir.

Mar. Indeed, madam! Why, then, to proceed: Fame says—you know best whether she lies or not—that you and my most conscionable guardian here have designed, contrived, plotted, and agreed, to chouse a very civil, honest, honourable gentleman out of a hundred pounds: Guilty or not?

Mir. That I contrived it!

Mar. Ay, you—you said never a word against it; so far you are guilty.

Sir Fran. Pray tell that civil, honest, honourable gentleman, that if he has any more such sums to fool away, they shall be received like the last; ha, ha, ha! Choused, quotha! But hark ye, let him know at the same time, that if he dare to report I tricked him of it, I shall recommend a lawyer to him shall shew him a trick for twice as much. D'ye hear? tell him that.

Mar. So, and this is the way you use a gentleman, and my friend!

Mir. Is the wretch thy friend?

Mar. The wretch! look ye, madam, don't call names; egad I won't take it.

Mir. Why, you won't beat me, will you? Ha, ha!

Mar. I don't know whether I will or no.

Sir Fran. Sir, I shall make a servant shew you out at the window if you are saucy.

Mar. I am your most humble servant, guardian; I design to go out the same way I came in. I would only ask this lady one question; don't you think he's a fine gentleman?

Sir Fran. Who's a fine gentleman?

Mar. Not you, Gardy; not you! Don't you think in your soul that sir George Airy is a very fine gentleman?

Mir. He dresses well.

Sir Fran. Which is chiefly owing to his tailor and valet de chambre.

Mar. Well! and who is your dress owing to, ha? There's a beau, ma'am—do but look at him!

Sir Fran. Sirrah!

Mir. And if being a beau be a proof of his being a fine gentleman, he may be so.

Mar. He may be so! Why, ma'am, the judicious part of the world allow him wit, courage, gallantry, ay, and economy, too; though I think he forfeited that character, when he flung away a hundred pounds upon your dumb ladyship.

Sir Fran. Does that gall him? Ha, ha, ha!

Mir. So, sir George, remaining in deep discontent, has sent you, his trusty squire, to utter his complaint. Ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Yes, madam; and you, like a cruel hard-hearted Jew, value it no more—than I would your ladyship, were I sir George; you, you, you——

Mir. Oh, don't call names: I know you love to be employed, and I'll oblige you, and you shall carry him a message from me.

Mar. According as I like it. What is it?

Mir. Nay, a kind one, you may be sure—— First, tell him I have chose this gentleman, to have and to hold, and so forth.

[*Clapping her hand into* SIR FRANCIS's.

Mar. Much good may do you!

Sir Fran. Oh, the dear rogue! how I dote on her! [*Aside.*

Mir. And advise his impertinence to trouble me no more, for I prefer sir Francis for a husband before all the fops in the universe.

Mar. Oh Lord, oh Lord! she's bewitched, that's certain. Here's a husband for eighteen—here's a titbit for a young lady—here's a shape, an air, and a grace—here's bones rattling in a leathern bag—[*Turning* SIR FRANCIS *about.*]—Here's buckram and canvas to scrub you to repentance.

Sir Fran. Sirrah, my cane shall teach you repentance presently.

Mar. No, faith; I have felt its twin brother from just such a whithered hand too lately.

Mir. One thing more; advise him to keep from the garden-gate on the left hand; for if he dare to saunter there, about the hour of eight, as he used to do, he shall be saluted with a pistol or a blunderbuss.

Sir Fran. Oh, monstrous! Why, Chargy, did he use to come to the garden-gate?

Mir. The gardener described just such another man that always watched his coming out, and fain would have bribed him for his entrance—Tell him he shall find a warm reception if he comes this night.

Mar. Pistols and blunderbusses! Egad! a warm reception indeed! I shall take care to inform him of your kindness, and advise him to keep farther off.

Mir. I hope he will understand my meaning better than to follow your advice. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Thou hast signed, sealed, and taken possession of my heart for ever, Chargy, ha, ha, ha! and for you, Mr Saucebox, let me have no more of your messages, if ever you design to inherit your estate, gentleman.

Mar. Why, there 'tis now. Sure I shall be out of your clutches one day—Well, Guardian, I say no more: but if you be not as arrant a cuckold as e'er drove bargain upon the exchange, or paid attendance to a court, I am the son of a whetstone; and so your humble servant.

[*Going.*

Mir. Mr Marplot, don't forget the message: ha, ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Nang, nang, nang! [*Exit.*

Sir Fran. I am so provoked—'tis well he's gone.

Mir. Oh, mind him not, Gardy, but let's sign articles, and then—

Sir Fran. And then—Adad I believe I am metamorphosed; my pulse beats high, and my blood boils, methinks——

[*Kissing and hugging her.*

Mir. Oh, fie, Gardy! be not so violent: consider the market lasts all the year.—Well; I'll in, and see if the lawyer be come: you'll follow?

[*Exit.*

Sir Fran. Ay, to the world's end, my dear! Well, Frank, thou art a lucky fellow in thy old age, to have such a delicate morsel, and thirty thousand pounds, in love with thee. I shall be the envy of bachelors, the glory of married men, and the wonder of the town. Some guardians would be glad to compound for part of the estate at dispatching an heiress, but I engross the whole. *O! mihi præteritos referet si Jupiter annos.* [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*Changes to a tavern.*

Discovers SIR GEORGE *and* CHARLES *with wine before them, and* WHISPER *waiting.*

Sir Geo. Nay, prithee, don't be grave, Charles: misfortunes will happen. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis some comfort to have a companion in our sufferings.

Cha. I am only apprehensive for Isabinda; her father's humour is implacable; and how far his jealousy may transport him to her undoing, shocks my soul to think.

Sir Geo. But since you escaped undiscovered by him, his rage will quickly lash into a calm; never fear it.

Cha. But who knows what that unlucky dog, Marplot, told him; nor can I imagine what brought him hither: that fellow is ever doing mischief; and yet, to give him his due, he never designs it. This is some blundering adventure wherein he thought to shew his friendship, as he calls it! a curse on him!

Sir Geo. Then you must forgive him. What said he?

Cha. Said! nay, I had more mind to cut his throat, than to hear his excuses.

Sir Geo. Where is he?

Whis Sir, I saw him go into sir Francis Gripe's just now.

Cha. Oh! then he's upon your business, sir George: a thousand to one but he makes some mistake there, too!

Sir Geo. Impossible, without he huffs the lady and makes love to sir Francis.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Mr Marplot is below, gentlemen, and desires to know if he may have leave to wait upon ye.

Cha. How civil the rogue is when he has done a fault!

Sir Geo. Ho! desire him to walk up. Prithee, Charles, throw off this chagrin, and be good company.

Cha Nay, hang him, I'm not angry with him. Whisper, fetch me pen, ink, and paper.

Whisp. Yes, sir. [*Exit* WHISPER.

Enter MARPLOT.

Cha. Do but mark his sheepish look, sir George.

Mar. Dear Charles! don't overwhelm a man already under insupportable affliction. I'm sure I always intend to serve my friends; but if my malicious stars deny the happiness, is the fault mine?

Sir Geo. Never mind him, Mr Marplot; he's eat up with spleen. But tell me, what says Miranda?

Mar. Says!—nay, we are all undone there, too.

Cha. I told you so; nothing prospers that he undertakes.

Mar. Why, can I help her having chose your father for better for worse?

Cha. So; there's another of Fortune's strokes. I suppose I shall be edged out of my estate with twins every year, let who will get them.

Sir Geo. What! is the woman really possessed?

Mar. Yes, with the spirit of contradiction: she railed at you most prodigiously.

Sir Geo. That's no ill sign.

Enter WHISPER, *with pen, ink, and paper.*

Mar. You'd say it was no good sign, if you knew all.

Sir Geo. Why, prithee!

Mar. Hark'e, sir George, let me warn you; pursue your old haunt no more; it may be dangerous.

[CHARLES *sits down to write.*

Sir Geo. My old haunt! what do you mean?

Mar. Why, in short, then, since you will have it, Miranda vows, if you dare approach the garden-gate at eight o'clock, as you used, you shall meet with a warm reception.

Sir Geo. A warm reception!

Mar. Aye, a very warm reception—you shall be saluted with a blunderbuss, sir. These were her very words: nay, she bid me tell you so, too.

Sir Geo. Ha! the garden gate at eight, as I used to do! There must be meaning in this. Is there such a gate, Charles?

Mar. Is there such a gate, Charles?

Cha. Yes, yes; it opens into the Park: I suppose her ladyship has made many a scamper through it.

Sir Geo. It must be an assignation, then. Ha! my heart springs for joy; 'tis a propitious omen. My dear Marplot! Let me embrace thee; thou art my friend, my better angel.

Mar. What do you mean, sir George?

Sir Geo. No matter what I mean. Here, take a bumper to the garden-gate, you dear rogue you!

Mar. You have reason to be transported, sir George; I have saved your life.

Sir Geo. My life! thou hast saved my soul, man. Charles, if thou dost not pledge this health, may'st thou never taste the joys of love!

Cha. Whisper, be sure you take care how you deliver this.—[*Gives him the letter.*]—Bring me the answer to my lodgings.

Whis. I warrant you, sir.

Mar. Whither does that letter go? Now, dare I not ask for my blood—That fellow knows more secrets than I do.

[*Exit* WHISPER.

Cha. Now I'm for you.

Sir Geo. To the garden-gate at the hour of eight, Charles: along; huzza!

Cha. I begin to conceive you.

Mar. That's more than I do, egad——To the garden-gate, huzza!—[*Drinks.*]—But, I hope, you design to keep far enough off on't, sir George?

Sir Geo. Aye, aye; never fear that; she shall see I despise her frowns; let her use the blunderbuss against the next fool; she sha'nt reach me with the smoke, I warrant her; ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Ah, Charles! if you could receive a disappointment thus *en cavalier*, one should have some comfort in being beat for you.

Cha. The fool comprehends nothing.

Sir Geo. Nor would I have him. Prithee, take him along with thee.

Cha. Enough.

Sir Geo. I kiss both your hands——And now for the garden gate!

'Tis beauty gives the assignation there,
And love too powerful grows to admit of fear.
[*Exit* SIR GEORGE.

Cha. Come, you shall go home with me.

Mar. Shall I! And are we friends, Charles? I am glad of it.

Cha. Come along.

[*Exit* SIR CHARLES.

Mar. Egad, Charles' asking me to go home with him, gives me a shrewd suspicion there's more in the garden-gate than I comprehend.—Faith, I'll give him the drop, and away to Gardy's, and find it out. [*Exit*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The outside of* SIR JEALOUS TRAFFICK'S *house,* PATCH *peeping out of the door.*

Enter WHISPER.

Whis. HA! Mrs Patch, this is a lucky minute, to find you so readily; my master dies with impatience.

Patch. My lady imagined so; and, by her orders, I have been scouting this hour in search of you, to inform you, that sir Jealous has invited some friends to supper with him to-night, which gives an opportunity to your master to make use of his ladder of ropes. The closet window shall be open, and Isabinda ready to receive him. Bid him come immediately.

Whis. Excellent! he'll not disappoint her, I warrant him. But hold, I have a letter here, which I'm to carry an answer to. I cannot think what language the direction is.

Patch. Pho! 'tis no language, but a character which the lovers invented to avert discovery——Ha! I hear my old master coming down stairs; it is impossible you should have an answer: away, and bid him come himself for that. Begone! we're ruined, if you're seen, for he has doubled his care since the last accident.

Whis. I go, I go.

[*Exit* WHISPER.

Patch. There, go thou into my pocket.—[*Puts it beside, and it falls down.*]—Now, I'll up the back-stairs, lest I meet him—Well, a dexterous chambermaid is the ladies' best utensil, I say.

[*Exit* PATCH.

Enter SIR JEALOUS, *with a letter in his hand.*

Sir Jea. So, this is some comfort; this tells me that signior Don Diego Babinetto is safely arrived. He shall marry my daughter the minute he comes——Ha! What's here!——[*Takes up the letter* PATCH *dropped.*]—A letter! I don't know what to make of the superscription. I'll see what's within-side.—[*Opens it.*]—Humph—'tis Hebrew, I think. What can this mean?—There must be some trick in it. This was certainly designed for my daughter; but I don't know that she can speak any language but her mother tongue. No matter for that; this may be one of love's hieroglyphicks; and I fancy I saw Patch's tail sweep by: that wench may be a slut, and, instead of guarding my honour, betray it. I'll find it out, I'm resolved——Who's there?

Enter Servant.

What answer did you bring from the gentlemen I sent you to invite?

Ser. That they'd all wait on you, sir, as I told you before; but I suppose you forgot, sir?

Sir Jea. Did I so, sir? but I sha'nt forget to break your head, if any of them come, sir.

Ser. Come, sir! Why, did not you send me to desire their company, sir?

Sir Jea. But I send you now to desire their absence. Say, I have something extraordinary fallen out, which calls me abroad, contrary to expectation, and ask their pardon; and, d'ye hear, send the butler to me.

Ser. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter Butler.

Sir Jea. If this paper has a meaning, I'll find it——Lay the cloth in my daughter's chamber, and bid the cook send supper thither, presently.

But. Yes, sir. Hey-day! What's the matter, now? [*Exit Butler.*

Sir Jea. He wants the eyes of Argus, that has a young, handsome daughter, in this town; but my comfort is, I shall not be troubled long with her. He, that pretends to rule a girl once in her teens, had better be at sea in a storm, and in less danger.

For let him do, or counsel all he can,
She thinks, and dreams of nothing else, but man. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—ISABINDA'S *chamber.*

Enter ISABINDA *and* PATCH.

Isa. Are you sure nobody saw you speak to Whisper?

Patch. Yes, very sure, madam; but I heard sir Jealous coming down stairs; so clapt this letter into my pocket. [*Feels for the letter*

Isa. A letter! give it me quickly.

Patch. Bless me! What's become on't—I'm sure I put it——— [*Searching still.*

Isa. Is't possible that thou couldst be so careless? Oh, I'm undone for ever, if it be lost.

Patch. I must have dropt it upon the stairs.—But why are you so much alarmed? if the worst happens, nobody can read it, madam, nor find out whom it was designed for.

Isa. If it falls into my father's hands, the very figure of a letter will produce ill consequences.—Run, and look for it upon the stairs this moment.

Patch. Nay, I'm sure it can be no where else.—[*As she is going out of the door, meets the butler.*]—How now, what do you want?

But. My master ordered me to lay the cloth here for supper.

Isa. Ruined past redemption——— [*Aside.*

Patch. You mistake, sure. What shall we do?

Isa. I thought he expected company to-night—Oh, poor Charles! Oh, unfortunate Isabinda!

But. I thought so, too, madam; but I suppose he has altered his mind.

[*Lays the cloth, and exit.*

Isa. The letter is the cause. This heedless action has undone me. Fly, and fasten the closet-window, which will give Charles notice to retire. Ha! my father! oh, confusion!

Enter SIR JEALOUS.

Sir Jea. Hold, hold, Patch! whither are you going? I'll have nobody stir out of the room till after supper.

Patch. Sir, I was going to reach your easy chair—oh, wretched accident!

Sir Jea. I'll have nobody stir out of the room. I don't want my easy chair.

Isa. What will be the event of this? [*Aside.*

Sir Jea. Hark ye, daughter, do you know this hand?

Isa. As I suspected——Hand, do you call it, sir? 'tis some school-boy's scrawl.

Patch. Oh, Invention! Thou chambermaid's best friend, assist me!

Sir Jea. Are you sure you don't understand it?

[PATCH *feels in her bosom, and shakes her coats.*

Isa. Do you understand it, sir?

Sir Jeal. I wish I did.

Isa. Thank Heaven you do not!—[*Aside.*]—Then I know no more of it than you do, indeed, sir.

Patch. Oh Lord, Oh Lord! What have you done, sir? Why, the paper is mine, I dropped it out of my bosom.

[*Snatching it from him.*

Sir Jeal. Ha! yours, mistress?

Isa. What does she mean by owning it?

Patch. Yes, sir, it is.

Sir Jeal. What is it? Speak!

Patch. Yes, sir, it is a charm for the toothache—I have worn it these seven years; 'twas given me by an angel, for aught I know, when I was raving with the pain, for nobody knew from whence he came, nor whither he went. He charged me never to open it, lest some dire vengeance befell me; and Heaven knows what will be the event. Oh, cruel misfortune! that I should drop it, and you should open it———If you had not opened it——

Isa. Excellent wench! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Pox of your charms and whims for me! If that be all, 'tis well enough: there, there, burn it, and, I warrant you, no vengeance will follow.

Patch. So, all's right again, thus far. [*Aside.*

Isa. I would not lose Patch for the world——I'll take courage a little.—[*Aside.*]—Is this usage for your daughter, sir? Must my virtue and conduct be suspected for every trifle? You immure me like some dire offender here, and deny me all the recreations which my sex enjoy, and the custom of the country, and modesty, allow; yet, not content with that, you make my confinement more intolerable by your mistrusts and jealousies. Would I were dead, so I were free from this!

Sir Jeal. To-morrow rids you of this tiresome load: Don Diego Babinetto will be here; and then my care ends, and his begins.

Isa. Is he come, then? Oh, how shall I avoid this hated marriage!

Enter servants with supper.

Sir Jeal. Come, will you sit down?

Isa. I cannot eat, sir.

Patch. No, I dare swear he has given her supper enough. I wish I could get into the closet.

[*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Well, if you cannot eat, then give me a song, whilst I do.

Isa. I have such a cold I can scarce speak, sir, much less sing. How shall I prevent Charles coming in? [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. I hope you have the use of your fingers, madam. Play a tune upon your spinnet, whilst your woman sings me a song.

Patch. I am as much out of tune as my lady, if he knew all. [*Aside.*

Isa. I shall make excellent music.

[*Sits down to play.*

Patch. Really, sir, I am so frighted about your opening this charm, that I cannot remember one song.

Sir Jeal. Pish! Hang your charm! Come, come; sing any thing.

Patch. Yes, I'm likely to sing, truly.—[*Aside.*]—Humph, humph; bless me! I cannot raise my voice, my heart pants so.

Sir Jeal. Why, what, does your heart pant so, that you cannot play, neither? Pray, what key are you in, ha?

Patch. Ah, would the key was turned on you once! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Why don't you sing, I say?

Patch. When madam has put her spinnet in tune, sir; humph, humph——

Isa. I cannot play, sir, whatever ails me.

[*Rising.*

Sir Jeal. Zounds! sit down and play me a tune, or I'll break the spinnet about your ears.

Isa. What will become of me?

[*Sits down and plays.*

Sir Jeal. Come, mistress. [*To* PATCH.

Patch. Yes, sir.

[*Sings, but horribly out of tune.*

Sir Jeal. Hey, hey! Why, you are a-top of the house, and you are down in the cellar? what is the meaning of this? is it on purpose to cross me, ha?

Patch. Pray, madam, take it a little lower; I cannot reach that note—nor any note I fear.

Isa. Well, begin—Oh, Patch, we shall be discovered.

Patch. I sink with apprehension, madam—— Humph, humph—[*Sings.*]

[CHARLES *opens the closet door.*

Cha. Music and singing!

'Tis thus the bright celestial court above
Beguiles the hours with music and with love.

Death! her father there!—[*The women shriek.*]
—Then I must fly— [*Exit into the closet.*

[SIR JEALOUS *rises up hastily, seeing* CHA. *slip back into the closet.*

Sir Jeal. Hell and furies! A man in the closet!——

Patch. Ah! a ghost! a ghost!—He must not enter the closet—[ISABINDA *throws herself down before the closet door, as in a swoon.*]

Sir Jeal. The devil! I'll make a ghost of you, I warrant you. [*Strives to get by.*

Patch. Oh, hold, sir! have a care; you'll tread upon my lady—Who waits there? Bring some water. Oh! this comes of your opening the charm. Oh, oh, oh, oh! [*Weeps aloud.*

Sir Jeal. I'll charm you, housewife. Here lies the charm that conjured this fellow in, I'm sure on't. Come out, you rascal, do so. Zounds! take her from the door, or I'll spurn her from it, and break your neck down stairs.

Isa. He's gone; I heard him leap down.

[*Aside to* PATCH.

Patch. Nay, then, let him enter—Here, here, madam, smell to this; come, give me your hand; come nearer to the window; the air will do you good.

Sir Jeal. I would she were in her grave.—Where are you, sirrah? Villain! robber of my honour! I'll pull you out of your nest.

[*Goes into the closet.*

Patch. You'll be mistaken, old gentleman; the bird is flown.

Isa. I'm glad I have escaped so well; I was almost dead in earnest with the fright.

Re-enter SIR JEALOUS *out of the closet.*

Sir Jeal. Whoever the dog were, he has escaped out of the window, for the sash is up: but, though he is got out of my reach, you are not.—And first, Mrs Pander, with your charms for the tooth-ache, get out of my house! go, troop! yet hold—stay—I'll see you out of my doors myself; but I'll secure your charge, ere I go.

Isa. What do you mean, sir? Was she not a creature of your own providing?

Sir Jeal. She was of the devil's providing, for aught I know.

Patch. What have I done, sir, to merit your displeasure?

Sir Jeal. I don't know which of you have done it, but you shall both suffer for it, till I can discover whose guilt it is. Go, get in there; I'll move you from this side of the house.—[*Pushes* ISABINDA *in at the door, and locks it, puts the key in his pocket*]—I'll keep the key myself; I'll try what ghost can get into that room: and now, forsooth, I'll wait on you down stairs.

Patch. Ah, my poor lady! Down stairs, sir! But I won't go out, sir, till I have locked up my clothes.

Sir Jeal. If thou wert as naked as thou wert born, thou shouldst not stay to put on a smock. Come along, I say. When your mistress is married, you shall have your rags, and every thing that belongs to you; but, till then——

[*Exit, pulling her out.*

Patch. Oh, barbarous usage for nothing!

Re-enter at the lower end.

Sir Jeal. There, go, and come no more within sight of my habitation these three days, I charge you. [*Slaps the door after her.*

Patch. Did ever any body see such an old monster!

Enter CHARLES.

Oh, Mr Charles! Your affairs and mine are in an ill posture.

Cha. I am inured to the frowns of fortune; but what has befallen thee?

Patch. Sir Jealous, whose suspicious nature is always on the watch, nay, even while one eye sleeps, the other keeps centinel, upon sight of you, flew into such a violent passion, that I could find no stratagem to appease him; but, in spite of all arguments, he locked his daughter into his own apartment, and turned me out of doors.

Cha. Ha! oh Isabinda!

Patch. And swears she shall see neither sun nor moon, till she is Don Diego Babinetto's wife, who arrived last night, and is expected with impatience.

Cha. He dies; yes, by all the wrongs of love,

he shall: Here will I plant myself, and through my breast he shall make his passage, if he enters.

Patch. A most heroic resolution! there might be ways found out more to your advantage: policy is often preferred to open force.

Cha. I apprehend you not.

Patch. What think you of personating this Spaniard, imposing upon the father, and marrying your mistress by his own consent?

Cha. Say'st thou so, my angel? Oh, could that be done, my life to come would be too short to recompense thee: but how can I do that, when I neither know what ship he came in, nor from what part of Spain, who recommends him, or how attended?

Patch. I can solve all this. He is from Madrid; his father's name Don Pedro Questo Portento Babinetto. Here's a letter of his to sir Jealous, which he dropt one day. You understand Spanish, and the hand may be counterfeited,—You conceive me, sir?

Cha. My better genius! Thou hast revived my drooping soul. I'll about it instantly. Come to my lodgings, and we'll concert matters.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A garden-gate open*; SCENTWELL *waiting within.*

Enter SIR GEORGE AIRY.

Sir Geo. So, this is the gate, and most invitingly open. If there should be a blunderbuss here, now, what a dreadful ditty would my fall make for fools, and what a jest for the wits! how my name would be roared about the streets! Well, I'll venture all.

Scent. Hist, hist! sir George Airy— [*Enters.*

Sir Geo. A female voice! thus far I'm safe—My dear!

Scent. No, I'm not your dear; but I'll conduct you to her. Give me your hand; you must go through many a dark passage and dirty step before you arrive—

Sir Geo. I know I must, before I arrive at paradise; therefore, be quick, my charming guide.

Scent. For aught you know. Come, come, your hand, and away.

Sir Geo. Here, here, child; you can't be half so swift as my desires. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The house.*

Enter MIRANDA.

Mir. Well, let me reason a little with my mad self. Now, don't I transgress all rules, to venture upon a man without the advice of the grave and wise? But then, a rigid, knavish guardian, who would have married me—to whom? even to his nauseous self, or nobody. Sir George is what I have tried in conversation, inquired into his character, and am satisfied in both. Then his love! Who would have given a hundred pounds only to have seen a woman he had not infinitely loved? So I find my liking him has furnished me with arguments enough of his side; and now, the only doubt remains whether he will come or no.

Enter SCENTWELL *and* SIR GEORGE.

Scent. That's resolved, madam; for here's the knight. [*Exit* SCENTWELL.

Sir Geo. And do I once more behold that lovely object, whose idea fills my mind, and forms my pleasing dreams!

Mir. What, beginning again in heroicks!—Sir George, don't you remember how little fruit your last prodigal oration produced? Not one bare single word in answer.

Sir Geo. Ha! the voice of my incognita!—Why did you take ten thousand ways to captivate a heart your eyes alone had vanquished?

Mir. Pr'ythee, no more of these flights; for our time's but short, and we must fall to business. Do you think we can agree on that same terrible bugbear, matrimony, without heartily repenting on both sides?

Sir Geo. It has been my wish since first my longing eyes beheld you.

Mir. And your happy ears drank in the pleasing news I had thirty thousand pounds.

Sir Geo. Unkind! did I not offer you, in those purchased minutes, to run the risk of your fortune, so you would but secure that lovely person to my arms?

Mir. Well, if you have such love and tenderness, since our wooing has been short, pray reserve it for our future days, to let the world see we are lovers after wedlock; 'twill be a novelty.

Sir Geo. Haste then, and let us tie the knot, and prove the envied pair——

Mir. Hold, not so fast; I have provided better than to venture on dangerous experiments headlong——My guardian, trusting to my dissembled love, has given up my fortune to my own disposal, but with this proviso, that he to-morrow morning weds me. He is now gone to Doctors Commons for a licence.

Sir Geo. Ha! a licence!

Mir. But I have planted emissaries that infallibly take him down to Epsom, under a pretence that a brother usurer of his is to make him his executor, a thing on earth he covets.

Sir Geo. 'Tis his known character.

Mir. Now my instruments confirm him this man is dying, and he sends me word he goes this minute. It must be to-morrow ere he can be undeceived: that time is ours.

Sir Geo. Let us improve it then, and settle on our coming years endless, endless happiness!

Mir. I dare not stir till I hear he's on the road ——then I and my writings, the most material point, are soon removed.

Sir Geo. I have one favour to ask: if it lies in your power, you would be a friend to poor Charles; though the son of this tenacious man, he is as free from all his vices as nature and a good education can make him; and what now I have vanity enough to hope will induce you, he is the man on earth I love.

Mir. I never was his enemy, and only put it on as it helped my designs on his father. If his uncle's estate ought to be in his possession, which I shrewdly suspect, I may do him a singular piece of service.

Sir Geo. You are all goodness.

Enter SCENTWELL.

Scent. Oh, madam! my master and Mr Marplot are just coming into the house.

Mir. Undone, undone! if he finds you here in this crisis all my plots are unravelled.

Sir Geo. What shall I do? can't I get back into the garden?

Scent. O no! he comes up those stairs.

Mir. Here, here, here! can you condescend to stand behind this chimney-board, sir George?

Sir Geo. Any where, any where, dear madam! without ceremony.

Scent. Come, come, sir; lie close——

[*They put him behind the chimney board.*

Enter SIR FRANCIS *and* MARPLOT; SIR FRANCIS *peeling an orange.*

Sir Fran. I could not go, though 'tis upon life and death, without taking leave of dear Chargy. Besides, this fellow buzzed into my ears, that thou might'st be so desperate as to shoot that wild rake which haunts the garden-gate, and that would bring us into trouble, dear——

Mir. So, Marplot brought you back then?

Mar. Yes, I brought him back.

Mir. I'm obliged to him for that, I'm sure.

[*Frowning at* MARPLOT *aside.*

Mar. By her looks she means she's not obliged to me. I have done some mischief now, but what, I can't imagine.

Sir Fran. Well, Chargy, I have had three messengers to come to Epsom, to my neighbour Squeezum's, who, for all his vast riches, is departing. [*Sighs.*

Mar. Ay, see what all you usurers must come to.

Sir Fran. Peace, you young knave! Some forty years hence I may think on't—But, Chargy, I'll be with thee to-morrow before those pretty eyes are open; I will, I will, Chargy; I'll rouse you, i'faith—Here, Mrs Scentwell, lift up your lady's chimney-board, that I may throw my peel in, and not litter her chamber.

Mir. Oh my stars! what will become of us now?

Scent. Oh, pray, sir, give it me; I love it above all things in nature; indeed I do.

Sir Fran. No, no, hussy; you have the green pip already; I'll have no apothecary's bills.

[*Goes towards the chimney.*

Mir. Hold, hold, hold, dear Gardy! I have a, a, a, a, monkey shut up there; and if you open it before the man comes that is to tame it, 'tis so wild 'twill break all my china, or get away, and that would break my heart; for I'm fond on't to distraction—next thee, dear Gardy!

[*In a flattering tone.*

Sir Fran. Well, well, Chargy, I won't open it; she shall have her monkey, poor rogue! Here, throw this peel out of the window.

[*Exit* SCENT.

Mar. A monkey! dear madam, let me see it; I can tame a monkey as well as the best of them all. Oh, how I love the little miniatures of man!

Mir. Be quiet, mischief! and stand farther from the chimney——You shall not see my monkey—why sure— [*Striving with him.*

Mar. For Heaven's sake, dear madam! let me but peep, to see if it be as pretty as lady Fiddle Faddle's. Has it got a chain?

Mir. Not yet, but I design it one shall last its lifetime. Nay, you shall not see it.——Look, Gardy, how he teazes me!

Sir Fran. [*Getting between him and the chimney.*] Sirrah, sirrah, let my Chargy's monkey alone, or bamboo shall fly about your ears. What! is there no dealing with you.

Mar. Pugh, pox of the monkey! here's a rout! I wish he may rival you.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, they have put two more horses to the coach, as you ordered, and 'tis ready at the door.

Sir Fran. Well, I am going to be executor; better for thee, jewel. B'ye, Chargy; one buss! —I'm glad thou hast got a monkey to divert thee a little.

Mir. Thank'e, dear Gardy!—Nay, I'll see you to the coach.

Sir Fran. That's kind, adad!

Mir. Come along, impertinence.

[*To* MARPLOT.

Mar. [*Stepping back.*] Egad, I will see the monkey now. [*Lifts up the board, and discovers* SIR GEORGE.] O Lord! O Lord! Thieves! thieves! murder!

Sir Geo. Damn ye, you unlucky dog! 'tis I, Which way shall I get out? Shew me instantly, or I'll cut your throat.

Mar. Undone, undone! At that door there. But hold, hold; break that china, and—I'll bring you off.

[*He runs off at the corner, and throws down some china.*]

Re-enter SIR FRANCIS, MIRANDA, *and* SCENTWELL.

Sir Fran. Mercy on me! what's the matter?

Mir. O, you toad! what have you done?

Mar. No great harm; I beg of you to forgive me: Longing to see the monkey, I did but just raise up the board, and it flew over my shoulders, scratched all my face, broke yon china, and whisked out of the window.

Sir Fran. Where, where is it, sirrah?

Mar. There, there, sir Francis, upon your neighbour Parmazan's pantiles.

Sir Fran. Was ever such an unlucky rogue! Sirrah, I forbid you my house. Call the servants to get the monkey again. Pug, Pug, Pug! I would stay myself to look for it, but that you know my earnest business.

Scent. Oh, my lady will be best to lure it back: all them creatures love my lady extremely.

Mir. Go, go, dear Gardy! I hope I shall recover it.

Sir Fran. B'ye, b'ye, dearee! Ah, mischief! how you look now! B'ye, b'ye.

[*Exit* SIR FRAN.

Mir. Scentwell, see him in the coach, and bring me word.

Scent. Yes, madam. [*Exit* SCENT.

Mir. So, sir, you have done your friend a signal piece of service, I suppose?

Mar. Why, look you, madam, if I have committed a fault, thank yourself; no man is more serviceable when I am let into a secret, and none more unlucky at finding it out. Who could divine your meaning? when you talked of a blunderbuss, who thought of a rendezvous? and when you talked of a monkey, who the devil dreamt of sir George?

Mir. A sign you converse but little with our sex, when you can't reconcile contradictions.

Enter SCENTWELL.

Scent. He's gone, madam, as fast as the coach and six can carry him——

Enter SIR GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Then I may appear.

Mar. Here's Pug, ma'am—Dear sir George! make my peace. On my soul I never took you for a monkey before!

Sir Geo. I dare sware thou didst not. Madam, I beg you to forgive him.

Mir. Well, sir George, if he can be secret.

Mar. 'Odsheart, madam! I'm as secret as a priest, when trusted.

Sir Geo. Why, 'tis with a priest our business is at present.

Scent. Madam, here's Mrs Isabinda's woman to wait on you.

Mir. Bring her up

Enter PATCH.

How do ye, Mrs Patch? What news from your lady?

Patch. That's for your private ear, madam. Sir George, there's a friend of your's has an urgent occasion for your assistance.

Sir Geo. His name?

Patch. Charles.

Mar. Ha! then there's something a-foot that I know nothing of. I'll wait on you, sir George.

Sir Geo. A third person may not be proper, perhaps. As soon as I have dispatched my own affairs, I am at his service. I'll send my servant to tell him I'll wait on him in half an hour.

Mir. How came you employed in this message, Mrs Patch?

Patch. Want of business, madam; I am discharged by my master, but hope to serve my lady still.

Mir. How! discharged! you must tell me the whole story within.

Patch. With all my heart, madam.

Mar. Tell it here, Mrs Patch. Pish, Pox! I wish I were fairly out of the house. I find marriage is the end of this secret; and now I am half mad to know what Charles wants him for.

[*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Madam, I'm doubly pressed by love and friendship. This exigence admits of no delay. Shall we make Marplot of the party?

Mir. If you'll run the hazard, sir George; I believe he means well.

Mar. Nay, nay; for my part, I desire to be let into nothing; I'll be gone; therefore, pray don't mistrust me. [*Going.*

Sir Geo. So, now he has a mind to be gone to Charles: but not knowing what affairs he may have upon his hands at present—I'm resolved he shan't stir. No, Mr Marplot, you must not leave us; we want a third person.

[*Takes hold of him.*

Mar. I never had more mind to be gone in my life.

Mir. Come along, then; if we fail in the voyage, thank yourself for taking this ill-starred gentleman on board.

Sir Geo. That vessel ne'er can unsuccessful prove,
Whose freight is beauty, and whose pilot's love.

[*Exit* SIR GEORGE *and* MIRANDA.

Mar. Tyty ti, tyty ti. [*Steals off the other way.*

Re-enter SIR GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Marplot! Marplot!

Mar. [*Entering.*] Here! I was coming, sir George. Lord, can't you let one tie up one's garter? [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter MIRANDA, PATCH, *and* SCENTWELL.

Mir. WELL, Patch, I have done a strange bold thing; my fate is determined, and expectation is no more. Now, to avoid the impertinence and roguery of an old man, I have thrown myself into the extravagance of a young one: if he should despise, slight, or use me ill, there's no remedy from a husband but the grave; and that's a terrible sanctuary to one of my age and constitution.

Patch. O! fear not, madam; you'll find your account in sir George Airy; it is impossible a man of sense should use a woman ill, endued with beauty, wit, and fortune. It must be the lady's fault, if she does not wear the unfashionable name of wife easy, when nothing but complaisance and good humour is requisite on either side to make them happy.

Mir. I long till I am out of this house, lest any accident should bring my guardian back. Scentwell, put my best jewels into the little casket, slip them into thy pocket, and let us march off to sir Jealous's.

Scent. It shall be done, madam. [*Exit* SCENT.

Patch. Sir George will be impatient, madam. If their plot succeeds, we shall be well received; if not, he will be able to protect us. Besides, I long to know how my young lady fares.

Mir. Farewell old Mammon, and thy detested walls! 'Twill be no more sweet sir Francis! I shall be compelled the odious task of dissembling no longer to get my own, and coax him with the wheedling names of my precious, my dear, dear Gardy! O Heavens!

Enter SIR FRANCIS *behind.*

Sir Fran. Ah, my sweet Chargy! don't be frighted: [*She starts*] but thy poor Gardy has been abused, cheated, fooled, betrayed; but nobody knows by whom.

Mir. Undone, past redemption! [*Aside*].

Sir Fran. What! won't you speak to me, Chargy?

Mir. I am so surprised with joy to see you, I know not what to say.

Sir Fran. Poor dear girl! But do you know that my son, or some such rogue, to rob or murder me, or both, contrived this journey? for, upon the road, I met my neighbour Squeezum well, and coming to town.

Mir. Good lack! good lack! what tricks are there in this world!

Enter SCENTWELL, *with a diamond necklace in her hand, not seeing* SIR FRANCIS.

Scent. Madam, be pleased to tie this necklace on, for I can't get into the—[*Seeing* SIR FRANCIS.

Mir. The wench is a fool, I think! could you not have carried it to be mended without putting it in the box?

Sir Fran. What's the matter?

Mir. Only, dearee! I bid her, I bid her—— Your ill usage has put every thing out of my head. But won't you go, Gardy, and find out these fellows, and have them punished?—and, and——

Sir Fran. Where should I look for them, child? no, I'll sit me down contented with my safety, nor stir out of my own doors till I go with thee to a parson.

Mir. [*Aside.*] If he goes into his closet I am ruined. Oh bless me! in this fright I had forgot Mrs Patch.

Patch. Aye, madam; and I stay for your speedy answer.

Mir. [*Aside.*] I must get him out of the house. Now, assist me, Fortune!

Sir Fran. Mrs Patch! I profess I did not see you: how dost thou do, Mrs Patch? Well, don't you repent leaving my Chargy?

Patch. Yes, every body must love her—but I come now——Madam, what did I come for? my invention is at the last ebb.

[*Aside to* MIRANDA.

Sir Fran. Nay, never whisper; tell me.

Mir. She came, dear Gardy! to invite me to her lady's wedding, and you shall go with me, Gardy; 'tis to be done this moment, to a Spanish merchant. Old sir Jealous keeps on his humour; the first minute he sees her, the next he marries her.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha, ha! I'd go, if I thought the sight of matrimony would tempt Chargy to perform her promise. There was a smile! there was a consenting look, with those pretty twinklers, worth a million! Ods-precious! I am happier than the Great Mogul, the emperor of China, or all the potentates that are not in wars.—Speak, confirm it, make me leap out of my skin!

Mir. When one has resolved, 'tis in vain to stand shilly-shally. If ever I marry, positively this is my wedding-day.

Sir Fran. Oh! happy, happy man! Verily I will beget a son the first night shall disinherit that dog, Charles. I have estate enough to purchase a barony, and be the immortalizing the whole family of the Gripes.

Mir. Come, then, Gardy; give me thy hand; let's to this house of Hymen.

My choice is fixed, let good or ill betide.

Sir Fran. The joyful bridegroom I,

Mir. And I the happy bride. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter SIR JEALOUS, *meeting a Servant.*

Serv. Sir, here's a couple of gentlemen inquire

for you; one of them calls himself Signior Diego Babinetto.

Sir Jeal. Ha! Signior Babinetto! admit them instantly—joyful minute! I'll have my daughter married to-night.

Enter CHARLES *in a Spanish habit, with* SIR GEORGE, *dressed like a merchant.*

Senhor, beso las manos: vuestra merced es muy bien venido en esta tierra.

Cha. Senhor, soy muy humilde, y muy obligado cryado de vuestra merced: mi padre embia a vuestra merced, los mas profondos de sus respetos; y a commissionado este mercadel Ingles, de concluyr un negocio, que me haze el mas dichoss hombre del mundo, haziendo me su yerno.

Sir Jeal. I am glad on't, for I find I have lost much of my Spanish. Sir, I am your most humble servant. Signior Don Diego Babinetto has informed me that you are commissioned by signior Don Pedro, &c. his worthy father——

Sir Geo. To see an affair of marriage consummated between a daughter of your's and signior Diego Babinetto his son here. True, sir, such a trust is reposed in me, as that letter will inform you. I hope, 'twill pass upon him.—[*Aside.*] [*Gives him a letter.*

Sir Jeal. Aye, 'tis his hand. [*Seems to read.*

Sir Geo. Good; you have counterfeited to a nicety, Charles. [*Aside to* CHARLES.

Cha. If the whole plot succeeds as well, I'm happy.

Sir Jeal. Sir, I find by this that you are a man of honour and probity; I think, sir, he calls you Meanwell?

Sir Geo. Meanwell is my name, sir.

Sir Jeal. A very good name, and very significant.

Cha. Yes, faith, if he knew all. [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. For, to mean well, is to be honest; and to be honest, is the virtue of a friend; and a friend is the delight and support of human society.

Sir Geo. You shall find that I'll discharge the part of a friend in what I have undertaken, sir Jealous.

Cha. But little does he think to whom. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Therefore, sir, I must entreat the presence of your fair daughter, and the assistance of your chaplain; for signior Don Pedro strictly enjoined me to see the marriage rites performed as soon as we should arrive, to avoid the accidental overtures of Venus.

Sir Jeal. Overtures of Venus!

Sir Geo Aye, sir; that is, those little hawking females that traverse the Park and the playhouse to put off their damaged ware—they fasten upon foreigners like leeches, and watch their arrival as carefully as the kentish men do a shipwreck: I warrant you they have heard of him already.

Sir Jeal. Nay, I know this town swarms with them.

Sir Geo. Aye, and then you know the Spaniards are naturally amorous, but very constant; the first face fixes them; and it may be very dangerous to let him ramble ere he is tied.

Cha. Well hinted.

Sir Jeal. Pat to my purpose! Well, sir, there is but one thing more, and they shall be married instantly.

Cha. Pray Heaven, that one thing more don't spoil all! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Don Pedro writ me word, in his last but one, that he designed the sum of five thousand crowns, by way of jointure, for my daughter; and that it should be paid into my hand upon the day of marriage——

Cha. Oh, the devil! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. In order to lodge it in some of our funds, in case she should become a widow, and return for England——

Sir Geo. Pox on't, this is an unlucky turn!—What shall I say? [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. And he does not mention one word of it in this letter.

Cha. I don't know how he should. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Humph! True, sir Jealous, he told me such a thing, but, but, but, but—he, he, he—he did not imagine that you would insist upon the very day; for, for, for, for money, you know, is dangerous returning by sea, an, an, an, an——

Cha. Zounds! say we have brought it in commodities. [*Aside to* SIR GEORGE.

Sir Geo. And so, sir, he has sent it in merchandize, tobacco, sugars, spices, lemons, and so forth, which shall be turned into money with all expedition: in the mean time, sir, if you please to accept of my bond for performance——

Sir Jeal. It is enough, sir; I am so pleased with the countenance of signior Diego, and the harmony of your name, that I'll take your word, and will fetch my daughter this moment. Within there.

Enter Servant.

Desire Mr Tackum, my neighbour's chaplain, to walk hither.

Serv. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Sir Jeal. Gentlemen, I'll return in an instant. [*Exit.*

Cha. Wondrous well! let me embrace thee.

Sir Geo. Egad, that five thousand crowns had like to have ruined the plot.

Cha. But that's over; and if Fortune throws no other rubs in our way——

Sir Geo. Thou'lt carry the prize——But hist! here he comes.

Enter SIR JEALOUS, *dragging in* ISABINDA.

Sir Jeal. Come along, you stubborn baggage you! come along.

Isa. Oh! hear me, sir; hear me but speak one word:
Do not destroy my everlasting peace;
My soul abhors this Spaniard you have chose,
Nor can I wed him without being curst.

Sir Jeal. How's that!

Isa. Let this posture move your tender nature. [*Kneels.*
For ever will I hang upon these knees,
Nor loose my hands, till you cut off my hold,
If you refuse to hear me, sir.

Cha. Oh! that I could discover myself to her! [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Have a care what you do: you had better trust to his obstinacy. [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Did you ever see such a perverse slut? Off, I say. Mr Meanwell, pray help me a little.

Sir Geo. Rise, madam, and do not disoblige your father, who has provided a husband worthy of you; one that will love you equal with his soul, and one that you will love, when once you know him.

Isa. Oh! never, never!
Could I suspect that falsehood in my heart,
I would this moment tear it from my breast,
And straight present him with the treacherous part.

Cha. Oh! my charming, faithful dear! [*Aside.*

Sir Jeal. Falsehood! why, who the devil are you in love with? Don't provoke me; for, by St Iago, I shall beat you, housewife.

Cha. Heaven forbid! for I shall infallibly discover myself if he should.

Sir Geo. Have patience, madam, and look at him: why will ye prepossess yourself against a man, that is master of all the charms you would desire in a husband.

Sir Jeal. Ay, look at him, Isabinda. Senhor pase vind adelante.

Cha. My heart bleeds to see her grieve, whom I imagined would with joy receive me. Senhora obligue me vuestra merced de sa mano.

Sir Jeal. [*Pulling up her head.*] Hold up your head, hold up your head, hussy, and look at him. Is there a properer, handsomer, better shaped, fellow in England, ye jade you? Ha! see, see the obstinate baggage shuts her eyes; by St Iago I hsve a good mind to beat them out. [*Pushes her down.*

Isab. Do then, sir, kill me; kill me instantly;
'Tis much the kinder action of the two,
For 'twill be worse than death to wed him.

Sir Geo. Sir Jealous, you are too passionate. Give me leave; I'll try, by gentle words, to work her to your purpose.

Sir Jeal. I pray do, Mr Meanwell, I pray do; she'll break my heart. [*Weeps.*] There is, in that, jewels of the value of three thousand pounds, which were her mother's; and a paper, wherein I have settled one half of my estate upon her now, and the whole when I die, but provided she marries this gentleman; else by St Iago I'll turn her out of doors to beg or starve. Tell her this, Mr Meanwell; pray do. [*Walks off.*

Sir Geo. Ha! this is beyond expectation—— Trust to me, sir; I'll lay the dangerous consequence of disobeying you at this juncture before her, I warrant you.

Cha. A sudden joy runs through my heart, like a propitious omen. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Come, madam, do not blindly cast your life away, just in the moment you would wish to save it.

Isa. Pray, cease your trouble, sir; I have no wish but sudden death to free me from this hated Spaniard. If you are his friend, inform him what I say; my heart is given to another youth, whom I love with the same strength of passion that I hate this Diego, with whom, if I am forced to wed, my own hand shall cut the Gordian knot.

Sir Geo. Suppose this Spaniard, whom you strive to shun, should be the very man to whom you'd fly?

Isa. Ha!

Sir Geo. Would you not blame your rash resolve, and curse your eyes that would not look on Charles?

Isa. On Charles? Oh! you have inspired new life, and collected every wandering sense. Where is he? Oh! let me fly into his arms. [*Rises.*

Sir Geo. Hold, hold, hold! 'Sdeath! madam, you'll ruin all! Your father believes him to be signior Babinetto. Compose yourself a little, pray, madam. [*He runs to* SIR JEALOUS.

Cha. Her eyes declare she knows me. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. She begins to hear reason, sir; the fear of being turned out of doors has done it. [*Runs back to* ISABINDA.

Isa. 'Tis he! Oh, my ravished soul!

Sir Geo. Take heed, madam, you don't betray yourself. Seem with reluctance to consent, or you are undone.—[*Runs to* SIR JEALOUS.]—Speak gently to her, sir; I'm sure she'll yield; I see it in her face.

Sir Jeal. Well, Isabinda, can you refuse to bless a father, whose only care is to make you happy, as Mr Meanwell has informed you? Come, wipe thy eyes; nay, prithee, do, or thou wilt break thy father's heart. See, thou bring'st the tears in mine, to think of thy undutiful carriage to me. [*Weeps.*

Isa. Oh, do not weep, sir! your tears are like a poignard to my soul. Do with me what you please; I am all obedience.

Sir Jeal. Ha! then thou art my child again.

Sir Geo. 'Tis done; and now, friend, the day's thy own.

Cha. The happiest of my life, if nothing intervene.

Sir Jea. And wilt thou love him?

Isa. I will endeavour it, sir.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, here is Mr Tackum.

Sir Jeal. Shew him into the parlour. Senhor tome vind sucipora; cette momento les junta les manos.

[*Gives her to* CHARLES.

Cha. Oh, transport! Senhor, yo la recibo como se deve un tesoro tan grande. Oh! my joy, my life, my soul!

[*Embrace.*

Isa. My faithful, everlasting comfort!

Sir Jeal. Now, Mr Meanwell, let's to the parson,

Who, by his art, will join this pair for life,
Make me the happiest father, her the happiest wife. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the street before* SIR JEALOUS'S *door.*

Enter MARPLOT.

Mar. I have hunted all over the town for Charles, but cannot find him; and, by Whisper's scouting at the end of the street, I suspect he must be in the house again. I am informed, too, that he has borrowed a Spanish habit out of the play-house: what can it mean?

Enter a servant of SIR JEALOUS'S *to him, out of the house.*

Hark'e, sir, do you belong to this house?

Ser. Yes, sir.

Mar. Isn't your name Richard!

Ser. No, sir, Thomas.

Mar. Oh, aye, Thomas——Well, Thomas, there's a shilling for you.

Ser. Thank you, sir.

Mar. Pray, Thomas, can you tell if there be a gentleman in it in a Spanish habit?

Ser. There's a Spanish gentleman within, that is just a-going to marry my young lady, sir.

Mar. Are you sure he is a Spanish gentleman?

Ser. I'm sure he speaks no English that I hear of.

Mar. Then that cannot be him I want; for 'tis an English gentleman that I inquire after; he may be dressed like a Spaniard, for aught I know.

Ser. Ha! Who knows but this may be an impostor? I'll inform my master; for, if he should be imposed upon, he'll beat us all round.—[*Aside.*]—Pray, come in, sir, and see if this be the person you inquire for.

Mar. Aye, I'll follow you——Now for't.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the inside of the house.*

Enter MARPLOT *and servant.*

Ser. Sir, please to stay here; I'll send my master to you. [*Exit.*

Mar. So, this was a good contrivance. If this be Charles now, he will wonder how I found him out.

Enter servant and SIR JEALOUS.

Sir Jeal. What is your earnest business, blockhead, that you must speak with me before the ceremony's past? Ha! who's this?

Ser. Why, this gentleman, sir, wants another gentleman in a Spanish habit, he says.

Sir Jeal. In a Spanish habit! 'tis some friend of signior Don Diego's, I warrant. Sir, your servant.

Mar. Your servant, sir.

Sir Jeal. I suppose you would speak with signior Babinetto.

Mar. Sir!

Sir Jeal. I say, I suppose you would speak with signior Babinetto.

Mar. Hey day! What the devil does he say now? Sir, I don't understand you.

Sir Jeal. Don't you understand Spanish, sir?

Mar. Not I, indeed, sir.

Sir Jeal. I thought you had known signior Babinetto.

Mar. Not I, upon my word, sir.

Sir Jeal. What then, you'd speak with his friend, the English merchant, Mr Meanwell?

Mar. Neither, sir, not I; I don't mean any such thing.

Sir Jeal. Why, who are you, then, sir? And what do you want? [*In an angry tone.*

Mar. Nay, nothing at all; not I, sir. Pox on him! I wish I were out; he begins to exalt his voice; I shall be beaten again.

Sir Jeal. Nothing at all, sir! Why, then, what business have you in my house? ha!

Ser. You said you wanted a gentleman in a Spanish habit.

Mar. Why, aye; but his name is neither Babinetto nor Meanwell.

Sir Jeal. What is his name, then, sirrah? Ha! Now I look at you again, I believe you are the rogue that threatened me with half-a-dozen myrmidons——

Mar. Me, sir! I never saw your face in all my life, before.

Sir Jeal. Speak, sir, who is it you look for? or, or——

Mar. A terrible old dog! Why, sir, only an honest young fellow of my acquaintance——I thought that here might be a ball, and that he might have been here in masquerade. 'Tis Charles, sir Francis Gripe's son, because I knew he used to come hither sometimes.

Sir Jeal. Did he so? not that I know of, I'm sure. Pray Heaven that this be Don Diego—If I should be tricked now—Ha! my heart misgives me plaguily—Within there! stop the marriage—Run, sirrah; call all my servants! I'll be satisfied that this is signior Pedro's son, ere he has my daughter.

Mar. Ha! Sir George! What have I done, now?

Enter SIR GEORGE, *with a drawn sword, between the scenes.*

Sir Geo. Ha! Marplot here—oh, the unlucky dog!—What's the matter, sir Jealous?

Sir Jeal. Nay, I don't know the matter, Mr Meanwell.

Mar. Upon my soul, sir George——

[*Going up to* SIR GEORGE.

Sir Jeal. Nay, then, I'm betrayed, ruined, undone! Thieves, traitors, rogues!—[*Offers to go in.*]—Stop the marriage, I say——

Sir Geo. I say, go on, Mr Tackum. Nay, no entering here; I guard this passage, old gentleman: the act and deed were both your own, and I'll see them signed, or die for't.

Enter Servant.

Sir Jeal. A pox on the act and deed! Fall on, knock him down.

Sir Geo. Aye, come on, scoundrels! I'll prick your jackets for you.

Sir Jeal. Zounds! sirrah, I'll be revenged on you. [*Beats* MARPLOT.

Sir Geo. Aye, there your vengeance is due. Ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Why, what do you beat me for? I han't married your daughter.

Sir Jeal. Rascals! Why don't you knock him down?

Ser. We are afraid of his sword, sir; if you'll take that from him, we'll knock him down presently.

Enter CHARLES *and* ISABINDA.

Sir Jeal. Seize her, then!

Cha. Rascals! retire; she's my wife; touch her if you dare; I'll make dog's meat of you.

Mar. Aye, I'll make dog's meat of you, rascals!

Sir Jeal. Ah! downright English——Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Enter SIR FRANCIS GRIPE, MIRANDA, PATCH, SCENTWELL, *and* WHISPER.

Sir Fran. Into the house of joy we enter, without knocking——Ha! I think 'tis the house of sorrow, sir Jealous.

Sir Jeal. Oh, sir Francis, are you come? what! was this your contrivance, to abuse, trick, and chouse me out of my child?

Sir Fran. My contrivance! What do you mean?

Sir Jeal. No, you don't know your son, there, in a Spanish habit?

Sir Fran. How! my son in a Spanish habit! Sirrah, you'll come to be hanged. Get out of sight, ye dog! get out of my sight!

Sir Jeal. Get out of your sight, sir! get out with your bags. Let's see what you'll give him now, to maintain my daughter on.

Sir Fran. Give him! he shall never be the better for a penny of mine—and you might have looked after your daughter better, sir Jealous.—Tricked, quotha! Egad, I think you designed to trick me: but, look ye, gentlemen, I believe I shall trick you both. This lady is my wife, do you see, and my estate shall descend only to the heirs of her body.

Sir Geo. Lawfully begotten by me—I shall be extremely obliged to you, sir Francis.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, ha, ha! Poor sir George! You see your prospect was of no use; does not your hundred pound stick in your stomach? Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. No, faith, sir Francis; this lady has given me a cordial for that.

[*Takes her by the hand.*

Sir Fran. Hold, sir, you have nothing to say to this lady.

Sir Geo. Nor you nothing to do with my wife, sir.

Sir Fran. Wife, sir?

Mir. Aye, really, guardian, 'tis even so. I hope you'll forgive my first offence.

Sir Fran. What! Have you choused me out of my consent, and your writings, then, mistress, ha?

Mir. Out of nothing but my own, guardian.

Sir Jeal. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis some comfort, at least, to see you are over-reached as well as myself. Will you settle your estate upon your son now?

Sir Fran. He shall starve first.

Mir. That I have taken care to prevent.—There, sir, are the writings of your uncle's estate, which have been your due these three years.

[*Gives* CHARLES *papers.*

Cha. I shall study to deserve this favour.

Mar. Now, how the devil could she get those writings, and I know nothing of it!

Sir Fran. What, have you robbed me too, mistress! Egad, I'll make you restore them—— hussy, I will so.

Sir Jeal. Take care I don't make you pay the arrears, sir. 'Tis well 'tis no worse, since 'tis no better. Come, young man, seeing thou hast outwitted me, take her, and bless you both!

Cha. I hope, sir, you'll bestow your blessing, too; 'tis all I ask. [*Kneels.*

Mar. Do, Gardy, do.

Sir Fran. Confound you all!

[*Exit* SIR FRANCIS.

Mar. Mercy upon us, how he looks!

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! ne'er mind his curses,

Charles; thou'lt thrive not one jot the worse for them. Since this gentleman is reconciled, we are all made happy.

Sir Jeal. I always loved precaution, and took care to avoid dangers; but, when a thing was past, I ever had philosophy to be easy.

Cha. Which is the true sign of a great soul. I loved your daughter, and she me; and you shall have no reason to repent her choice.

Isa. You will not blame me, sir, for loving my own country best.

Mar So, here's every body happy, I find, but poor Pilgarlick. I wonder what satisfaction I shall have for being cuffed, kicked, and beaten in your service!

Sir Jeal. I have been a little too familiar with you, as things are fallen out; but, since there's no help for't, you must forgive me.

Mar. Egad, I think so—but, provided that you be not so familiar for the future.

Sir Geo. Thou hast been an unlucky rogue.

Mar. But very honest.

Cha. That I'll vouch for, and freely forgive thee.

Sir Geo. And I'll do you one piece of service more, Marplot; I'll take care that sir Francis make you master of your estate.

Mar. That will make me as happy as any of you.

Patch. Your humble servant begs leave to remind you, madam.

Isa. Sir, I hope you'll give me leave to take Patch into favour again.

Sir Jeal. Nay, let your husband look to that; I have done with my care.

Cha. Her own liberty shall always oblige me. Here's nobody but honest Whisper and Mrs Scentwell, to be provided for, now. It shall be left to their choice to marry, or keep their services.

Whis. Nay, then, I'll stick to my master.

Scent. Coxcomb! and I prefer my lady before a footman.

Sir Jeal. Hark! I hear the music; the fiddlers smell a wedding. What say you, young fellows, will you have a dance?

Sir Geo. With all my heart; call them in.

[*A Dance.*]

Sir Jeal. Now, let us in, and refresh ourselves with a cheerful glass, in which we'll bury all animosities: and,

By my example let all parents move,
And never strive to cross their childrens' love.
But still submit that care to Providence above.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

WONDER;

A

WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET!

BY

MRS CENTLIVRE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
DON LOPEZ, *a grandee of Portugal.*	DONNA VIOLANTE, *designed for a nun by her father, in love with* FELIX.
DON FELIX, *his son, in love with* VIOLANTE.	DONNA ISABELLA, *sister to* FELIX.
FREDERICK, *a merchant.*	INIS, *her maid.*
DON PEDRO, *father to* VIOLANTE.	FLORA, *maid to* DONNA VIOLANTE.
COLONEL BRITON, *a Scotsman.*	
GIBBY, *his footman.*	*Alguazil, attendants, servants, &c.*
LISSARDO, *footman to* FELIX.	

Scene—Lisbon.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter DON LOPEZ, *meeting* FREDERICK.

Fred. My Lord, Don Lopez!

Lop. How d'ye, Frederick?

Fred. At your Lordship's service. I am glad to see you look so well, my lord. I hope Antonio's out of danger?

Lop. Quite contrary; his fever increases, they tell me; and the surgeons are of opinion his wound is mortal.

Fred. Your son, Don Felix, is safe, I hope?

Lop. I hope so, too; but they offer large rewards to apprehend him.

Fred. When heard your lordship from him?

Lop. Not since he went: I forbade him writing till the public news gave him an account of Antonio's health. Letters might be intercepted, and the place of his abode discovered.

Fred. Your caution was good, my lord. Though I am impatient to hear from Felix, yet his safety is my chief concern. Fortune has maliciously struck a bar between us in the affairs of life, but she has done me the honour to unite our souls.

Lop. I am not ignorant of the friendship between my son and you: I have heard him commend your morals, and lament your want of noble birth.

Fred. That's nature's fault, my lord. It is some comfort not to owe one's misfortunes to one's self; yet it is impossible not to regret the want of noble birth.

Lop. 'Tis a pity, indeed, such excellent parts, as you are master of, should be eclipsed by mean extraction.

Fred. Such commendation would make me vain, my lord, did you not cast in the allay of my extraction.

Lop. There is no condition of life without its cares; and it is the perfection of a man to wear them as easy as he can: this unfortunate duel of my son's does not pass without impression; but since it is past prevention, all my concern is now how he may escape the punishment. If Antonio dies, Felix shall for England. You have been there; what sort of people are the English?

Fred. My lord, the English are, by nature, what the ancient Romans were by discipline, courageous, bold, hardy, and in love with liberty. Liberty is the idol of the English, under whose banner all the nation lists: give but the word for liberty, and straight more armed legions would appear, than France and Philip keep in constant pay.

Lop. I like their principles: who does not wish for freedom in all degrees of life? though common prudence sometimes makes us act against it, as I am now obliged to do; for, I intend to marry my daughter to Don Guzman, whom I expect from Holland every day, whither he went to take possession of a large estate left him by his uncle.

Fred. You will not surely sacrifice the lovely Isabella to age, avarice, and a fool? Pardon the expression, my lord; but my concern for your beauteous daughter transports me beyond that good manners which I ought to pay your lordship's presence.

Lop. I can't deny the justness of the character, Frederick; but you are not insensible what I have suffered by these wars; and he has two things which render him very agreeable to me for a son-in-law—he is rich and well born: as for his being a fool, I don't conceive how that can be any blot in a husband, who is already possessed of a good estate. A poor fool, indeed, is a very scandalous thing, and so are your poor wits, in my opinion, who have nothing to be vain of but the inside of their sculls. Now, for Don Guzman, I know I can rule him as I think fit.—This is acting the politic part, Frederick, without which, it is impossible to keep up the port of this life.

Fred. But have you no consideration for your daughter's welfare, my lord?

Lop. Is a husband of twenty thousand crowns a-year no consideration? Now, I think it a very good consideration.

Fred. One way, my lord. But what will the world say of such a match?

Lop. Sir, I value not the world a button.

Fred. I cannot think your daughter can have any inclination for such a husband.

Lop. There, I believe, you are pretty much in the right, though it is a secret which I never had the curiosity to enquire into, nor, I believe, ever shall. Inclination, quotha! Parents would have a fine time on't, if they consulted their children's inclinations! I'll venture you a wager, that in all the garrison towns in Spain and Portugal during the late war, there was not three women who have not had an inclination for every officer in the whole army; does it, therefore, follow, that their fathers ought to pimp for them? No, no, sir; it is not a father's business to follow his children's inclinations till he makes himself a beggar.

Fred. But this is of another nature, my lord.

Lop. Look ye, sir; I resolve she shall marry Don Guzman the moment he arrives. Though I could not govern my son, I will my daughter, I assure you.

Fred. This match, my lord, is more preposterous than that which you proposed to your son, from whence arose this fatal quarrel. Don Antonio's sister, Elvira, wanted beauty only; but Guzman every thing but——

Lop. Money——and that will purchase every thing; and so adieu. [*Exit.*

Fred. Monstrous! these are the resolutions which destroy the comforts of matrimony. He is rich and well-born; powerful arguments, indeed! could I but add them to the friendship of Don Felix, what might I not hope? But a merchant and a grandee of Spain are inconsistent names. Lissardo! from whence came you?

Enter LISSARDO *in a riding-habit.*

Lis. This letter will inform you, sir.

Fred. I hope your master's safe?

Lis. I left him so; I have another to deliver which requires haste. Your most humble servant, sir. [*Bowing.*

Fred. To Violante, I suppose?

Liss. The same. [*Exit.*

Fred. [*Reads.*] 'Dear Frederick! the two 'chief blessings of this life, are a friend and a 'mistress; to be debarred the sight of those, is 'not to live. I hear nothing of Antonio's death, 'and therefore resolve to venture to thy house 'this evening, impatient to see Violante, and em-'brace my friend. Your's.

FELIX.'

Pray Heaven he comes undiscovered! Ha! Colonel Briton!

Enter COLONEL BRITON *in a riding-habit.*

Col. Frederick, I rejoice to see thee.

Fred. What brought you to Lisbon, colonel?

Col. La fortune de la guerre, as the French say. I have commanded these three last years in Spain, but my country has thought fit to strike up a peace, and give us good Protestants leave to hope for christian burial; so I resolved to take Lisbon in my way home.

Fred. If you are not provided of a lodging, colonel, pray command my house while you stay.

Col. If I were sure I should not be troublesome, I would accept your offer, Frederick.

Fred. So far from trouble, colonel, I shall take it as a particular favour. What have we here?

Col. My footman: this is our country dress, you must know, which, for the honour of Scotland, I make all my servants wear.

Enter GIBBY, *in a highland dress.*

Gib. What maun I de with the horses, and like yer honour? They will tack cald gin they stand in the causeway.

Fred. Oh, I'll take care of them. What, hoa! Vasquez!

Enter VASQUEZ.

Put those horses, which that honest fellow will shew you, into my stable, do you hear, and feed them well.

Vas. Yes, sir.——Sir, by my master's orders, I am, sir, your most obsequious humble servant. Be pleased to lead the way.

Gib. 'Sbleed! gang your gate, sir; and I sall follow ye. Ise tee hungry to feed on compliments. [*Exit.*

Fred. Ha, ha! a comical fellow. Well, how do you like our country, colonel?

Col. Why, faith, Frederick, a man might pass his time agreeably enough within side of a nunnery; but to behold such troops of soft, plump, tender, melting, wishing, nay, willing girls, too, through a damned grate, gives us Britons strong temptations to plunder. Ah, Frederick! your priests are wicked rogues; they immure beauty for their own proper use, and shew it only to the laity to create desires, and inflame account, that they may purchase pardons at a dearer rate.

Fred. I own wenching is something more difficult here than in England, where womens' liberties are subservient to their inclinations, and husbands seem of no effect but to take care of the children which their wives provide.

Col. And does restraint get the better of inclination with your women here? No, I'll be sworn, not even in fourscore. Don't I know the constitution of the Spanish ladies?

Fred. And of all the ladies where you come, colonel; you were ever a man of gallantry.

Col. Ah, Frederick! the kirk half starves us Scotsmen. We are kept so sharp at home, that we feed like cannibals abroad. Hark ye, hast thou never a pretty acquaintance now that thou wouldst consign over to a friend for half an hour, ha?

Fred. Faith, colonel, I am the worst pimp in Christendom; you had better trust to your own luck: the women will soon find you out, I warrant you.

Col. Aye, but it is dangerous foraging in an enemy's country; and since I have some hopes of seeing my own again, I had rather purchase my pleasure than run the hazard of a stiletto in my guts. Egad, I think I must e'en marry, and sacrifice my body for the good of my soul. Wilt thou recommend me to a wife, then; one that is willing to exchange her moidores for English liberty? ha, friend?

Fred. She must be very handsome, I suppose?

Col. The handsomer the better——but be sure she has a nose.

Fred. Aye, aye; and some gold.

Col. Oh, very much gold; I shall never be able to swallow the matrimonial pill, if it be not well gilded.

Fred. Puh! beauty will make it slide down nimbly.

Col. At first, perhaps, it may; but the second or third dose will choke me. I confess, Frederick, women are the prettiest play-things in nature; but gold, substantial gold, gives them the air, the mien, the shape, the grace, and beauty of a goddess.

Fred. And has not gold the same divinity in their eyes, colonel?

Col. Too often—Money is the very god of marriage; the poets dress him in a saffron robe, by which they figure out the golden deity; and his lighted torch blazons those mighty charms which encourage us to list under his banner.

None marry now for love; no, that's a jest:
The self-same bargain serves for wife and beast.

Fred. You are always gay, colonel. Come, shall we take a refreshing glass at my house, and consider what has been said?

Col. I have two or three compliments to discharge for some friends, and then I shall wait on you with pleasure. Where do you live?

Fred. At yon corner-house with the green rails.

Col. In the close of the evening, I will endeavour to kiss your hand! Adieu. [*Exit* COL.

Fred. I shall expect you with impatience.

[*Exit* FRED.

SCENE II.—*A room in* DON LOPEZ's *house.*

Enter ISABELLA, *and* INIS *her maid.*

Inis. For goodness sake, madam, where are you going in this pet?

Isa. Any where to avoid matrimony. The thoughts of a husband are as terrible to me as the sight of a hobgoblin.

Inis. Ay, of an old husband: but if you may choose for yourself, I fancy matrimony would be no such frightful thing to you.

Isa. You are pretty much in the right, Inis: but to be forced into the arms of an idiot, a sneaking, snivelling, drivelling, avaricious fool! who has neither person to please the eye, sense to charm the ear, nor generosity to supply those

defects—Ah, Inis! what pleasant lives women lead in England, where duty wears no fetter but inclination! The custom of our country enslaves us from our very cradles, first to our parents, next to our husbands, and, when Heaven is so kind to rid us of both these, our brothers still usurp authority, and expect a blind obedience from us; so that, maids, wives, or widows, we are little better than slaves to the tyrant, man. Therefore, to avoid their power, I resolve to cast myself into a monastery.

Inis. That is, you'll cut your own throat to avoid another's doing it for you. Ah, madam! those eyes tell me you have no nun's flesh about you. A monastery, quotha!—where you'll wish yourself into the green-sickness in a month.

Isa. What care I? there will be no man to plague me.

Inis. No; nor, what's much worse, to please you, neither—Odslife, madam, you are the first woman that ever despaired in a Christian country ——Were I in your place———

Isa. Why, what would your wisdom do, if you were?

Inis. I'd embark with the first fair wind with all my jewels, and seek my fortune on t'other side the water: no shore can treat you worse than your own. There's ne'er a father in Christendom should make me marry any man against my will.

Isa. I am too great a coward to follow your advice. I must contrive some way to avoid Don Guzman, and yet stay in my own country.

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. Must you so, mistress? but I shall take care to prevent you. [*Aside.*]—Isabella, whither are you going, my child?

Isa. Ha! my father!—To church, sir.

Inis. The old rogue has certainly overheard her. [*Aside.*

Lop. Your devotion must needs be very strong, or your memory very weak, my dear. Why, vespers are over for this night. Come, come; you shall have a better errand to church than to say your prayers there. Don Guzman is arrived in the river, and I expect him ashore to-morrow.

Isa. Ha! to-morrow!

Lop. He writes me word, that his estate in Holland is worth twelve thousand crowns a-year, which, together with what he had before, will make thee the happiest wife in Lisbon.

Isa. And the most unhappy woman in the world. Oh, sir, if I have any power in your heart; if the tenderness of a father be not quite extinct, hear me with patience.

Lop. No objection against the marriage, and I will hear whatsoever thou hast to say.

Isa. That's torturing me on the rack, and forbidding me to groan. Upon my knees, I claim the privilege of flesh and blood. [*Kneels.*

Lop. I grant it; thou shalt have an armful of flesh and blood to-morrow. Flesh and blood, quotha! Heaven forbid I should deny thee flesh and blood, my girl!

Inis. Here's an old dog for you! [*Aside.*

Isa. Do not mistake, sir. The fatal stroke, which separates soul and body, is not more terrible to the thoughts of sinners, than the name of Guzman to my ear.

Lop. Puh, puh! you lie, you lie.

Isa. My frighted heart beats hard against my breast, as if it sought a passage to your feet, to beg you'd change your purpose.

Lop. A very pretty speech, this! if it were turned into blank verse, it would serve for a tragedy. Why, thou hast more wit than I thought thou hadst, child. I fancy this was all *extempore;* I don't believe thou didst ever think one word on't before.

Inis. Yes, but she has, my lord; for I have heard her say the same things a thousand times.

Lop. How, how!—What, do you top your second-hand jests upon your father, hussy, who knows better what's good for you than you do yourself? Remember 'tis your duty to obey.

Isa. [*Rising.*] I never disobeyed before; and I wish I had not reason now; but nature has got the better of my duty, and makes me loathe the the harsh commands you lay.

Lop. Ha, ha! very fine! ha, ha!

Isa. Death itself would be more welcome.

Lop. Are you sure of that?

Isa. I am your daughter, my lord, and can boast as strong a resolution as yourself. I'll die before I'll marry Guzman.

Lop. Say you so? I'll try that presently. [*Draws.*] Here, let me see with what dexterity you can breathe a vein now. [*Offers her his sword.*] The point is pretty sharp—'twill do your business, I warrant you.

Inis. Bless me, sir! What! do you mean to put a sword into the hands of a desperate woman?

Lop. Desperate! ha, ha, ha! you see how desperate she is. What, art thou frighted, little Bell? ha!

Isa. I confess I am startled at your morals, sir.

Lop. Ay, ay, child; thou hadst better take the man; he'll hurt thee the least of the two.

Isa. I shall take neither, sir: Death has many doors; and, when I can live no longer with pleasure, I shall find one to let him in at without your aid.

Lop. Say'st thou so, my dear Bell? Ods, I'm afraid thou art a little lunatic, Bell. I must take care of thee, child. [*Takes hold of her, and pulls out of his pocket a key.*] I shall make bold to secure thee, my dear; I'll see if locks and bars can keep thee till Guzman come. Go, get into your chamber:

There I'll your boasted resolution try,
And see who'll get the better, you or I.

[*Pushes her in, and locks the door.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A room in* DON PEDRO'S *house.*

Enter DONNA VIOLANTE, *reading a letter, and* FLORA *following.*

Flo. WHAT, must that letter be read again?

Vio. Yes, and again, and again, and again; a thousand times again; a letter from a faithful lover can ne'er be read too often; it speaks such kind, such soft, such tender things——

[*Kisses it.*

Flo. But always the same language.

Vio. It does not charm the less for that.

Flo. In my opinion, nothing charms that does not change: and any composition of the four-and-twenty-letters, after the first essay, from the same hand, must be dull, except a bank-note, or a bill of exchange.

Vio. Thy taste is my averson.—[*Reads.*] 'My 'all that's charming, since life's not life, exiled 'from thee, this night shall bring me to thy arms. 'Frederick and thee are all I trust. These six 'weeks' absence, has been, in love's account, six 'hundred years. When it is dark, expect the 'wonted signal at thy window: till when, adieu. 'Thine, more than his own, FELIX.'

Flo. Who would not have said as much to a lady of her beauty, and twenty thousand pounds? ——Were I a man, methinks I could have said a hundred finer things.

Vio. What would you have said?

Flo. I would have compared your eyes to the stars, your teeth to ivory, your lips to coral, your neck to alabaster, your shape to——

Vio. No more of your bombast; truth is the best eloquence in a lover.——What proof remains ungiven of his love? When his father threatened to disinherit him for refusing Don Antonio's sister, from whence sprung this unhappy quarrel, did it shake his love for me? and now, though strict inquiry runs through every place, with large rewards to apprehend him, does he not venture all for me?

Flo. But you know, madam, your father, Don Pedro, designs you for a nun—to be sure, you look very like a nun!—and says your grandfather left you your fortune upon that condition.

Vio. Not without my approbation, girl, when I come to one-and-twenty, as I am informed. But, however, I shall run the risk of that. Go, call in Lissardo.

Flo. Yes, madam. Now for a thousand verbal questions! [*Exit.*

Re-enter with LISSARDO.

Vio. Well, and how do you do, Lissardo?

Lis. Ah, very weary, madam.——'Faith, thou look'st wondrous pretty, Flora. [*Aside to* FLORA.

Vio. How came you?

Lis. En chevalier, madam; upon a hackney jade, which, they told me, formerly belonged to an English colonel; but I should have rather thought she had been bred a good Roman catholic all her lifetime—for she downed on her knees to every stock and stone we came along by.—— My chops water for a kiss; they do, Flora.

[*Aside to* FLORA.

Flo. You'd make one believe you are wondrous fond now.

Lis. Od, if I had you alone, housewife, I'd shew you how fond I would be— [*Aside to* FLO.

Vio. Where did you leave your master?

Lis. At a little farm-house, madam, about five miles off. He'll be at Don Frederick's in the evening——Od, I will so revenge myself of those lips of thine— [*To* FLORA.

Vio. Is he in health?

Flo. Oh, you counterfeit wondrous well.

[*To* LISSARDO.

Lis. No; every body knows I counterfeit very ill. [*To* FLORA.

Vio. How say you? Is Felix ill? What's his distemper? ha!

Lis. A pox on't; I hate to be interrupted.—Love, madam, love——In short, madam, I believe he has thought of nothing but your ladyship ever since he left Lisbon. I am sure he could not, if I may judge of his heart by my own.

[*Looking lovingly upon* FLORA.

Vio. How came you so well acquainted with your master's thoughts, Lissardo?

Lis. By an infallible rule, madam; words are the pictures of the mind, you know: now, to prove he thinks of nothing but you, he talks of nothing but you.—For example, madam; coming from shooting t'other day with a brace of partridges, Lissardo, said he, go bid the cook roast me these Violantes.——I flew into the kitchen, full of thoughts of thee, cried, Here, cook, roast me these Floras. [*To* FLORA.

Flo. Ha, ha! excellent!—You mimic your master, then, it seems?

Lis. I can do every thing as well as my master, you little rogue.—Another time, madam, the priest came to make him a visit; he called out hastily, Lissardo, said he, bring a Violante for my father to sit down on.——Then he often mistook my name, madam, and called me Violante: in short, I heard it so often, that it became as familiar to me as my prayers.

Vio. You live very merrily, then, it seems?

Lis. Oh! exceeding merry, madam.

[*Kisses* FLORA'S *hand.*

Vio. Ha! exceeding merry: had you treats and balls?

Lis. Oh! yes, yes, madam, several.

Flo. You are mad, Lissardo; you don't mind what my lady says to you. [*Aside to* LISSARDO.

Vio. Ha! balls—Is he so merry in my absence? And did your master dance, Lissardo?

Lis. Dance, madam! where, madam?

Vio. Why, at those balls you speak of.

Lis. Balls! what balls, madam?

Vio. Why, sure you are in love, Lissardo! did not you say, but now, you had balls where you have been?

Lis. Balls, madam! Odslife, I ask your pardon, madam! I, I, I, had mislaid some wash-balls of my master's t'other day; and, because I could not think where I had laid them, just when he asked for them, he very fairly broke my head, madam; and now, it seems, I can think of nothing else. Alas! he dance, madam! No, no, poor gentleman! he is as melancholy as an unbraced drum.

Vio. Poor Felix! There, wear that ring for your master's sake, and let him know I shall be ready to receive him. [*Exit* VIOLANTE.

Lis. I shall, madam.——[*Puts on the ring.*] Methinks, a diamond ring is a vast addition to the little finger of a gentleman.

[*Admiring his hand.*

Flo. That ring must be mine.—Well, Lissardo, what haste you make to pay off arrears now! Look how the fellow stands!

Lis. Egad, methinks I have a very pretty hand—and very white—and the shape!—Faith, I never minded it so much before—In my opinion, it is a very fine shaped hand—and becomes a diamond ring as well as the first grandee's in Portugal.

Flo. The man's transported! Is this your love, this your impatience?

Lis. [*Takes snuff.*] Now, in my mind—I take snuff with a very jantee air——Well, I am persuaded I want nothing but a coach and a title to make me a very fine gentleman. [*Struts about.*

Flo. Sweet Mr Lissardo! [*Curtsying.*] if I may presume to speak to you, without affronting your little finger——

Lis. Odso, madam, I ask your pardon——Is it to me, or to the ring——you direct your discourse, madam?

Flo. Madam! Good lack! how much a diamond ring improves one!

Lis. Why, though I say it—I can carry myself as well as any body—But what wert thou going to say, child?

Flo. Why, I was going to say, that I fancy you had best let me keep that ring: it will be a very pretty wedding-ring, Lissardo, would it not?

Lis. Humph! ah! But—but—but—I believe I shan't marry yet awhile.

Flo. You shan't, you say!—Very well! I suppose you design that ring for Inis?

Lis. No, no; I never bribe an old acquaintance—Perhaps I might let it sparkle in the eyes of a stranger a little, till we come to a right understanding——but, then, like all other mortal things, it would return from whence it came.

Flo. Insolent!—is that your manner of dealing?

Lis. With all but thee—Kiss me, you little rogue, you. [*Hugging her.*

Flo. Little rogue! Prithee, fellow, don't be so familiar; [*Pushing him away.*] if I mayn't keep your ring, I can keep my kisses.

Lis. You can, you say! spoke with the air of a chambermaid.

Flo. Replied with the spirit of a serving man.

Lis. Prithee, Flora, don't let you and I fall out; I am in a merry humour, and shall certainly fall in somewhere.

Flo. What care I where you fall in!

Enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Why do you keep Lissardo so long, Flora, when you don't know how soon my father may awake? his afternoon naps are never long.

Flo. Had Don Felix been with her, she would not have thought the time long. These ladies consider nobody's wants but their own. [*Aside.*

Vio. Go, go; let him out, and bring a candle.

Flo. Yes, madam.

Lis. I fly, madam. [*Exeunt* LIS. *and* FLORA.

Vio. The day draws in, and night, the lover's friend, advances—night, more welcome than the sun to me, because it brings my love.

Flo. [*Shrieks within.*] Ah, thieves, thieves! Murder, Murder!

Vio. [*Shrieks.*] Ah! defend me, Heaven! What do I hear? Felix is certainly pursued, and will be taken.

Enter FLORA, *running.*

Vio. How now? why dost stare so? Answer me quickly; what's the matter?

Flo. Oh, madam! as I was letting out Lissardo, a gentleman rushed between him and I, struck down my candle, and is bringing a dead person in his arms into our house.

Vio. Ha! a dead person! Heaven grant it does not prove my Felix!

Flo. Here they are, madam.

Vio. I'll retire till you discover the meaning of this accident. [*Exit.*

Enter COLONEL, *with* ISABELLA *in his arms; sets her down in a chair, and addresses himself to* FLORA.

Col. Madam, the necessity this lady was under of being conveyed into some house with speed and secrecy, will, I hope, excuse any indecency I might be guilty of in pressing so rudely into this—I am an entire stranger to her name and circumstances—would I were so to her beauty, too. [*Aside.*] I commit her, madam, to your care; and fly to make her retreat secure, if the street be clear: permit me to return, and learn, from her own mouth, if I can be further serviceable. Pray, madam, how is the lady of this house called?

Flo. Violante, signior——He is a handsome cavalier, and promises well. [*Aside.*

Col. Are you she, madam?

Flo. Only her woman, signior.

Col. Your humble servant, mistress. Pray, be careful of the lady.——

[*Gives her two moidores, and exit.*

Flo. Two moidores! Well, he is a generous fellow. This is the only way to make one careful. I find all countries understand the constitution of a chambermaid.

Enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Was you distracted, Flora! to tell my name to a man you never saw! Unthinking wench! who knows what this may turn to?—— What, is the lady dead? Ah! defend me, Heaven! 'tis Isabella, sister to my Felix. What has befallen her? Pray Heaven he's safe.—Run and fetch some cold water.—Stay, stay, Flora.—— Isabella, friend, speak to me; Oh! speak to me, or I shall die with apprehension!

Flo. See, she revives!

Isa. Oh! hold, my dearest father! do not force me; indeed, I cannot love him.

Vio. How wild she talks!——

Isa. Ha! where am I?

Vio. With one as sensible of thy pain, as thou thyself canst be.

Isa. Violante! what kind star preserved and lodged me here?

Flo. It was a terrestrial star, called a man, madam; pray Jupiter he proves a lucky one!

Isa. Oh! I remember now. Forgive me, dear Violante! my thought ran so much upon the danger I escaped, I forgot.

Vio. May I not know your story?

Isab. Thou are no stranger to one part of it. I have often told thee, that my father designed to sacrifice me to Don Guzman, who, it seems, is just returned from Holland, and expected ashore to-morrow, the day that he has set to celebrate our nuptials. Upon my refusing to obey him, he locked me into my chamber, vowing to keep me there till he arrived, and force me to consent. I know my father to be positive, never to be won from his design; and having no hope left me to escape the marriage, I leaped from the window into the street.

Vio. You have not hurt yourself, I hope?

Isa. No; a gentleman, passing by accident, caught me in his arms: at first, my fright made me apprehend it was my father, till he assured me to the contrary.

Flo. He is a very fine gentlemen, I promise you, madam, and a well-bred man I warrant him. I think I never saw a grandee put his hand into his pocket with a better air in my whole life-time; then he opened his purse with such a grace, that nothing but his manner of presenting me with the gold could equal.

Vio. There is but one common road to the heart of a servant, and 'tis impossible for a generous person to mistake it.——Go, leave us, Flora.——But how came you hither, Isabella?

Isa. I know not; I desired the stranger to convey me to the next monastery; but, ere I reached the door, I saw, or fancied that I saw, Lissardo, my brother's man; and the thought that his master might not be far off, flung me into a swoon; which is all that I can remember.— Ha! What's here? [*Takes up a letter.*] 'For 'Colonel Briton, to be left at the post-house in 'Lisbon.' This must be dropt by the stranger which brought me hither.

Vio. Thou art fallen into the hands of a soldier; take care he does not lay thee under contribution, girl.

Isa. I find he is a gentleman; and if he is but unmarried, I could be content to follow him all the world over.—But I shall never see him more, I fear. [*Sighs and pauses.*

Vio. What makes you sigh, Isabella?

Isa. The fear of falling into my father's clutches again.

Vio. Can I be serviceable to you?

Isa. Yes, if you conceal me two or three days.

Vio. You command my house and secresy.

Isa. I thank you, Violante. I wish you would oblige me with Mrs Flora a while.

Vio. I'll send her to you.—I must watch if dad be still asleep, or here will be no room for Felix. [*Exit.*

Isa. Well, I don't know what ails me; methinks I wish I could find this stranger out.

Enter FLORA.

Flo. Does your ladyship want me, madam?

Isa. Ay, Mrs Flora: I resolve to make you my confidante.

Flo. I shall endeavour to discharge my duty, madam.

Isa. I doubt it not, and desire you to accept this as a token of my gratitude.

Flo. Oh, dear Seniora! I should have been your humble servant without a fee.

Isa. I believe it—But to the purpose——Do you think, if you saw the gentleman who brought me hither, you should know him again?

Flo. From a thousand, madam; I have an excellent memory, where a handsome man is concerned. When he went away, he said he would return again immediately. I admire he comes not.

Isa. Here, did you say? You rejoice me—— though I'll not see him, if he comes. Could not you contrive to give him a letter?

Flo. With the air of a duenna——

Isa. Not in this house——you must veil and follow him——He must not know it comes from me.

Flo. What, do you take me for a novice in love affairs? Though I have not practised the art since I have been in Donna Violante's service, yet I have not lost the theory of a chambermaid—Do you write the letter and leave the

rest to me.———Here, here, here's pen, ink, and paper.

Isa. I'll do it in a minute.

[*Sits down to write.*

Flo. So! this is a business after my own heart.——Love always takes care to reward his labourers, and Great Britain seems to be his favourite country.——Oh! I long to see the other two moidores with a British air—Methinks there's a grace peculiar to that nation in making a present.

Isa. So, I have done. Now, if he does but find this house again!

Flo. If he should not—I warrant I'll find him, if he's in Lisbon; for I have a strong prepossession that he has two moidores as good as ever was told. [*Puts the letter into her bosom.*

Enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Flora, watch my papa; he's fast asleep in his study: if you find him stir, give me notice. [*Colonel taps at the window.*] Hark, I hear Felix at the window! admit him instantly, and then to your post. *Exit* FLORA.

Isa. What say you, Violante! is my brother come?

Vio. It is his signal at the window.

Isa. [*Kneels.*] Oh, Violante! I conjure you by all the love thou bearest to Felix, by thy own generous nature, nay, more, by that unspotted virtue thou art mistress of, do not discover to my brother I am here.

Vio. Contrary to your desire, be assured I never shall. But where's the danger?

Isa. Art thou born in Lisbon, and ask that question! He'll think his honour blemished by my disobedience, and would restore me to my father, or kill me; therefore, dear, dear girl!—

Vio. Depend upon my friendship; nothing shall draw the secret from these lips; not even Felix, though at the hazard of his love. I hear him coming; retire into that closet.

Isa. Remember, Violante, upon thy promise my very life depends. [*Exit.*

Vio. When I betray thee, may I share thy fate!

Enter FELIX.

My Felix, my everlasting love!

[*Runs into his arms.*

Fel. My life! my soul! my Violante!

Vio. What hazards dost thou run for me? Oh, how shall I requite thee?

Fel. If during this tedious painful exile, thy thoughts have never wandered from thy Felix, thou hast made me more than satisfaction.

Vio. Can there be room within this heart for any but thyself? No; if the god of love were lost to all the rest of human-kind, thy image would secure him in my breast: I am all truth, all love, all faith, and know no jealous fears.

Fel. My heart's the proper sphere where love resides: could he quit that, he would be no where found; and yet, Violante, I'm in doubt.

Vio. Did I ever give thee cause to doubt, my Felix?

Fel. True love has many fears, and Fear as many eyes as Fame; yet sure, I think they see no fault in thee. [*Colonel taps again.*] What's that?

[*Taps again.*

Vio. What? I heard nothing. [*Again.*

Fel. Ha! What means this signal at your window?

Vio. Somewhat perhaps, in passing by, might accidentally hit it; it can be nothing else.

Col. [*Within.*] Hist, hist! Donna Violante! Donna Violante!

Fel. They use your name by accident too, do they, madam?

Enter FLORA.

Flo. There is a gentleman at the window, madam, whom I fancy to be him who brought Isabella hither. Shall I admit him?

[*Aside to* VIOLANTE.

Vio. Admit distraction rather! Thou art the cause of this, unthinking wretch!

[*Aside to* FLORA.

Fel. What, has Mrs Scout brought you fresh intelligence? Death! I'll know the bottom of this immediately. [*Offers to go.*

Flo. Scout! I scorn your words, senior.

Vio. Nay, nay, nay! you must not leave me.

[*Runs and catches hold of him.*

Fel. Oh! 'tis not fair not to answer the gentleman, madam; it is none of his fault that his visit proves unseasonable. Pray let me go; my presence is but a restraint upon you.

[*Struggles to get from her. The Col. puts again.*]

Vio. Was ever accident so mischievous!

[*Aside.*

Flo. It must be the colonel——Now to deliver my letter to him!

[*Exit. The* COL. *taps louder.*

Fel. Hark! he grows impatient at your delay.—Why do you hold the man whose absence would oblige you? Pray, let me go, madam. Consider the gentleman wants you at the window. Confusion! [*Struggles still.*

Vio. It is not me he wants.

Fel. Death! not you! Is there another of your name in the house? But come on, convince me of the truth of what you say; open the window; if his business does not lie with you, your conversation may be heard. This, and only this, can take off my suspicion.—What, do you pause? Oh, guilt, guilt!—Have I caught you? Nay, then, I'll leap the balcony. If I remember, this way leads to it. [*Breaks from her, and goes to the door where* ISABELLA *is.*

Vio. Oh, heaven! what shall I do now! Hold, hold, hold, hold; not for the world—you enter

there. Which way shall I preserve his sister from his knowledge? [*Aside.*

Fel. What, have I touched you? Do you fear your lover's life?

Vio. I fear for none but you.—For goodness' sake, do not speak so loud, my Felix! If my father hear you, I am lost for ever; that door opens into his apartment.——What shall I do, if he enters? There he finds his sister.—If he goes out, he'll quarrel with the stranger.——Felix, Felix!———Nay, do not struggle to be gone, my Felix.——If I open the window, he may discover the whole intrigue; and yet, of all evils, we ought to chuse the least.——Your curiosity shall be satisfied. [*Goes to the window, and throws up the sash.*] Whoe'er you are, that, with such insolence, dare use my name, and give the neighbourhood pretence to reflect upon my conduct, I charge you instantly to be gone; or expect the treatment you deserve.

Col. I ask pardon, madam, and will obey: but when I left this house to-night———

Fel. Good!

Vio. It is, most certainly, the stranger. What will be the event of this, Heaven knows! [*Aside.*] You are mistaken in the house, I suppose, sir?

Fel. No, no; he's not mistaken.——Pray, madam, let the gentleman go on.

Vio. Wretched misfortune! Pray, begone, sir; I know of no business you have here.

Col. I wish I did not know it neither——But this house contains my soul; then, can you blame my body for hovering about it?

Fel. Excellent!

Vio. Distraction! he will infallibly discover Isabella.—I tell you again you are mistaken; however, for your own satisfaction, call to-morrow.

Fel. Matchless impudence! an assignation before my face!—No, he shall not live to meet your wishes.

[*Takes out a pistol, and goes towards the window. She catches hold of him.*

Vio. Ah! [*Shrieks.*] Hold, I conjure you!

Col. To-morrow's an age, madam! may I not be admitted to-night?

Vio. If you be a gentleman, I command your absence.——Unfortunate! what will my stars do with me? [*Aside.*

Col. I have done——only this——be careful of my life; for it is in your keeping.

[*Exit from the window.*

Fel. Pray, observe the gentleman's request, madam. [*Walking off from her.*

Vio. I am all confusion. [*Aside.*

Fel. You are all truth, all love, all faith! oh, thou all woman!——How have I been deceived?———'Sdeath! could you not have imposed upon me for this one night? Could neither my faithful love, nor the hazard I have run to see you, make me worthy to be cheated on? Oh, thou———

Vio. Can I bear this from you! [*Weeps.*

Fel. [*Repeats.*] When I left this house to-night——To-night! the devil! return so soon!

Vio. Oh, Isabella! what hast thou involved me in! [*Aside.*

Fel. [*Repeats.*[This house contains my soul.

Vio. Yet I resolve to keep the secret. [*Aside.*

Fel. [*Repeats.*] Be careful of my life; for it is in your keeping.——Damnation!——How ugly she appears! [*Looking at her.*

Vio. Do not look so sternly on me; but believe me, Felix, I have not injured you; nor am I false.

Fel. Not false! not injured me! Oh, Violante! lost and abandoned to thy vice! Not false! Oh, monstrous!

Vio. Indeed, I am not.—There is a cause which I must not reveal.——Oh, think, how far honour can oblige your sex—then allow a woman may be bound by the same rule to keep a secret.

Fel. Honour! what hast thou to do with honour, thou that canst admit plurality of lovers? A secret! ha, ha, ha! his affairs are wondrous safe, who trusts his secret to a woman's keeping. But you need give yourself no trouble about clearing this point, madam; for you are become so indifferent to me, that your truth and falsehood are the same.

Vio. My love! [*Offers to take his hand.*

Fel. My torment! [*Turns from her.*

Flo. So, I have delivered my letter to the colonel, and received my fee. [*Aside.*] Madam, your father bade me see what noise that was.—For goodness sake, sir, why do you speak so loud?

Fel. I understand my cue, mistress; my absence is necessary; I'll oblige you.

[*Going, she takes hold of him.*

Vio. Oh, let me undeceive you first!

Fel. Impossible!

Vio. 'Tis very possible, if I durst.

Fel. Durst! ha, ha, ha! Durst, quotha!

Vio. But another time, I'll tell thee all.

Fel. Nay, now or never———

Vio. Now it cannot be.

Fel. Then it shall never be—Thou most ungrateful of thy sex, farewell!

[*Breaks from her, and exit.*

Vio. Oh, exquisite trial of my friendship! Yet, not even this shall draw the secret from me.

That I'll preserve, let fortune frown or smile;
And trust to love my love to reconcile. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A chamber in* DON LOPEZ'S *house.*

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. Was ever man thus plagued? Odsheart, I could swallow my dagger for madness. I know not what to think: sure Frederick had no hand in her escape.——She must get out of the window; and she could not do that, without a ladder; and who could bring it to her but him? Ay, it must be so. The dislike he shewed to Don Guzman, in our discourse to-day, confirms my suspicion; and I will charge him home with it. Sure children were given me for a curse! Why, what innumerable misfortunes attend us parents! when we have employed our whole care to educate and bring our children up to years of maturity, just when we expect to reap the fruits of our labour, a man shall, in the tinkling of a bell, see one hanged, and t'other whored. This graceless baggage!—But I'll to Frederick immediately; I'll take the Alguazil with me, and search his house; and if I find her, I'll use her——by St Anthony, I don't know how I'll use her!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Street.*

Enter COLONEL *with* ISABELLA'S *letter in his hand, and* GIBBY *following.*

Col. Well, though I could not see my fair incognita, Fortune, to make me amends, has flung another intrigue in my way. Oh, how I love these pretty, kind, coming females, that won't give a man the trouble of racking his invention to deceive them.——Oh, Portugal! thou dear garden of pleasure—where love drops down his mellow fruit, and every bough bends to our hands, and seems to cry, Come, pull, and eat! how deliciously a man lives here, without fear of the stool of repentance!—This letter I received from a lady in a veil——some duenna, some necessary implement of Cupid, I suppose. The style is frank and easy; I hope, like her that writ it. [*Reads.*] 'Sir, I have seen your person, and like 'it;'—very concise!—'and if you'll meet me at 'four o'clock in the morning, upon the *Terriero* 'de passa, half an hour's conversation will let me 'into your mind.'—Ha, ha, ha! a philosophical wench! This is the first time I ever knew a woman had any business with the mind of a man!—'If your intellects answer your outward ap-'pearance, the adventure may not displease you. 'I expect you'll not attempt to see my face, nor 'offer any thing unbecoming the gentleman I 'take you for.'——Humph, the gentleman she takes me for! I hope she takes me to be flesh and blood, and then I'm sure I shall do nothing unbecoming a gentleman. Well, if I must not see her face, it shall go hard if I don't know where she lives.——Gibby!

Gib. Here, an like yer honour.

Col. Follow me at a good distance; do you hear, Gibby?

Gib. In troth dee I, weel eneugh, sir.

Col. I am to meet a lady upon the *Terriero de passa.*

Gib. The deel an mine eyn gin I ken her, sir.

Col. But you will, when you come there, sirrah.

Gib. Like eneugh, sir; I have as sharp an eye tull a bonny lass, as ere a lad in aw Scotland. And what mun I dee wi' her, sir?

Col. Why if she and I part, you must watch her home, and bring me word where she lives.

Gib. In troth sall I, sir, gin the deel tak her not.

Col. Come along, then; it is pretty near the time.—I like a woman that rises early to pursue her inclination.

Thus we improve the pleasures of the day,
While tasteless mortals sleep their time away.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* FREDERICK'S *house.*

Enter INIS *and* LISSARDO.

Lis. Your lady run away, and you know not whither, say you?

Inis. She never greatly cared for me, after finding you and I together. But you are very grave, methinks, Lissardo.

Lis. [*Looking on the ring.*] Not at all—I have some thoughts, indeed, of altering my course of living: there is a critical minute in every man's life, which if he can but lay hold of, he may make his fortune.

Inis. Ha! what do I see? a diamond ring! Where the deuce had he that ring?——You have got a very pretty ring there, Lissardo?

Lis. Ay, the trifle is pretty enough——but the lady who gave it to me is a *bona roba* in beauty, I assure you. [*Cocks his hat, and struts.*

Inis. I can't bear this.——The lady! what lady, pray?

Lis. O fy! there's a question to ask a gentleman!

Inis. A gentleman! why, the fellow's spoiled! Is this your love for me? Ungrateful man! you'll break my heart; so you will. [*Bursts into tears.*

Liss. Poor tender-hearted fool!——

Inis. If I knew who gave you that ring, I'd tear her eyes out; so I would. [*Sobs.*

Lis. So, now, the jade wants a little coaxing. Why, what dost weep for now, my dear? ha!

Inis. I suppose Flora gave you that ring; but I'll——

Lis. No; the devil take me if she did! you make me swear now.——So, they are all for the ring; but I shall bob them.——I did but joke; the ring is none of mine; it is my master's; I am to give it to be new set, that's all; therefore, pr'ythee, dry thy eyes, and kiss me; come.

Enter FLORA.

Inis. And do you really speak truth now?

Lis. Why, do you doubt it?

Flo. So, so; very well! I thought there was an intrigue between him and Inis, for all he has forsworn it so often. [*Aside.*

Inis. Nor ha'nt you seen Flora since you came to town?

Flo. Ha! how dares she name my name? [*Aside.*

Lis. No, by this kiss I ha'nt. [*Kisses her.*

Flo. Here's a dissembling varlet! [*Aside.*

Inis. Nor don't you love her at all?

Lis. Love the devil! Why, did I not always tell thee she was my aversion?

Flo. Did you so, villain? [*Strikes him a box on the ear.*

Lis. Zounds, she here! I have made a fine spot of work on't. [*Aside.*

Inis. What's that for? ha! [*Brushes up to her.*

Flo. I shall tell you by and by, Mrs Frippery, if you don't get about your business.

Inis. Who do you call Frippery, Mrs Trollop? —Pray get about your business, if you go to that. I hope you pretend to no right and title here?

Lis. What the devil! do they take me for an acre of land, that they quarrel about right and title to me? [*Aside.*

Flo. Pray, what right have you, mistress, to ask that question?

Inis. No matter for that; I can show a better title to him than you, I believe.

Flo. What, has he given thee nine months earnest for a living title? ha, ha!

Inis. Don't fling your flaunting jests to me, Mrs Boldface, for I won't take them, I assure you.

Lis. So! now I am as great as the famed Alexander. But, my dear Statira and Roxana, don't exert yourselves so much about me. Now, I fancy if you would agree lovingly together, I might, in a modest way, satisfy both your demands upon me.

Flo. You satisfy! No, sirrah; I am not to be satisfied so soon as you think, perhaps.

Inis. No, nor I, neither.—What! do you make no difference between us?

Flo. You pitiful fellow you! What! you fancy, I warrant, I gave myself the trouble of dogging you out of love to your filthy person; but you are mistaken, sirrah—it was to detect your treachery.——How often have you sworn to me, that you hated Inis, and only carried fair for the good cheer she gave you; but that you could never like a woman with crooked legs, you said?

Inis. How, how, sirrah? crooked legs! Ods, I could find in my heart——

[*Snatching up her petticoat a little.*

Lis. Here's a lying young jade now! pr'ythee, my dear, moderate thy passion. [*Coaxingly.*

Inis. I'd have you to know, sirrah, my legs were never——Your master, I hope, understands legs better than you do, sirrah. [*Passionately.*

Lis. My master! so, so! [*Shaking his head, and winking.*

Flo. I am glad I have done some mischief, however. [*Aside.*

Lis. [*To* INIS.] Art thou really so foolish to mind what an enraged woman says? Don't you see she does it on purpose to part you and I?—[*Runs to* FLORA]. Could not you find the joke, without putting yourself in a passion, you silly girl you? Why, I saw you follow us plain enough, mun, and said all this, that you might not go back with only your labour for your pains.—But you are a revengeful young slut though, I tell you that; but come, kiss and be friends.

Flo. Don't think to coax me; hang your kisses!

Fel. [*Within.*] Lissardo!

Lis. Ods-heart, here's my master! The devil take both these jades for me! What shall I do with them?

Inis. Ha! 'tis Don Felix's voice! I would not have him find me here with his footman for the world. [*Aside.*

Fel. [*Within.*] Why, Lissardo, Lissardo!

Lis. Coming sir. What a pox will you do!

Flo. Bless me, which way shall I get out?

Lis. Nay, nay, you must e'en set your quarrel aside, and be content to be mewed up in this clothes-press together, or stay where you are and face it out—there is no help for it.

Flo. Put me any where rather than that; come, come; let me in.

[*He opens the press, and she goes in.*

Inis. I'll see her hanged before I'll go into the place where she is.—I'll trust fortune with my deliverance. Here us'd to be a pair of back stairs, I'll try to find them out. [*Exit* INIS.

Enter FELIX *and* FREDERICK.

Fel. Was you asleep, sirrah, that you did not hear me call?

Lis. I did hear you, and answered you I was coming, sir.

Fel. Go, get the horses ready; I'll leave Lisbon to-night, never to see it more.

Lis. Hey-day! what's the matter now? [*Exit* LISSARDO.

Fred. Pray, tell me, Don Felix, what has ruffled your temper thus?

Fel. A woman—Oh, friend! who can name woman, and forget inconstancy!

Fred. This, from a person of mean education, were excuseable; such low suspicions have their source from vulgar conversation: men of your

politer taste never rashly censure.—Come, this is some groundless jealousy.—Love raises many fears.

Fel. No, no; my ears conveyed the truth into my heart, and reason justifies my anger. Oh, my friend! Violante's false, and I have nothing left but thee in Lisbon which can make me wish ever to see it more, except revenge upon my rival, of whom I'm ignorant. Oh, that some miracle would reveal him to me, that I might, through his heart, punish her infidelity!

Enter LISSARDO.

Lis. Oh, sir! here's your father, Don Lopez, coming up.

Fel. Does he know that I am here?

Lis. I can't tell, sir: he ask'd for Don Frederick.

Fred. Did he see you?

Lis. I believe not, sir; for as soon as I saw him I ran back to give my master notice.

Fel. Keep out of his sight then—and dear Frederick, permit me to retire into the next room; for I know the old gentleman will be very much displeased at my return without his leave.

[*Exit* FELIX.

Fred. Quick, quick; begone, he is here.

Enter Don LOPEZ, *speaking as he enters.*

Lop. Mr Alguazil, wait you without, till I call for you. Frederick, an affair brings me here—which—requires privacy—so that, if you have any body within ear-shot, pray order them to retire.

Fred. We are private, my lord; speak freely.

Lop. Why then, sir, I must tell you, that you had better have pitched upon any man in Portugal to have injured than myself.

Fel. [*Peeping.*] What means my father?

Fred. I understand you not, my lord.

Lop. Though I am old, I have a son—Alas! why name I him? He knows not the dishonour of my house.

Fel. I am confounded! The dishonour of his house!

Fred. Explain yourself, my lord: I am not conscious of any dishonourable action to any man, much less to your lordship.

Lop. 'Tis false; you have debauched my daughter.

Fel. Debauched my sister! impossible! he could not, durst not, be that villain.

Fred. My lord, I scorn so foul a charge.

Lop. You have debauched her duty at least; therefore, instantly restore her to me, or, by St Anthony, I'll make you.

Fred. Restore her, my lord! where shall I find her?

Lop. I have those that will swear she is here in your house.

Fel. Ha! in this house?

Fred. You are misinformed, my lord! Upon my reputation, I have not seen Donna Isabella since the absence of Don Felix.

Lop. Then pray, sir—if I am not too inquisitive, what motive had you for those objections you made against her marriage with don Guzman yesterday?

Fred. The disagreeableness of such a match, I feared, would give your daughter cause to curse her duty, if she complied with your demands; that was all, my lord.

Lop. And so you helped her through the window, to make her disobey?

Fel. Ha, my sister gone! Oh, scandal to our blood!

Fred. This is insulting me, my lord, when I assure you I have neither seen nor know any thing of your daughter.——If she is gone, the contrivance was her own, and you may thank your rigour for it.

Lop. Very well, sir: however, my rigour shall make bold to search your house. Here, call in the Alguazil——

Flo. [*Peeping.*] The Alguazil! What, in the name of wonder, will become of me?

Fred. The Alguazil! My lord, you'll repent this.

Enter ALGUAZIL, *and Attendants.*

Lop. No, sir; 'tis you that will repent it. I charge you in the king's name to assist me in finding my daughter. Be sure you leave no part of the house unsearched. Come, follow me.

[*Gets towards the door where* FELIX *is:* FREDERICK *draws, and plants himself before the door.*

Fred. Sir, I must first know by what authority you pretend to search my house before you enter here.

Alg. How, sir! dare you presume to draw your sword upon the representative of majesty? I am, sir, I am his majesty's alguazil, and the very quintessence of authority—therefore, put up your sword, or I shall order you to be knocked down—for know, sir, the breath of an alguazil is as dangerous as the breath of a demi-culverin.

Lop. She is certainly in that room, by his guarding the door. If he disputes your authority, knock him down, I say.

Fred. I shall shew you some sport first. The woman you look for is not here; but there is something in this room which I'll preserve from your sight at the hazard of my life.

Lop. Enter, I say; nothing but my daughter can be there. Force his sword from him.

[FELIX *comes out, and joins* FREDERICK.

Fel. Villains, stand off! assassinate a man in his own house!

Lop. Oh, oh, misericordia! what do I see? my son!

Alg. Ha, his son! Here's five hundred pounds good, my brethren, if Antonio dies; and that's in

the surgeon's power—and he's in love with my daughter, you know—so seize him——Don Felix, I command you to surrender yourself into the hands of justice, in order to raise me and my posterity; and, in consideration you lose your head to gain me five hundred pounds, I'll have your generosity recorded on your tombstone—at my own proper cost and charge—I hate to be ungrateful.

Lop. Hold, hold! Oh that ever I was born!

Fred. Did I not tell you, you would repent, my lord? What, hoa! within there.

Enter Servants.

Arm yourselves, and let not a man in nor out but Felix.

Fel. Generous Frederick!

Fred. Look ye, alguazil, when you would betray my friend for filthy lucre, I shall no more regard you as an officer of justice, but, as a thief and robber, thus resist you.

Fel. Come on, sir; we'll shew you play for the five hundred pounds.

Alg. Fall on; seize the money, right or wrong, ye rogues. [*They fight.*

Lop. Hold, hold, alguazil! I'll give you the five hundred pounds, that is, my bond to pay upon Antonio's death, and twenty pistoles, however things go, for you and these honest fellows to drink my health.

Alg. Say you so, my lord? Why look ye, my lord; I bear the young gentleman no ill will, my lord. If I get but the five hundred pounds, my lord——why look ye, my lord; 'tis the same thing to me, whether your son be hanged or not, my lord.

Fel. Scoundrels!

Lop. Aye, well, thou art a good-natured fellow, that's the truth on't. Come, then, we'll to the tavern, and sign and seal this minute. Oh, Felix! why wouldst thou serve me thus? But I cannot upbraid thee now, nor have I time to talk. Be careful of thyself, or thou wilt break my heart.

[*Exeunt* LOPEZ, *alguazil, and attendants.*

Fel. Now, Frederick, though I ought to thank you for your care of me, yet till I am satisfied as to my father's accusation, for I overheard it all, I can't return the acknowledgments I owe you. Know you aught relating to my sister?

Fred. I hope my faith and truth are known to you——and here, by both I swear, I am ignorant of every thing relating to your father's charge.

Fel. Enough, I do believe thee. Oh Fortune! where will thy malice end?

Enter VASQUEZ.

Vas. Sir, I bring you joyful news.

Fel. What's the matter?

Vas. I am told that Don Antonio is out of danger, and now in the palace.

Fel. I wish it be true; then I'm at liberty to watch my rival, and pursue my sister. Prithee, Frederick, inform thyself of the truth of this report.

Fred. I will, this minute. Do you hear? let nobody in to Don Felix till my return.

[*Exit* FRED.

Vas. I'll observe, sir. [*Exit* VAS.

Flo. [*Peeping.*] They have almost frighted me out of my wits, I'm sure. Now Felix is alone, I have a good mind to pretend I came with a message from my lady; but how then shall I say I came into the cupboard?

Enter VASQUEZ, *seeming to oppose the entrance of somebody.*

Vas. I tell you, madam, Don Felix is not here.

Vio. [*Within.*] I tell you, sir, he is here, and I will see him.

Fel. What noise is that?

Vio. [*Breaking in.*] You are as difficult of access, sir, as a first minister of state.

Flo. My stars, my lady here!

[*Shuts the press close.*

Fel. If your visit was designed for Frederick, madam, he is abroad.

Vio. No, sir, the visit is to you.

Fel. You are very punctual in your ceremonies, madam.

Vio. Though I did not come to return your visit, but to take that which your civility ought to have brought me.

Fel. If my eyes, my ears, and my understanding lied, then I am in your debt; else not, madam.

Vio. I will not charge them with a term so gross, to say they lied; but call it a mistake; nay, call it any thing to excuse my Felix.—— Could I, think ye, could I put off my pride so far, poorly to dissemble a passion which I did not feel, or seek a reconciliation with what I did not love? Do but consider, if I had entertained another, should I not rather embrace this quarrel, pleased with the occasion that rid me of your visits, and gave me freedom to enjoy the choice which you think I have made? Have I any interest in thee but my love? or am I bound by aught but inclination to submit and follow thee?—No law, whilst single, binds us to obey—but your sex are, by nature and education, obliged to pay a deference to all womankind.

Fel. These are fruitless arguments. 'Tis most certain thou wert dearer to these eyes than all that Heaven e'er gave to charm the sense of man; but I would rather tear them out than suffer them to delude my reason and enslave my peace.

Vio. Can you love without esteem? and where is the esteem for her you still suspect? Oh, Felix, there is a delicacy in love, which equals even a religious faith! True love never doubts the object it adores, and sceptics there will disbelieve their sight.

Fel. Your notions are too refined for mine, madam.

Enter VASQUEZ.

How now, sirrah, what do you want?

Vas. Only my master's cloak out of this press, sir; that's all.

Fel. Make haste, then.

Vas. [*Opens the press, sees* FLORA, *and roars out.*] Oh, the devil, the devil! [*Exit.*

Flo. Discovered! nay, then, legs befriend me. [*Runs out.*

Vio. Ha! a woman concealed! very well, Felix.

Fel. A woman in the press!

Enter LISSARDO.

How the devil came a woman there, sirrah?

Lis. What shall I say now?

Vio. Now, Lissardo, shew your wit to bring your master off.

Lis. Off, madam——Nay, nay, nay—there, there needs no great wit to, to, to bring them off, madam; for she did, and she did not come, as, as, as, a, a, a, man may say directly to, to, to, to, to speak with my master, madam.

Vio. I see by your stammering, Lissardo, that your invention is at a very low ebb.

Fel. 'Sdeath! rascal, speak without hesitation, and the truth, too, or I shall stick my spado in your guts.

Vio. No, no; your master mistakes; he would not have you speak the truth.

Fel. Madam, my sincerity wants no excuse.

Lis. I am so confounded between one and the other, that I cannot think of a lie. [*Aside.*

Fel. Sirrah, fetch me this woman back instantly—I'll know what business she has here.

Vio. Not a step; your master shall not be put to the blush. Come, a truce, Felix. Do you ask me no more questions about the window, and I'll forgive this.

Fel. I scorn forgiveness, where I own no crime; but your soul, conscious of its guilt, would fain lay hold of this occasion, to blend your treason with my innocence.

Vio. Insolent! Nay, if, instead of owning your fault, you endeavour to insult my patience, I must tell you, sir, you don't behave yourself like that man of honour you would be taken for; you ground your quarrel with me upon your own inconstancy; 'tis plain you are false yourself, and would make me the aggressor. It was not for nothing the fellow opposed my entrance. This last usage has given me back my liberty; and now my father's will shall be obeyed, without the least reluctance; and so your servant.

[*Exit* VIOLANTE.

Fel. Oh, stubborn, stubborn heart! what wilt thou do? Her father's will shall be obeyed! Ha! that carries her to a cloister, and cuts off all my hopes at once. By Heaven, she shall not, must not leave me! No, she is not false——at least my love now represents her true, because I fear to lose her. Ha! villain, art thou here?—[*Turns upon* LISSARDO.]—Tell me, this moment, who this woman was, and for what intent she was here concealed—or——

Lis. Aye, good sir! forgive me, and I'll tell you the whole truth. [*Falls on his knees.*

Fel. Out with it, then——

Lis. It, it, it was Mrs Flora, sir, Donna Violante's woman. You must know, sir, we have had a sneaking kindness for one another a great while—She was not willing you should know it; so, when she heard your voice, she ran into the clothes-press. I would have told you this at first, but I was afraid of her lady's knowing it. This is the truth, as I hope for a whole skin, sir.

Fel. If it be not, I'll not leave you a whole bone in it, sirrah. Fly, and observe if Violante goes directly home.

Lis. Yes, sir, yes.

Fel. Fly, you dog, fly!—[*Exit* LISSARDO.]—I must convince her of my faith. Oh, how irresolute is a lover's heart! My resentment cooled, when hers grew high—nor can I struggle longer with my fate; I cannot quit her; no, I cannot, so absolute a conquest has she gained. How absolute is woman's power!

In vain we strive their tyranny to quit,
In vain we struggle, for we must submit.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*The Terriero de Passa.*

Enter COLONEL, *and* ISABELLA *veiled.* GIBBY *at a distance.*

Col. Then you say it is impossible for me to wait on you home, madam?

Isa. I say it is inconsistent with my circumstances, colonel—and, that way, impossible for me to admit of it.

Col. Consent to go with me, then. I lodge at one Don Frederick's, a merchant, just by here.—He is a very honest fellow, and I dare confide in his secrecy.

Isa. Ha! does he lodge there? Pray Heaven I am not discovered! [*Aside.*

Col. What say you, my charmer? Shall we breakfast together? I have some of the best tea in the universe.

Isa. Puh! tea! is that the best treat you can give a lady at your lodgings, colonel?

Col. Well hinted——No, no, no; I have other things at thy service, child.

Isa. What are those things, pray?

Col. My heart, soul, and body, into the bargain.

Isa. Has the last no incumbrance upon it? can you make a clear title, colonel?

Col. All freehold, child, and I'll afford thee a very good bargain. [*Embraces her.*

Gib. O my soul, they mak muckle words about

it. Ise sare weary with standing—Ise e'en tak a sleep. [*Lies down.*

Isa. If I take a lease, it must be for life, colonel.

Col. Thou shalt have me as long, or as little time, as thou wilt, my dear. Come, let's to my lodgings, and we'll sign and seal this minute.

Isa. Oh, not so fast, colonel—There are many things to be adjusted before the lawyer and the parson come.

Col. The lawyer and parson! No, no, you little rogue; we can finish our affairs without the help of the law—or the gospel.

Isa. Indeed but we cannot, colonel.

Col. Indeed! Why, hast thou then trepanned me out of my warm bed this morning, for nothing? Why, this is shewing a man half famished, a well-furnished larder, then clapping a padlock on the door, till you starve him quite.

Isa. If you can find in your heart to say grace, colonel, you shall keep the key.

Col. I love to see my meat before I give thanks, madam; therefore, uncover thy face, child, and I'll tell thee more of my mind——If I like you——

Isa. I dare not risk my reputation upon your ifs, colonel; and so adieu! [*Going.*

Col. Nay, nay, nay; we must not part.

Isa. As you ever hope to see me more, suspend your curiosity now; one step farther loses me for ever. Shew yourself a man of honour, and you shall find me a woman of honour.

[*Exit* ISABELLA.

Col. Well, for once I'll trust to a blind bargain, madam—[*Kisses her hand, and parts.*]——But I shall be too cunning for your ladyship, if Gibby observes my orders. Methinks, these intrigues, which relate to the mind, are very insipid. The conversation of bodies is much more diverting. Ha! What do I see? My rascal asleep! Sirrah, did not I charge you to watch the lady? And is it thus ye observe my orders, ye dog?

[*Kicks him all this while, and he shrugs, and rubs his eyes, and yawns.*]

Gib. That's true, an like yer honour; but I thought, that when yence ye had her in yer ane hands, ye might a' ordered her yer sel weel eneugh without me, en ye ken, an like yer honour.

Col. Sirrah, hold your impertinent tongue, and make haste after her. If you don't bring me some account of her, never dare to see my face again. [*Exit.*

Gib. Aye, this is bony wark indeed! To run three hundred mile to this wicked town, and before I can weel fill my weam, to be sent a whore-hunting after this black she devil. What gate sal I gang to speer for this wutch now? Ah, for a ruling elder—or the kirk's treasurer—or his mon—I'd gar my master mak twa o' this—But I am sure there's na sick honest people here, or there wud na be sa mickle sculduddric.

Enter an English soldier, passing along.

Gib. Geud mon, did you see a woman, a lady, ony gate hereawa e'en now?

Eng. Yes, a great many. What kind of a woman is it you inquire after?

Gib. Geud troth, she's na kenspeckle; she's aw in a cloud——

Eng. What! 'Tis some Highland monster which you brought over with you, I suppose: I see no such, not I. Kenspeckle, quotha!

Gib. Huly, huly, mon; the deel pike out yer een, and then ye'll see the better, ye Portigise tike.

Eng. What says the fellow?

[*Turning to* GIBBY.

Gib. Say! I say I am a better fallow than e'er stude upon yer shanks—and gin I heer mair o' yer din, deel o' my saul, sir, but Ise crack yer croon.

Eng. Get you gone, you Scotch rascal, and thank your heathen dialect, which I don't understand, that you han't your bones broke.

Gib. Aye, an ye dinna understand a Scotsman's tongue, I'se see gin ye can understand a Scotsman's gripe. Wha's the better mon now, sir?

[*Lays hold of him, strikes up his heels, and gets astride over him.*]

Here VIOLANTE *crosses the stage,* GIBBY *jumps up from the man, and brushes up to* VIOLANTE.

Gib. I vow, madam, but I am glad that ye and I are foregathered.

Vio. What would the fellow have?

Gib. Nothing: away, madam! wo worth yer heart, what a muckle deal o' mischief had you like to bring upon poor Gibby!

Vio. The man's drunk———

Gib. In troth, am I not——And gin I had na found ye, madam, the laird knows when I should; for my maister bad me ne'er gang hame without idings of ye, madam.

Vio. Sirrah! get about your business, or I'll have your bones drubbed.

Gib. Geud faith! my maister has e'en done that t' yer honds, madam.

Vio. Who is your master, sir?

Gib. Mony a ane speers the gate they ken right weel: it is no sa lang sen ye parted wi' him. I wish he ken ye half as weel as ye ken him.

Vio. Pugh! the creature's mad, or mistakes me for somebody else; and I should be as mad as he to talk to him any longer.

[VIOLANTE *enters* DON PEDRO'S *house.*

Enter LISSARDO *at the upper end of the stage.*

Lis. So, she's gone home, I see. What did that Scots fellow want with her? I'll try to find it out; perhaps I may discover something that may make my master friends with me again.

Gib. Are ye gone, madam? a deel scope in.

yer company, for I'm as wise as I was. But I'll bide and see wha's house it is, gin I can meet with ony civil body to speer at.——Weel, of aw men in the warld, I think our Scotsmen the greatest feuls, to leave their weel-favoured honest women at hame, to rin walloping after a pack of gyrearlings here, that shame to shew their faces, and peur men, like me, are forced to be their pimps. A pimp! Godswarbit, Gibby's ne'er be a pimp—and yet, in troth, it's a triving trade: I remember a countrymon o' my ane, that, by ganging o' sick like errands as I am now, came to get preferment. My lad, wot ye wha lives here?

[*Turns and sees* LISSARDO.

Lis. Don Pedro de Mendosa.

Gib. And did you see a lady gang in but now?

Lis. Yes, I did.

Gib. And d' ye ken her tee?

Lis. It was Donna Violante, his daughter. What the devil makes him so inquisitive? Here is something in it, that is certain [*Aside.*]—'Tis a cold morning, brother; what think you of a dram?

Gib. In troth, very weel, sir.

Lis. You seem an honest fellow; prithee, let's drink to our better acquaintance.

Gib. Wi' aw my heart, sir; gang your get to the next house, and Ise follow ye.

Lis. Come along, then. [*Exit.*

Gib. Don Pedro de Mendosa!—Donna Violante, his daughter!—that's as reight as my leg now—— Ise need na mare; I'll tak a drink, and then to my maister———

Ise bring him news will mak his heart full blee;
Gin he rewards it not, deel pimp for me.

[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—VIOLANTE'S *lodgings.*

Enter ISABELLA *in a gay temper, and* VIOLANTE *out of humour.*

Isa. My dear! I have been seeking you this half hour, to tell you the most lucky adventure!

Vio. And you have pitched upon the most unlucky hour for it, that you could possibly have found in the whole four-and-twenty.

Isa. Hang unlucky hours! I won't think of them; I hope all my misfortunes are past.

Vio. And mine all to come.

Isa. I have seen the man I like.

Vio. And I have seen the man that I could wish to hate.

Isa. And you must assist me in discovering whether he can like me or not.

Vio. You have assisted me in such a discovery already, I thank ye.

Isa. What say you, my dear?

Vio. I say I am very unlucky at discoveries, Isabella; I have too lately made one pernicious to my ease; your brother is false.

Isa. Impossible!

Vio. Most true.

Isa. Some villain has traduced him to you.

Vio. No, Isabella; I love too well to trust the eyes of others: I never credit the ill-judging world, or form suspicions upon vulgar censures; no, I had ocular proof of his ingratitude.

Isa. Then I am most unhappy. My brother was the only pledge of faith betwixt us; if he has forfeited your favour, I have no title to your friendship.

Vio. You wrong my friendship, Isabella; your own merit entitles you to every thing within my power.

Isa. Generous maid! But may I not know what grounds you have to think my brother false?

Vio. Another time.—But tell me, Isabella, how can I serve you?

Isa. Thus, then—The gentleman that brought me hither, I have seen and talked with upon the Ferriero de Passa this morning, and I find him a man of sense, generosity, and good humour; in short, he is every thing that I could like for a husband; and I have dispatched Mrs Flora to bring him hither: I hope you'll forgive the liberty I have taken.

Vio. Hither! to what purpose?

Isa. To the great universal purpose—matrimony.

Vio. Matrimony! why, do you design to ask him?

Isa. No, Violante, you must do that for me.

Vio. I thank you for the favour you design me, but desire to be excused; I manage my own affairs too ill to be trusted with those of other people; besides, if my father should find a stranger here, it might make him hurry me into a monastery immediately. I can't, for my life, admire your conduct, to encourage a person altogether unknown to you.——'Twas very imprudent to meet him this morning, but much more so to send for him hither, knowing what inconveniency you have already drawn upon me.

Isa. I am not insensible how far my misfortunes have embarrassed you; and, if you please, sacrifice my quiet to your own.

Vio. Unkindly urged! Have I not preferred your happiness to every thing that's dear to me?

Isa. I know thou hast—then, do not deny me this last request, when a few hours, perhaps, may render my condition able to clear thy fame, and bring my brother to thy feet for pardon.

Vio. I wish you don't repent of this intrigue. I suppose he knows you are the same woman that he brought in here last night?

Isa. Not a syllable of that; I met him veiled,

and, to prevent his knowing the house, I ordered Mrs Flora to bring him by the back-door into the garden.

Vio. The very way which Felix comes! if they should meet, there would be fine work.—Indeed, my dear, I can't approve of your design.

Enter FLORA.

Flo. Madam, the colonel waits your pleasure.

Vio. How durst you go upon such a message, mistress, without acquainting me?

Flo. So! I am to be huffed for every thing!

Isa. 'Tis too late to dispute that now, dear Violante; I acknowledge the rashness of the action—but consider the necessity of my deliverance.

Vio. That, indeed, is a weighty consideration: well, what am I to do?

Isa. In the next room I'll give you instructions. In the mean time, Mrs Flora, shew the colonel into this.

[*Exit* FLORA *one way, and* ISABELLA *and* VIOLANTE *another.*

Re-enter FLORA *with the* COLONEL.

Flo. The lady will wait on you presently, sir. [*Exit.*

Col. Very well—This is a very fruitful soil. I have not been here quite four-and-twenty hours, and I have three intrigues upon my hands already; but I hate the chase, without partaking of the game———

Enter VIOLANTE, *veiled.*

Ha! a fine sized woman!—pray Heaven she proves handsome!—I am come to obey your ladyship's commands.

Vio. Are you sure of that, colonel?

Col. If you be not very unreasonable indeed, madam. A man is but a man.

[*Takes her hand, and kisses it.*

Vio. Nay, we have no time for compliments, colonel.

Col. I understand you, madam—*Montrez moi votre chambre.* [*Takes her in his arms.*

Vio. Nay, nay; hold, colonel; my bed-chamber is not be entered, without a certain purchase.

Col. Purchase! humph, this is some kept mistress, I suppose, who industriously lets out her leisure hours. [*Aside.*]—Look ye, madam, you must consider we soldiers are not overstocked with money—but we make ample satisfaction in love; we have a world of courage upon our hands now, you know—then, prithee use a conscience, and I'll try if my pocket can come up to your price.

Vio. Nay, don't give yourself the trouble of drawing your purse, colonel; my design is levelled at your person, if that be at your own disposal.

Col. Aye, that it is, faith, madam! and I'll settle it as firmly upon thee———

Vio. As law can do it.

Col. Hang law in love affairs! thou shalt have right and title to it, out of pure inclination.—A matrimonial hint again! Gad! I fancy the women have a project on foot to transplant the union into Portugal! [*Aside.*

Vio. Then you have an aversion to matrimony, colonel? Did you never see a woman in all your travels, that you could like for a wife?

Col. A very odd question! Do you really expect that I should speak truth now?

Vio. I do, if you expect to be dealt with, colonel.

Col. Why, then———Yes.

Vio. Is she in your country, or this?

Col. This is a very pretty kind of a catechism! but I don't conceive which way it turns to edification.—In this town, I believe, madam.

Vio. Her name is———

Col. Aye, how is she called, madam?

Vio. Nay, I ask you that, sir.

Col. Oh, ho! why, she is called———Pray, madam, how is it you spell your name?

Vio. Oh, colonel, I am not the happy woman, nor do I wish it.

Col. No! I'm sorry for that.———What the devil does she mean by all these questions? [*Aside.*

Vio. Come, colonel, for once be sincere—perhaps you may not repent it.

Col. This is like to be but a silly adventure, here's so much sincerity required. [*Aside.*]——Faith, madam, I have an inclination to sincerity; but I'm afraid you'll call my manners in question.

Vio. Not at all; I prefer truth before compliment in this affair.

Col. Why, then, to be plain with you, madam, a lady last night wounded my heart by a fall from a window, whose person I could be content to take, as my father took my mother, till death do us part———but who she is, or how distinguished, whether maid, wife, or widow, I can't inform you; perhaps you are she.

Vio. Not to keep you in suspense, I am not she—but I can give you an account of her. That lady is a maid of condition———has ten thousand pounds—and, if you are a single man, her person and fortune are at your service.

Col. I accept the offer with the highest transports; but say, my charming angel! art thou not she? [*Offers to embrace her.*]—This is a lucky adventure! [*Aside.*

Vio. Once, again, colonel, I tell you I am not she—but at six this evening you shall find her on the Terriero de Passa, with a white handkerchief in her hand. Get a priest ready, and you know the rest.

Col. I shall infallibly observe your directions, madam.

Enter FLORA *hastily, and whispers* VIOLANTE, *who starts, and seems surprised.*

Vio. Ha! Felix crossing, say you? What shall I do now?

Col. You seem surprised, madam?

Vio. Oh, colonel, my father is coming hither—and if he find you here, I am ruined.

Col. Odslife, madam, thrust me any where. Can't I go out this way?

Vio. No, no, no; he comes that way. How shall I prevent their meeting? Here, here; step into my bed-chamber——

Col. Oh, the best place in the world, madam!

Vio. And be still, as you value her you love. Don't stir till you've notice, as ever you hope to have her in your arms.

Col. On that condition, I'll not breathe.

[*Exit* COLONEL.

Enter FELIX.

Fel. I wonder where this dog of a servant is all this while—But she is at home, I find—How coldly she regards me!——You look, Violante, as if the sight of me were troublesome to you.

Vio. Can I do otherwise, when you have the assurance to approach me after what I saw to-day?

Fel. Assurance! rather call it good-nature, after what I heard last night. But such regard to honour have I in my love to you, I cannot bear to be suspected, nor suffer you to entertain false notions of my truth, without endeavouring to convince you of my innocence—So much good-nature have I more than you, Violante.—Pray, give me leave to ask your woman one question: my man assures me she was the person you saw at my lodgings.

Flo. I confess it, madam, and ask your pardon.

Vio. Impudent baggage! not to undeceive me sooner: what business could you have there?

Fel. Lissardo and she, it seems, imitate you and I.

Flo I love to follow the example of my betters, madam.

Fel. I hope I am justified——

Vio. Since we are to part, Felix, there needs no justification.

Fel. Methinks you talk of parting as a thing indifferent to you. Can you forget how I have loved?

Vio. I wish I could forget my own passion, I should with less concern remember yours.—But for mistress Flora——

Fel. You must forgive her——Must, did I say? I fear I have no power to impose, though the injury was done to me.

Vio. 'Tis harder to pardon an injury done to what we love, than to ourselves; but, at your request, Felix, I do forgive her. Go watch my father, Flora, lest he should awake and surprise us.

Flo. Yes, madam. [*Exit* FLORA.

Fel. Dost thou then love me, Violante?

Vio. What need of repetition from my tongue, when every look confesses what you ask?

Fel. Oh, let no man judge of love but those who feel it: what wondrous magic lies in one kind look!——One tender word destroys a lover's rage, and melts his fiercest passion into soft complaint. Oh, the window, Violante! wouldst thou but clear that one suspicion!

Vio. Prithee, no more of that, my Felix; a little time shall bring thee perfect satisfaction.

Fel. Well, Violante, on condition you think no more of a monastery, I'll wait with patience for this mighty secret.

Vio. Ah, Felix! love generally gets the better of religion in us women. Resolutions, made in the heat of passion, ever dissolve upon reconciliation.

Enter FLORA, *hastily.*

Flo. Oh! madam, madam, madam! my lord, your father, has been in the garden, and locked the back-door, and comes muttering to himself this way.

Vio. Then we are caught! Now, Felix, we are undone!

Fel. Heavens forbid! This is most unlucky! Let me step into your bed-chamber, he won't look under the bed; there I may conceal myself.

[*Runs to the door, and pushes it open a little.*]

Vio. My stars! if he goes in there, he'll find the colonel!—No, no, Felix, that's no safe place: my father often goes thither, and should you cough or sneeze, we are lost.

Fel. Either my eye deceived me, or I saw a man within; I'll watch him close.

Flo. Oh, invention, invention!—I have it, madam. Here, here, sir; off with your sword, and I'll fetch you a disguise. [*Exit.*

Fel. She shall deal with the devil, if she conveys him out without my knowledge.

Vio. Bless me, how I tremble!

Enter FLORA, *with a riding-hood.*

Flo. Here, sir, put on this.

Fel. Ay, ay; any thing to avoid Don Pedro.

[*She puts it on.*

Vio. Oh, quick, quick! I shall die with apprehension.

Flo. Be sure you don't speak a word.

Fel. Not for the Indies——but I shall observe you closer than you imagine. [*Aside.*

Ped. [*Within.*] Violante, where are you, child?

Enter DON PEDRO.

Why, how came the garden door open?—Ha! how now, who have we here?

Vio. Humph!—he'd certainly discover him. [*Aside.*

Flo. 'Tis my mother, an't please you, sir.

[*She and* FELIX *both curtsey.*

Ped. Your mother! by St Andrew, she's a strapper! why, you are a dwarf to her.——How many children have you, good woman?

Vio. Oh, if he speaks, we are lost! [*Aside.*

Flo. Oh, dear signior, she cannot hear you; she has been deaf these twenty years.

Ped. Alas, poor woman!—Why, you muffle her up as if she were blind, too.

Fel. Would I were fairly off! [*Aside.*

Ped. Turn up her hood.

Vio. Undone for ever!———St Anthony forbid! Oh, sir, she has the dreadfullest unlucky eyes——Pray, don't look upon them; I made her keep her hood shut on purpose.——Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Ped. Eyes!——Why, what's the matter with her eyes?

Flo. My poor mother, sir, is much afflicted with the colic; and, about two months ago, she had it grievously in her stomach, and was overpersuaded to take a dram of filthy English Geneva———which immediately flew up into her head, and caused such a defluxion in her eyes, that she could never since bear the day-light.

Ped. Say you so?——Poor woman!——Well, make her sit down, Violante, and give her a glass of wine.

Vio. Let her daughter give her a glass below, sir:——For my part, she has frighted me so, I shan't be myself these two hours——I am sure her eyes are evil eyes.

Fel. Well hinted.

Ped. Well, well; do so.——Evil eyes! there are no evil eyes, child.

Flo. Come along, mother—[*Speaks loud.*]—

[*Exeunt* FELIX *and* FLORA.

Vio. I'm glad he's gone. [*Aside.*

Ped. Hast thou heard the news, Violante?

Vio. What news, sir?

Ped. Why, Vasquez tells me, that Don Lopez' daughter, Isabella, is run away from her father! that lord has very ill fortune with his children.—Well, I'm glad my daughter has no inclination to mankind, that my house is plagued with no suitors. [*Aside.*

Vio. This is the first word ever I heard of it! I pity her frailty———

Ped. Well said, Violante.——Next week, I intend thy happiness shall begin.

Enter FLORA.

Vio. I don't intend to stay so long, thank you, papa. [*Aside.*

Ped. My lady Abbess writes word she longs to see thee, and has provided every thing in order for thy reception.——Thou wilt lead a happy life, my girl——fifty times before that of matrimony——where an extravagant coxcomb might make a beggar of thee, or an ill-natured surly dog break thy heart.

Flo. Break her heart! she had as good have her bones broke, as to be a nun; I am sure I had rather of the two. You are wondrous kind, sir: but, if I had such a father, I know what I would do.

Ped. Why, what would you do, minx, ha?

Flo. I would tell him I had as good a right and title to the law of nature, and the end of the creation, as he had.

Ped. You would, mistress! who the devil doubts it?—A good assurance is a chambermaid's coat of arms, and lying and contriving the supporters.——Your inclinations are on tiptoe, it seems.——If I were your father, housewife, I'd have a penance enjoined you so strict, that you should not be able to turn you in your bed for a month.—You are enough to spoil your lady, housewife, if she had not abundance of devotion.

Vio. Fy, Flora! are you not ashamed to talk thus to my father?——You said, yesterday, you would be glad to go with me into the monastery.

Flo. Did I! I told a great lie, then.

Ped. She go with thee! no, no; she's enough to debauch the whole convent.——Well, child, remember what I said to thee: next week——

Vio. Ay; and what I am to do this, too. [*Aside.*] I am all obedience, sir; I care not how soon I change my condition.

Flo. But little does he think what change she means. [*Aside.*

Ped. Well said, Violante!—I am glad to find her so willing to leave the world; but it is wholly owing to my prudent management. Did she know that she might command her fortune when she came at age, or upon day of marriage, perhaps she'd change her note.——But I have always told her, that her grandfather left it with this proviso, that she turned nun. Now, a small part of this twenty thousand pounds provides for her in the nunnery, and the rest is my own.——There is nothing to be got in this life without policy.—[*Aside.*]—Well, child, I am going into the country for two or three days, to settle some affairs with thy uncle; and, when I return, we'll proceed for thy happiness, child.——Good bye, Violante; take care of thyself.

[*Exeunt* DON PEDRO *and* VIOLANTE.

Flo. So, now for the colonel!——Hist, hist, colonel!

Enter COLONEL.

Col. Is the coast clear?

Flo. Yes, if you can climb; for you must get over the washhouse, and jump from the garden-wall into the street.

Col. Nay, nay; I don't value my neck, if my incognita answers but thy lady's promise.

[*Exeunt* COL. *and* FLO.

Enter FELIX.

Fel. I have lain perdue under the stairs till I watched the old man out. [VIOLANTE *opens the door.*] 'Sdeath! I am prevented. [*Exit* FELIX.

Enter VIOLANTE.

Vio. Now to set my prisoner at liberty. [*Goes*

to the door, where the colonel is hid.] Sir, sir, you may appear.

Enter FELIX, *following her.*

Fel. May he so, madam? I had cause for my suspicion, I find. Treacherous woman!

Vio. Ha, Felix here! Nay, then, all is discovered.

Fel. [*Draws.*] Villain! whoever thou art, come out, I charge thee, and take the reward of thy adulterous errand.

Vio. What shall I say?—Nothing but the secret, which I have sworn to keep, can reconcile this quarrel. [*Aside.*

Fel. A coward! Nay, then, I'll fetch you out; think not to hide thyself: no; by St Anthony, an altar should not protect thee; even there, I'd reach thy heart, though all the saints were armed in thy defence. [*Exit* FEL.

Vio. Defend me, Heaven! what shall I do? I must discover Isabella, or here will be murder!

Enter FLORA.

Flo. I have helped the colonel off clear, madam.

Vio. Sayest thou so, my girl?——Then, I am armed.

Re-enter FELIX.

Fel. Where has the devil, in compliance to your sex, conveyed him from my resentment?

Vio. Him! whom do you mean, my dear inquisitive spark? Ha, ha, ha, ha! you will never leave these jealous whims.

Fel. Will you never cease to impose upon me?

Vio. You impose upon yourself, my dear. Do you think I did not see you? Yes, I did, and resolved to put this trick upon you.

Fel. Trick?

Vio. Yes, trick! I knew you'd take the hint, and soon relapse into your wonted error. How easily your jealousy is fired! I shall have a blessed life with you.

Fel. Was there nothing in it, then, but only to try me?

Vio. Won't you believe your eyes?

Fel. My eyes! No, nor my ears, nor any of my senses, for they have all deceived me.—Well, I am convinced that faith is as necessary in love as in religion; for, the moment a man lets a woman know her conquest, he resigns his senses, and sees nothing but what she would have him.

Vio. And as soon as that man finds his love returned, she becomes as errant a slave as if she had already said after the priest.

Fel. The priest, Violante, would dissipate those fears which cause those quarrels. When wilt thou make me happy?

Vio. To-morrow I will tell thee: my father is gone for two or three days to my uncle's; we have time enough to finish our affairs.—But, prithee leave me now, lest some accident should bring my father.

Fel. To-morrow, then——
Fly swift, ye hours, and bring to-morrow on!
But I must leave you now, my Violante.

Vio. You must, my Felix. We soon shall meet to part no more!

Fel. Oh, rapturous sounds! Charming woman!
Thy words and looks have filled my heart
With joy, and left no room for jealousy.
Do thou, like me, each doubt and fear remove,
And all to come be confidence and love.
[*Exit* FEL.

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. I am glad my brother and you are reconciled, my dear; and the colonel escaped without his knowledge; I was frighted out of my wits when I heard him return. I know not how to express my thanks, woman, for what you suffered for my sake; my grateful acknowledgement shall ever wait you, and to the world proclaim the faith, truth, and honour of a woman.

Vio. Prithee, don't compliment thy friend, Isabella. You heard the colonel, I suppose?

Isa. Every syllable; and am pleased to find I do not love in vain.

Vio. Thou has caught his heart, it seems, and an hour hence may secure his person. Thou hast made hasty work on't, girl.

Isa. From thence I draw my happiness; we shall have no accounts to make up, after consummation.
She who for years protracts her lover's pain,
And makes him wish, and wait, and sigh in vain,
To be his wife, when late she gives consent,
Finds half his passion was in courtship spent;
Whilst they, who boldly all delays remove,
Find every hour a fresh supply of love.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—FREDERICK'S *house.*

Enter FELIX *and* FREDERICK.

Fel. This hour has been propitious; I am reconciled to Violante, and you assure me Antonio is out of danger.

Fred. Your satisfaction is doubly mine.

Enter LISSARDO.

Fel. What haste you made, sirrah, to bring me word if Violante went home!

Lis. I can give you very good reasons for my stay, sir. Yes, sir, she went home.

Fred. Oh! your master knows that, for he has been there himself, Lissardo.

Lis. Sir, may I beg the favour of your ear?

Fel. What have you to say?

[*Whispers, and* FELIX *seems uneasy.*

Fred. Ha! Felix changes colour at Lissardo's news! What can it be?

Fel. A Scots footman, that belongs to colonel Briton, an acquaintance of Frederick's, say you? The devil! if she be false, by Heaven I'll trace her. Prithee, Frederick, do you know one colonel Briton, a Scotsman?

Fred. Yes; why do you ask me?

Fel. Nay, no great matter; but my man tells me that he has had some little differences with a servant of his, that's all.

Fred. He is a good, harmless, innocent fellow: I am sorry for it. The colonel lodges in my house; I knew him formerly in England, and met him here by accident last night, and gave him an invitation home. He is a gentleman of good estate, besides his commission; of excellent principles, and strict honour, I assure you.

Fel. Is he a man of intrigue?

Fred. Like other men, I suppose. Here he comes.

Enter COLONEL.

Colonel, I began to think I had lost you.

Col. And not without some reason, if you knew all.

Fel. There's no danger of a fine gentleman's being lost in this town, sir.

Col. That compliment don't belong to me, sir; but, I assure you, I have been very near being run away with.

Fred. Who attempted it?

Col. Faith, I know not—only, that she is a charming woman; I mean as much as I saw of her.

Fel. My heart swells with apprehension—— some accidental encounter?

Fred. A tavern, I suppose, adjusted the matter?

Col. A tavern! no, no, sir; she's above that rank, I assure you; this nymph sleeps in a velvet bed, and lodgings every way agreeable.

Fel. Ha! a velvet bed! I thought you said but now, sir, you knew her not.

Col. No more I don't, sir.

Fel. How came you, then, so well acquainted with her bed?

Fred. Aye, aye, come, come, unfold.

Col. Why, then, you must know, gentlemen, that I was conveyed to her lodgings by one of Cupid's emissaries, called a chambermaid, in a chair, through fifty blind alleys, who, by the help of a key, let me into a garden.

Fel. 'Sdeath! a garden! this must be Violante's garden. [*Aside.*

Col. From thence conducted me into a spacious room, then dropt me a curtsey; told me her lady would wait on me presently; so, without unveiling, modestly withdrew.

Fel. Damn her modesty! this was Flora. [*Aside.*

Fred. Well, how then, colonel?

Col. Then, sir, immediately from another door issued forth a lady, armed at both eyes, from whence such showers of darts fell around me, that had I not been covered with the shield of another beauty, I had infallibly fallen a martyr to her charms; for, you must know, I just saw her eyes—Eyes! did I say? no, no, hold; I saw but one eye, though I suppose it had a fellow equally as killing.

Fel. But how came you to see her bed, sir?—'Sdeath! this expectation gives a thousand racks. [*Aside.*

Col. Why, upon her maid's giving notice her father was coming, she thrust me into the bedchamber.

Fel. Upon her father's coming!

Col. Aye, so she said; but putting my ear to the key-hole of the door, I found it was another lover.

Fel. Confound the jilt! 'twas she without dispute. [*Aside.*

Fred. Ah, poor colonel! Ha, ha, ha!

Col. I discovered they had had a quarrel, but whether they were reconciled or not I can't tell; for the second alarm brought her father in good earnest, and had like to have made the gentleman and I acquainted, but she found some other stratagem to convey him out.

Fel. Contagion seize her, and make her body ugly as her soul! There is nothing left to doubt of now—'Tis plain 'twas she. Sure he knows me, and takes this method to insult me. 'Sdeath! I cannot bear it. [*Aside.*

Fred. So, when she had dispatched her old lover, she paid you a visit in her bed-chamber—ha! colonel?

Col. No, pox take the impertinent puppy! he spoiled my diversion; I saw her no more.

Fel. Very fine! Give me patience, Heaven, or I shall burst with rage! [*Aside.*

Fred. That was hard.

Col. Nay, what was worse—But, sir, dear sir, do hearken to this: [*To* FELIX.] The nymph that introduced me, conveyed me out again over the top of a high wall, where I ran the danger of having my neck broke, for the father, it seems, had locked the door by which I entered.

Fel. That way I missed him. Damn her invention!—[*Aside.*]—Pray, colonel—Ha, ha, ha! 'tis very pleasant, ha, ha, ha! Was this the same lady you met upon the Terriero de Passa this morning?

Col. Faith, I cannot tell, sir; I had a design to know who that lady was; but my dog of a footman, whom I had ordered to watch her home, fell fast asleep. I gave him a good beating for his neglect, and I have never seen the rascal since.

Fred. Here he comes.

Enter GIBBY.

Col. Where have you been, sirrah?

Gib. Troth, Ise been seeking ye, an like yer honour, these twa hoors and mair. I bring ye glad teedings, sir.

Col. What! Have you found the lady?

Gib. Geud faith ha I, sir—and she is called Donna Violante, and her parent Don Pedro de Mendosa; and, gin ye will gang wi' me, an like yer honour, Ise mak ye ken the hoose right weel.

Fel. Oh, torture! torture! [*Aside.*

Col. Ha! Violante! that's the lady's name of the house where my incognita is: sure, it could not be her; at least, it was not the same house, I'm confident. [*Aside.*

Fred. Violante! 'tis false; I would not have you credit him, colonel.

Gib. The deel burst my bladder, sir, gin I lee.

Fel. Sirrah, I say you do lie, and I'll make you eat it, you dog;—[*Kicks him.*]—and, if your master will justify you——

Col. Not I, faith, sir——I answer for nobody's lies but my own: if you please, kick him again.

Gib But gin he does, Ise na tak it, sir, gin he was a thousand Spaniards.

[*Walks about in a passion.*

Col. I owed you a beating, sirrah, and I'm obliged to this gentleman for taking the trouble off my hands; therefore, say no more: d'ye hear, sir? [*Aside to* GIBBY.

Gib. Troth de I, sir, and feel tee.

Fred. This must be a mistake, colonel; for I know Violante perfectly well, and I am certain she would not meet you upon the Terriero de Passa.

Col. Don't be too positive, Frederick: now I have some reasons to believe it was that very lady.

Fel You'd very much oblige me, sir, if you'd let me know these reasons.

Col. Sir!

Fel. Sir, I say I have a right to inquire into these reasons you speak of.

Col. Ha, ha! Really, sir, I cannot conceive how you, or any man, can have a right to inquire into my thoughts.

Fel. Sir, I have a right to every thing that relates to Violante—and he that traduces her fame, and refuses to give his reasons for't, is a villain.

[*Draws.*

Col. What the devil have I been doing? now, blisters on my tongue by dozens! [*Aside.*

Fred. Prithee, Felix, don't quarrel till you know for what: this is all a mistake, I'm positive.

Col. Look ye, sir; that I dare draw my sword, I think, will admit of no dispute. But, though fighting's my trade, I'm not in love with it, and think it more honourable to decline this business, than pursue it. This may be a mistake: however, I'll give you my honour never to have any affair, directly or indirectly, with Violante, provided she is your Violante; but, if there should happen to be another of her name, I hope you would not engross all the Violante's in the kingdom?

Fel. Your vanity has given me sufficient reasons to believe I'm not mistaken. I'll not be imposed upon, sir.

Col. Nor I be bullied, sir.

Fel. Bullied! 'Sdeath! such another word, and I'll nail thee to the wall.

Col. Are you sure of that, Spaniard? [*Draws.*

Gib. [*Draws.*]—Say na mair, mon. O' my saul, here's twa to twa. Dinna fear, sir; Gibby stonds by ye, for the honour of Scotland.

[*Vapours about.*

Fred. By St Anthony, you shan't fight—[*Interposes.*]—on bare suspicion: be certain of the injury, and then——

Fel. That I will, this moment; and then, sir—I hope you are to be found——

Col. Whenever you please, sir.

[*Exit* FELIX.

Gib. 'Sbleed, sir! there ne'er was a Scotsman yet, that shamed to shew his face.

[*Strutting about.*

Fred. So, quarrels spring up like mushrooms, in a minute. Violante and he were but just reconciled, and you have furnished him with fresh matter for falling out again; and I am certain, colonel, Gibby is in the wrong.

Gib. Gin I be, sir, the mon that told me, lee'd; and, gin he did, the deel be my landlord, hell my winter-quarters, and a rape my winding-sheet, gin I dee not lick him as lang as I can haud a stick in my hond, now see ye.

Col. I am sorry for what I have said, for the lady's sake: but who could divine that she was his mistress? Prithee, who is this warm spark?

Fred. He is the son of one of our grandees, named Don Lopez de Pimentell, a very honest gentleman, but something passionate in what relates to his love. He is an only son, which may, perhaps, be one reason for indulging his passion.

Col. When parents have but one child, they either make a madman or a fool of him.

Fred. He is not the only child; he has a sister; but I think, through the severity of his father, who would have married her against her inclination, she has made her escape, and, notwithstanding he has offered five hundred pounds, he can get no tidings of her.

Col. Ha! How long has she been missing?

Fred. Nay, but since last night, it seems.

Col. Last night! The very time! How went she?

Fred. Nobody can tell; they conjecture through the window.

Col. I'm transported! This must be the lady I caught. What sort of a woman is she?

Fred. Middle-sized, a lovely brown, a fine pouting lip, eyes that roll and languish, and seem to speak the exquisite pleasure her arms could give.

Col. Oh! I am fired with this description——'tis the very she. What's her name?

Fred. Isabella.——You are transported, colonel.

Col. I have a natural tendency in me to the flesh, thou knowest, and who can hear of charms so exquisite, and yet remain unmoved?——Oh, how I long for the appointed hour! I'll to the Terriero de Passa, and wait my happiness: if she fails to meet me, I'll once more attempt to find her at Violante's, in spite of her brother's jealousy.—[*Aside.*]—Dear Frederick! I beg your pardon; but I had forgot I was to meet a gentleman upon business, at five: I'll endeavour to dispatch him, and wait on you again as soon as possible.

Fred. Your humble servant, colonel.

[*Exit* FREDERICK.

Col. Gibby, I have no business with you at present. [*Exit* COLONEL.

Gib. That's weel. Now will I gang and seek this loon, and gar him gang with me to Don Pedro's house. Gin he'll no gang of himself, Ise gar him gang by the lug, sir. Godswarbit! Gibby hate's a leer. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* VIOLANTE'S *lodgings.*

Enter VIOLANTE *and* ISABELLA.

Isa. The hour draws on, Violante, and now my heart begins to fail me; but I resolve to venture for all that.

Vio. What, does your courage sink, Isabella?

Isa. Only the force of resolution a little retreated; but I'll rally it again, for all that.

Enter FLORA.

Flo. Don Felix is coming up, madam.

Isa. My brother! Which way shall I get out? Dispatch him as soon as you can, dear Violante.

[*Exit* ISABELLA *into the closet.*

Vio. I will.

Enter FELIX, *in a surly humour.*

Felix, what brings you home so soon? Did I not say to-morrow?

Fel. My passion chokes me; I cannot speak.—Oh, I shall burst!

[*Aside. Throws himself into a chair.*

Vio. Bless me! Are you not well, my Felix?

Fel. Yes—no—I don't know what I am.

Vio. Hey-day! What's the matter, now? Another jealous whim!

Fel. With what an air she carries it! I sweat at her impudence. [*Aside.*

Vio. If I were in your place, Felix, I'd choose to stay at home when these fits of spleen are upon me, and not trouble such persons as are not obliged to bear with them.

[*Here he affects to be careless of her.*

Fel. I am very sensible, madam, of what you mean: I disturb you, no doubt; but, were I in a better humour, I should not incommode you less: I am too well convinced you could easily dispense with my visit.

Vio. When you behave yourself as you ought to do, no company so welcome—but when you reserve me for your ill-nature, I wave your merit, and consider what's due to myself.——And I must be free to tell you, Felix, that these humours of yours will abate, if not absolutely destroy, the very principles of love.

Fel. [*Rising.*] And I must be so free to tell you, madam, that since you have made such ill returns to the respect that I have paid you, all you do shall be indifferent to me for the future; and you shall find me abandon your empire with so little difficulty, that I'll convince the world your chains are not so hard to break as your vanity would tempt you to believe. I cannot brook the provocation you give.

Vio. This is not to be borne——insolent! you abandon! you! whom I have so often forbad ever to see me more! Have you not fallen at my feet? implored my favour and forgiveness? did you not trembling wait, and wish, and sigh, and swear yourself into my heart? Ungrateful man! if my chains are so easily broke as you pretend, then you are the silliest coxcomb living, you did not break them long ago; and I must think him capable of brooking any thing, on whom such usage could make no impression.

Isa. [*Peeping.*] A deuce take your quarrels! she'll never think on me.

Fel. I always believed, madam, my weakness was the greatest addition to your power; you would be less imperious had my inclination been

less forward to oblige you. You have indeed forbad me your sight, but your vanity, even then, assured you I would return, and I was fool enough to feed your pride.—Your eyes, with all their boasted charms, have acquired their greatest glory in conquering me————and the brightest passage of your life is wounding this heart with such arms as pierce but few persons of my rank. [*Walks about in a great pet.*

Vio. Matchless arrogance! True, sir, I should have kept measures better with you, if the conquest had been worth preserving; but we easily hazard what gives us no pain to lose.——As for my eyes, you are mistaken if you think they have vanquished none but you: there are men, above your boasted rank, who have confessed their power, when their misfortune in pleasing you made them obtain such a disgraceful victory.

Fel. Yes, madam, I am no stranger to your victories.

Vio. And what you call the brightest passage of my life, is not the least glorious part of yours.

Fel. Ha, ha! don't put yourself in a passion, madam; for, I assure you, after this day, I shall give you no trouble.——You may meet your sparks on the Terriero de Passa at four in the morning, without the least regard to me——for, when I quit your chamber, the world shan't bring me back.

Vio. I am so well pleased with your resolution, I don't care how soon you take your leave. —But what you mean by the Terriero de Passa at four in the morning, I can't guess.

Fel. No, no, no! not you.————You was not upon the Terriero de Passa at four this morning!

Vio. No, I was not; but if I were, I hope I may walk where I please, and at what hour I please, without asking your leave.

Fel. Oh, doubtless, madam! and you might meet colonel Briton there, and afterwards send your emissary to fetch him to your house—and, upon your father's coming in, thrust him into your bed-chamber—without asking my leave. 'Tis no business of mine, if you are exposed among all the footmen in town—nay, if they ballad you, and cry you about at a halfpenny a piece—they may, without my leave.

Vio. Audacious! don't provoke me—don't: my reputation is not to be sported with [*Going up to him.*] at this rate————no, sir, it is not. [*Bursts into tears.*] Inhuman Felix!————Oh, Isabella! what a train of ills hast thou brought on me! [*Aside.*

Fel. Ha! I cannot bear to see her weep—a woman's tears are far more fatal than our swords. [*Aside.*] Oh, Violante—'Sdeath! what a dog am I! Now have I no power to stir.—Dost not thou know such a person as colonel Briton? Prithee tell me, didst not thou meet him at four this morning upon the Terriero de Passa?

Vio. Were it not to clear my fame, I would not answer thee, thou black ingrate!—but I cannot bear to think of—much less to act. By Heaven, I have not seen the Terriero de Passa this day.

Fel. Did not a Scotch footman attack you in the street neither, Violante?

Vio. Yes; but he mistook me for another—or he was drunk, I know not which.

Fel. And do not you know this Scotch colonel?

Vio. Pray, ask me no more questions: this night shall clear my reputation, and leave you without excuse for your base suspicions. More than this I shall not satisfy you; therefore, pray leave me.

Fel. Didst thou ever love me, Violante?

Vio. I'll answer nothing——You was in haste to be gone just now; I should be very well pleased to be alone, sir.

[*She sits down, and turns aside.*

Fel. I shall not long interrupt your contemplation.——Stubborn to the last! [*Aside.*

Vio. Did ever woman involve herself as I have done!

Fel. Now would I give one of my eyes to be friends with her, for something whispers to my soul, she is not guilty.——[*He pauses, then pulls a chair, and sits by her at a little distance, looking at her some time without speaking, then draws a little nearer to her.*] Give me your hand at parting however, Violante, won't you—[*He lays his hand upon her knee several times.*] won't you————won't you————won't you!

Vio. [*Half regarding him.*] Won't I do what?

Fel. You know what I would have, Violante. Oh, my heart!

Vio. [*Smiling.*] I thought my chains were easily broke. [*Lays her hand into his.*

Fel. [*Draws his chair close to her, and kisses her hand in a rapture.*] Too well thou knowest thy strength.————Oh, my charming angel! my heart is all thy own. Forgive my hasty passion —'tis the transport of a love sincere. Oh, Violante, Violante!

DON PEDRO, *within.*

Ped. Bid Sancho get a new wheel to my chariot presently.

Vio. Bless me, my father returned! What shall we do now, Felix? we are ruined past redemption.

Fel. No, no, no, my love; I can leap from the closet window.

[*Runs to the door where* ISABELLA *is, who claps to the door, and bolts it withinside.*

Isa. [*Peeping.*] Say you so? But I shall prevent you.

Fel. Confusion! Somebody bolts the door withinside. I'll see who you have concealed here, if I die for it. Oh, Violante! hast thou again sacrificed me to my rival? [*Draws.*

Vio. By Heaven, thou hast no rival in my heart! let that suffice——Nay, sure, you will not let my father find you here——Distraction!

Fel. Indeed, but I shall—except you command this door to be opened, and that way conceal me from his sight.

[*He struggles with her to come at the door.*

Vio. Hear me, Felix——Though I were sure the refusing what you ask would separate us for ever, by all that's powerful you shall not enter here! Either you do love me, or you do not: convince me by your obedience.

Fel. That's not the matter in debate——I will know who is in this closet, let the consequence be what it will. Nay, nay, you strive in vain: I will go in.

Vio. Thou shalt not go————

Enter DON PEDRO.

Ped. Hey-day! what's here to do? I will go in, and you shan't go in—and I will go in—— Why, who are you, sir?

Fel. 'Sdeath! what shall I say now?

Ped. Don Felix, pray, what's your business in my house? ha, sir?

Vio. Oh, sir, what miracle returned you home so soon? some angel 'twas that brought my father back to succour the distressed.——This ruffian, he—I cannot call him gentleman—has committed such an uncommon rudeness, as the most profligate wretch would be ashamed to own.

Fel. Ha! what the devil does she mean? [*Aside.*

Vio. As I was at my devotion in my closet, I heard a loud knocking at my door, mixed with a woman's voice, which seemed to imply she was in danger——

Fel. I am confounded! [*Aside.*

Vio. I flew to the door with the utmost speed, where a lady, veiled, rushed in upon me; who, falling on her knees, begged my protection from a gentleman, who, she said, pursued her. I took compassion on her tears, and locked her into this closet; but, in the surprise, having left open the door, this very person whom you see with his sword drawn, ran in, protesting, if I did not give her up to his revenge, he'd force the door.

Fel. What, in the name of goodness, does she mean to do? hang me? [*Aside.*

Vio. I strove with him, till I was out of breath; and had you not come as you did, he must have entered—But he's in drink, I suppose; or he could not have been guilty of such an indecorum. [*Leering at* FELIX.

Ped. I'm amazed!

Fel. The devil never failed a woman at a pinch:—what a tale has she formed in a minute! ——In drink, quotha! a good hint: I'll lay hold on't to bring myself off. [*Aside.*

Ped. Fy! Don Felix!—no sooner rid of one broil, than you are commencing another.——To assault a lady with a naked sword, derogates much from the character of a gentleman, I assure you.

Fel. [*Counterfeits drunkenness.*] Who, I assault a lady——upon honour, the lady assaulted me, sir, and would have seized this body-politic on the king's high-way—Let her come out, and deny it, if she can.——Pray, sir, command the door to be opened; and let her prove me a liar, if she knows how————I have been drinking Claret, and Champaign, and Burgundy, and other French wines, sir; but I love my own country, for all that.

Ped. Ay, ay, who doubts it, sir? Open the door, Violante, and let the lady come out. Come, I warrant thee he shan't hurt her.

Fel. No, no; I won't hurt the dear creature. ——Now, which way will she come off? [*Aside.*

Vio. [*Unlocks the door.*] Come forth, madam; none shall dare to touch your veil——I'll convey you out with safety, or lose my life.——I hope she understands me. [*Aside.*

Enter ISABELLA, *veiled, and crosses the stage.*

Isa. Excellent girl! [*Exit.*

Fel. The devil!—a woman!—I'll see if she be really so. [*Aside.*

Vio. [*To* FELIX.] Get clear of my father, and follow me to the Terriero de Passa, where all mistakes shall be rectified.

[*Exit with* ISABELLA. DON FELIX *offers to follow her.*

Ped. [*Drawing his sword.*] Not a step, sir, till the lady is past your recovery; I never suffer the laws of hospitality to be violated in my house, sir. ——I'll keep Don Felix here, till you see her safe out, Violante.——Come, sir, you and I will take a pipe and a bottle together.

Fel. Damn your pipe, and damn your bottle! —I hate drinking and smoking; and how will you help yourself, old whiskers?

Ped. As to smoking or drinking, you have your liberty; but you shall stay, sir.

Fel. But I won't stay—for I don't like your company; besides, I have the best reason in the world, for my not staying.

Ped. Ay, what's that?

Fel. Why, I am going to be married; and so, good bye.

Ped. To be married!—it can't be. Why, you are drunk, Felix.

Fel. Drunk! ay, to be sure; you don't think I'd go to be married, if I were sober——but, drunk or sober, I am going to be married, for all that——and if you won't believe me, to convince you, I'll show you the contract, old gentleman.

Ped. Ay, do; come, let's see this contract, then.

Fel. Yes, yes; I'll shew you the contract—I'll shew you the contract——Here, sir—here's the contract. [*Draws a pistol.*

Ped. [*Starting.*] Well, well, I'm convinced—go, go—pray go, and be married, sir.

Fel. Yes, yes; I'll go—I'll go and be married; but shan't we take a bottle, first?

Ped. No, no—pray, dear sir, go, and be married.

Fel. Very well, very well; [*Going.*] but I insist upon your taking one glass, though.

Ped. No, not now—some other time—consider the lady waits.

Fel. What a cross old fool! first he will, and then he won't; and then he will, and then he won't. [*Exit.*

Enter Servant.

Ser. Here's Don Lopez de Pimentell to wait on you, senior.

Ped. What the devil does he want? he is not going to be married, too!——Bring him up; he's in pursuit of his son, I suppose.

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. I am glad to find you at home, Don Pedro——I was told that you was upon the road to Don Juan's chateau this afternoon.

Ped. That might be, my lord; but I had the misfortune to break the wheel of my chariot, which obliged me to return.——What is your pleasure with me, my lord?

Lop. I am informed that my daughter is in your house.

Ped. That's more than I know, my lord; but here was your son, just now, as drunk as an emperor.

Lop. My son drunk!—I never saw him in drink in my life.—Where is he, pray, sir?

Ped. Gone to be married.

Lop. Married!—to whom!—I don't know that he courted any body.

Ped. Nay, I know nothing of that—but, I'm sure, he showed me the contract—Within, there!

Enter Servant.

Bid my daughter come hither; she'll tell you another story, my lord.

Ser. She's gone out in a chair, sir.

Ped. Out in a chair!—what do you mean, sir?

Ser. As I say, sir—and Donna Isabella went in another just before her.

Lop. Isabella!

Ser. And Don Felix followed in another—I overheard them all bid the chair go to the Terriero de Passa.

Ped. Ha! what business has my daughter there? I am confounded, and know not what to think—within there. [*Exit.*

Lop. My heart misgives me plaguily.——Call me an alguazil—I'll pursue them straight. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the street before* DON PEDRO'S *house.*

Enter LISSARDO.

Lis. I wish I could see Flora——methinks I have an hankering kindness after the slut——we must be reconciled.

Enter GIBBY.

Gib. Aw my sal, sir, but Ise blithe to find ye here now.

Lis. Ha, brother! give me thy hand, boy.

Gib. No se fast, se ye me—Brether me ne brethers; I scorn a leer as muckle as a thiefe, se ye now, and ye must gang intul this house with me, and justifie to Donna Violante's face, that she was the lady that ganged in here this morn, se ye me, or the deel ha my saul, sir, but ye and I shall be twa folks.

Lis. Justify it to Donna Violante's face, quotha! For what? Sure you don't know what you say.

Gib. Troth de I, sir, as weel as ye dee; therefore, come along, and make na mair words about it.

Lis. Why, what the devil do ye mean? Don't you consider you are in Portugal? Is the fellow mad?

Gib. Fellow! Ise none of yer fellow, sir; and gin the place were hell, I'd gar ye do me justice. [LISSARDO *going.*] Nay, the deel a fit ye gang.

[*Lays hold of him, and knocks.*

Lis. Ha! Don Pedro himself: I wish I were fairly off. [*Aside.*

Enter DON PEDRO.

Ped. How now? What makes you knock so loud?

Gib. Gin this be Don Pedro's house, sir, I would speak with Donna Violante, his daughter.

Ped. Ha! what is it you want with my daughter, pray?

Gib. An she be your daughter, and lik your honour, command her to come out, and answer for herself now, and either justify or disprove what this chield told me this morn.

Lis. So, here will be a fine piece of work! [*Aside.*

Ped. Why, what did he tell you, ha?

Gib. By my saul, sir, Ise tell you aw the truth.—My master got a pratty lady upon the how de call't——Passa—here at five this morn, and he gar'd me watch her heam—and, in troth, lodged her here; and, meeting this ill-favoured thiefe, se ye me, I speered wha she was—and he tald me her name was Donna Violante, Don Pedro de Mendosa's daughter.

Ped. Ha! my daughter with a man, abroad at five in the morning! Death, hell, and furies! By St Anthony, I'm undone!

Gib. Wounds, sir! ye put yer saint intul bonny company.

Ped. Who is your master, you dog you? Adsheart, I shall be tricked of my daughter and money, too, that's worst of all.

Gib. You dog you! 'sblead, sir! dinna ca'

names—I wunna tell you who my master is, se ye me no v?

Ped. And who are you, rascal, that know my daughter so well? ha! [*Holds up his cane.*

Lis. What shall I say, to make him give this Scotch dog a good beating? [*Aside.*]——I know your daughter, signior! Not I; I never saw your daughter in all my life.

Gib. [*Knocks him down with his fist.*] Deel ha my saul, sar, gin ye get no your carich for that lie now.

Ped. What, hoa! where are all my servants?

Enter COLONEL, FELIX, ISABELLA, *and* VIOLANTE.

Raise the house in pursuit of my daughter!

Ser. Here she comes, signior.

Col. Hey-day! what's here to do?

Gib. This is the loon-like tike, an lik your honour, that sent me heam with a lee this morn.

Col. Come, come; 'tis all well, Gibby; let him rise.

Ped. I am thunderstruck—and have no power to speak one word.

Fel. This is a day of jubilee, Lissardo; no quarrelling with him this day.

Lis. A pox take his fists!—Egad! these Britons are but a word and a blow.

Enter DON LOPEZ.

Lop. So, have I found you, daughter? Then you have not hanged yourself yet, I see.

Col. But she is married, my lord.

Lop. Married! Zounds! to whom?

Col. Even to your humble servant, my lord. If you please to give us your blessing. [*Kneels.*

Lop. Why, hark ye, mistress, are you really married?

Isa. Really so, my lord.

Lop. And who are you, sir?

Col. An honest North Briton by birth, and a colonel by commission, my lord.

Lop. An heretic! the devil!

[*Holding up his hands.*

Ped. She has played you a slippery trick, indeed, my lord.—Well, my girl, thou hast been to see thy friend married——next week thou shalt have a better husband, my dear.

[*To* VIOLANTE.

Fel. Next week is a little too soon, sir; I hope to live longer than that.

Ped. What do you mean, sir? You have not made a rib of my daughter, too, have you?

Vio. Indeed but he has, sir; I know not how, but he took me in an unguarded minute—when my thoughts were not over-strong for a nunnery, father.

Lop. Your daughter has played you a slippery trick, too, signior.

Ped. But your son shall never be the better for it, my lord; her twenty thousand pounds was left on certain conditions, and I'll not part with a shilling.

Lop. But we have a certain thing, called law, shall make you do justice, sir.

Ped. Well, we'll try that—my lord, much good may it do you with your daughter-in-law. [*Exit.*

Lop. I wish you much joy of your rib. [*Exit.*

Enter FREDERICK.

Fel. Frederick, welcome!—I sent for thee to be partaker of my happiness; and pray give me leave to introduce you to the cause of it.

Fred. Your messenger has told me all, and I sincerely share in all your happiness.

Col. To the right about, Frederick; wish thy friend joy.

Fred. I do, with all my soul—and, madam, I congratulate your deliverance.—Your suspicions are cleared now, I hope, Felix?

Fel. They are; and I heartily ask the colonel pardon, and wish him happy with my sister; for love has taught me to know, that every man's happiness consists in choosing for himself.

Lis. After that rule, I fix here. [*To* FLORA.

Flo. That's your mistake; I prefer my lady's service, and turn you over to her that pleaded right and title to you to-day.

Lis. Choose, proud fool! I sha'nt ask you twice.

Gib. What say ye now, lass?—will ye gee yer hond to poor Gibby?—What say you? will you dance the reel of Bogie with me?

Inis. That I may not leave my lady, I take you at your word; and, though our wooing has been short, I'll, by her example, love you dearly.

[*Music plays.*

Fel. Hark! I hear the music; somebody has done us the favour to call them in.

[*A country-dance.*

Gib. Wounds, this is bonny music!——How caw ye that thing that ye pinch by the craig, and tickle the weamb, and make it cry grum, grum?

Fred. Oh! that's a guitar, Gibby.

Fel. Now, my Violante, I shall proclaim thy virtues to the world.

Let us no more thy sex's conduct blame,
Since thou'rt a proof, to their eternal fame,
That man has no advantage, but the name.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

DRUMMER;

OR,

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

BY

ADDISON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR GEORGE TRUMAN, *supposed dead.*
TINSEL, *a coxcomb pretending to* LADY TRUMAN.
FANTOME, *the drummer.*
VELLUM, SIR GEORGE TRUMAN'S *steward.*
BUTLER.
COACHMAN.
GARDENER.

WOMEN.

LADY TRUMAN, *supposed widow of* SIR GEORGE,
ABIGAIL, *her maid.*

Scene—A county in England.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A great hall.*

Enter the BUTLER, COACHMAN, *and* GARDENER.

But. There came another coach to town last night, that brought a gentleman to inquire about this strange noise we hear in the house. This spirit will bring a power of custom to the George.——If so be he continues his pranks, I design to sell a pot of ale, and set up the sign of the drum.

Coach. I'll give madam warning, that's flat—I've always lived in sober families—I'll not disparage my-self to be a servant in a house that is haunted.

Gard. I'll e'en marry Nell, and rent a bit of ground of my own, if both of you leave madam; not but that madam is a very good woman, if Mrs Abigail did not spoil her.——Come, here's her health.

But. 'Tis a very hard thing to be a butler in a house that is disturbed. He made such a racket in the cellar last night, that I'm afraid he'll sour all the beer in my barrels.

Coach. Why, then, John, we ought to take it off as fast as we can.—Here's to you.—He rattled so loud under the tiles last night, that I verily thought the house would have fallen over our heads. I durst not go up into the cock-loft this morning, if I had not got one of the maids to go along with me.

Gard. I thought I heard him in one of my bed-posts. I marvel, John, how he gets into the house, when all the gates are shut!

But. Why, look ye, Peter, your spirit will creep you into an augre-hole——he'll whisk ye through a key-hole, without so much as justling against one of the wards.

Coach. Poor madam is mainly frighted, that's certain; and verily believes it is my master, that was killed in the last campaign.

But. Out of all manner of question, Robin,

'tis sir George. Mrs Abigail is of opinion, it can be none but his honour. He always liked the wars; and, you know, was mightly pleased, from a child, with the music of a drum.

Gard. I wonder his body was never found after the battle.

But. Found! Why, ye fool, is not his body here about the house? Dost thou think he can beat his drum without hands and arms?

Coach. 'Tis master, as sure as I stand here alive; and I verily believe I saw him last night in the town-close.

Gard. Ay! How did he appear?

Coach. Like a white horse.

But. Phoo, Robin! I tell ye he has never appeared yet, but in the shape of the sound of a drum.

Coach. This makes one almost afraid of one's own shadow. As I was walking from the stable t'other night, without my lanthorn, I fell across a beam that lay in my way; and faith my heart was in my mouth. I thought I had stumbled over a spirit!

But. Thou might'st as well have stumbled over a straw. Why, a spirit is such a little thing, that I have heard a man, who was a great scholar, say, that he'll dance you a Lancashire hornpipe upon the point of a needle. As I sat in the pantry last night, counting my spoons, the candle, methought, burnt blue, and the spayed bitch looked as if she saw something.

Coach. Ay, poor cur, she is almost frightened out of her wits!

Gard. Ay, I warrant ye, she hears him, many a time and often, when we don't.

But. My lady must have him laid, that's certain, whatever it cost her.

Gard. I fancy, when one goes to market, one might hear of somebody that can make a spell.

Coach. Why, may not the parson of our parish lay him?

But. No, no, no; our parson cannot lay him.

Coach. Why not he, as well as another man?

But. Why, ye fool, he is not qualified. He has not taken the oaths.

Gard. Why, d'ye think, John, that the spirit would take the law of him? Faith, I could tell you one way to drive him off.

Coach. How's that?

Gard. I'll tell you immediately.—[*Drinks.*]—I fancy Mrs Abigail might scold him out of the house.

Coach. Ay, she has a tongue that would drown his drum, if any thing could.

But. Pugh, this is all froth; you understand nothing of the matter. The next time it makes a noise, I tell you what ought to be done——I would have the steward speak Latin to it.

Coach. Ay, that would do, if the steward had but courage.

Gard. There you have it. He's a fearful man. If I had as much learning as he, and I met the ghost, I'd tell him his own. But, alack! what can one of us poor men do with a spirit, that can neither write nor read?

But. Thou art always cracking and boasting, Peter; thou dost not know what mischief it might do thee, if such a silly dog as thee should offer to speak to it. For aught I know, he might flea thee alive, and make parchment of thy skin, to cover his drum with.

Gard. A fiddlestick! tell not me—I fear nothing, not I. I never did harm in my life; I never committed murder.

But. I verily believe thee. Keep thy temper, Peter; after supper we'll drink each of us a double mug, and then let come what will.

Gard. Why, that's well said, John—An honest man, that is not quite sober, has nothing to fear—Here's to ye———Why, now, if he should come this minute, here would I stand——Ha! what noise is that?

But. Coach. Ha! where?

Gard. The devil! the devil! Oh, no, 'tis Mrs Abigail.

But. Ay, faith! 'tis she; 'tis Mrs Abigail! A good mistake; 'tis Mrs Abigail.

Enter ABIGAIL.

Abi. Here are your drunken sots for you! Is this a time to be guzzling, when gentry are come to the house! Why don't you lay your cloth? How come you out of the stables? Why are you not at work in your garden?

Gard. Why, yonder's the fine Londoner and madam fetching a walk together; and, methought, they looked as if they should say, they had rather have my room than my company.

But. And so, forsooth, being all three met together, we are doing our endeavours to drink this same drummer out of our heads.

Gard. For you must know, Mrs Abigail, we are all of opinion, that one cannot be a match for him, unless one be as drunk as a drum.

Coach. I am resolved to give madam warning to hire herself another coachman; for I came to serve my master, d'ye see, while he was alive; but do suppose that he has no further occasion for a coach, now he walks.

But. Truly, Mrs Abigail, I must needs say, that this spirit is a very odd sort of a body, after all, to fright madam, and his old servants, at this rate.

Gard. And truly, Mrs Abigail, I must needs say, I served my master contentedly, while he was living; but I will serve no man living (that is, no man that is not living) without double wages.

Abi. Ay, 'tis such cowards as you that go about with idle stories, to disgrace the house, and bring so many strangers about it: you first frighten yourselves, and then your neighbours.

Gard. Frightened! I scorn your words: frightened, quotha!

Abi. What, you sot! are you grown pot-valiant?

Gard. Frightened with a drum! that's a good one! It will do us no harm, I'll answer for it: it will bring no blood-shed along with it, take my word. It sounds as like a train-band drum as ever I heard in my life.

But. Pr'ythee, Peter, don't be so presumptuous.

Abi. Well, these drunken rogues take it as I could wish. [*Aside.*

Gard. I scorn to be frightened, now I am in for't; if old dub-a-dub come into the room, I would take him———

But. Prithee, hold thy tongue.

Gard. I would take him———

[*The drum beats: the Gardener endeavours to get off, and falls.*

But. Coach. Speak to it, Mrs Abigail!

Gard. Spare my life, and take all I have!

Coach. Make off, make off, good butler, and let us go hide ourselves in the cellar.

[*They all run off.*

Abi. So, now the coast is clear, I may venture to call out my drummer—But first, let me shut the door, lest we be surprised. Mr Fantome! Mr Fantome!—[*He beats*]—Nay, nay, pray come out: the enemy's fled——I must speak with you immediately——Don't stay to beat a parley.

[*The back scene opens, and discovers* FANTOME *with a drum.*

Fan. Dear Mrs Nabby, I have overheard all that has been said, and find thou hast managed this thing so well, that I could take thee in my arms and kiss thee——If my drum did not stand in my way.

Abi. Well, o' my conscience, you are the merriest ghost! and the very picture of sir George Truman.

Fan. There you flatter me, Mrs Abigail: sir George had that freshness in his looks, that we men of the town cannot come up to.

Abi. Oh, death may have altered you, you know—Besides, you must consider, you lost a great deal of blood in the battle.

Fan. Aye, that's right; let me look never so pale, this cut cross my forehead will keep me in countenance.

Abi. 'Tis just such a one as my master received from a cursed French trooper, as my lady's letter informed her.

Fan. It happens luckily, that this suit of clothes of sir George's fits me so well——I think I cannot fail hitting the air of a man with whom I was so long acquainted.

Abi. You are the very man—I vow I almost start, when I look upon you.

Fan. But what good will this do me, if I must remain invisible?

Abi. Pray, what good did your being visible do you? The fair Mr Fantome thought no woman could withstand him—But, when you were seen by my lady in your proper person, after she had taken a full survey of you, and heard all the pretty things you could say, she very civilly dismissed you for the sake of this empty, noisy creature, Tinsel. She fancies you have been gone from hence this fortnight.

Fan. Why, really, I love thy lady so well, that, though I had no hopes of gaining her for myself, I could not bear to see her given to another, especially such a wretch as Tinsel.

Abi. Well, tell me truly, Mr Fantome, have not you a great opinion of my fidelity to my dear lady, that I would not suffer her to be deluded in this manner for less than a thousand pounds?

Fan. Thou art always reminding me of my promise—thou shalt have it, if thou canst bring our project to bear: dost not know, that stories of ghosts and apparitions generally end in a pot of money?

Abi. Why, truly, now, Mr Fantome, I should think myself a very bad woman, if I had done what I do for a farthing less.

Fan. Dear Abigail, how I admire thy virtue!

Abi. No, no, Mr Fantome; I defy the worst of my enemies to say I love mischief for mischief's sake.

Fan. But is thy lady persuaded that I'm the ghost of her deceased husband?

Abi. I endeavour to make her believe so: and tell her, every time your drum rattles, that her husband is chiding her for entertaining this new lover.

Fan. Prithee, make use of all thy art: for I'm tired to death with strolling round this wide old house, like a rat behind the wainscoat.

Abi. Did not I tell you, 'twas the purest place in the world for you to play your tricks in? There's none of the family that knows every hole and corner in it, besides myself.

Fan. Ah, Mrs Abigail! You have had your intrigues——

Abi. For, you must know, when I was a romping young girl, I was a mighty lover of hide and seek.

Fan. I believe, by this time, I am as well acquainted with the house as yourself.

Abi. You are very much mistaken, Mr Fantome: but no matter for that; here is to be your station to-night. This place is unknown to any one living, besides myself, since the death of the joiner, who, you must understand, being a lover of mine, contrived the wainscoat to move to and fro, in the manner that you find it. I designed it for a wardrobe for my lady's clothes. Oh, the stomachers, stays, petticoats, commodes, laced shoes, and good things, that I have had in it! Pray, take care you don't break the cherry brandy bottle, that stands up in the corner.

Fan. Well, Mrs Abigail, I hire your closet of you but for this one night—A thousand pounds you know, is a very good rent.

Abi. Well, get you gone: you have such a way with you, there's no denying you any thing.

Fan. I am thinking how Tinsel will stare, when he sees me come out of the wall; for I am resolved to make my appearance to-night.

Abi. Get you in, get you in; my lady's at the door.

Fan. Pray, take care she does not keep me up so late as she did last night, or, depend upon it, I'll beat the tattoo.

Abi. I'm undone, I'm undone!—[*As he is going in.*]—Mr Fantome! Mr Fantome! Have you put the thousand pound bond into my brother's hand?

Fan. Thou shalt have it; I tell thee, thou shalt have it.

[FANTOME *goes in.*

Abi. No more words—Vanish, vanish!

Enter LADY TRUEMAN.

Abi. [*Opening the door.*]—Oh, dear madam, was it you that made such a knocking? My heart does so beat——I vow you have frighted me to death——I thought, verily, it had been the drummer.

Lady True. I have been shewing the garden to Mr Tinsel: he's most insufferably witty upon us, about this story of the drum.

Abi. Indeed, madam, he's a very loose man: I'm afraid 'tis he that hinders my poor master from resting in his grave.

Lady True. Well, an infidel is such a novelty in the country, that I am resolved to divert myself a day or two, at least, with the oddness of his conversation.

Abi. Ah, madam, the drum began to beat in the house, as soon as ever that creature was admitted to visit you. All the while Mr Fantome made his addresses to you, there was not a mouse stirring in the family, more than used to be—

Lady True. This baggage has some design upon me, more than I can yet discover.—[*Aside.*]—Mr Fantome was always thy favourite.

Abi. Aye, and should have been yours, too, by my consent. Mr Fantome was not such a slight fantastic thing as this is—Mr Fantome was the best built man one should see in a summer's day! Mr Fantome was a man of honour, and loved you. Poor soul! how has he sighed, when he has talked to me of my hard-hearted lady. Well, I had as lief as a thousand pounds, you would marry Mr Fantome.

Lady True. To tell thee truly, I loved him well enough, till he loved me so much. But Mr Tinsel makes his court to me with so much neglect and indifference, and with such an agreeable sauciness—Not that I say I'll marry him.

Abi. Marry him, quotha! No—if you should, you'll be awakened sooner than married couples generally are—You'll quickly have a drum at your window.

Lady True. I'll hide my contempt of Tinsel for once, if it be but to see what this wench drives at. [*Aside.*

Abi. Why, suppose your husband, after this fair warning he has given you, should sound you an alarm at midnight; then open your curtains with a face as pale as my apron, and cry out with a hollow voice—What dost thou do in bed with this spindle-shanked fellow?

Lady True. Why wilt thou needs have it to be my husband? He never had any reason to be offended at me. I always loved him while he was living; and should prefer him to any man, were he so still. Mr Tinsel is, indeed, very idle in his talk: but I fancy, Abigail, a discreet woman might reform him.

Abi. That's a likely matter, indeed! Did you ever hear of a woman who had power over a man when she was his wife, that had none while she was his mistress? Oh, there's nothing in the world improves a man in his complaisance like marriage!

Lady True. He is, indeed, at present, too familiar in his conversation.

Abi. Familiar, madam! in troth, he's downright rude.

Lady True. But that, you know, Abigail, shews he has no dissimulation in him——Then he is apt to jest a little too much upon grave subjects.

Abi. Grave subjects! He jests upon the church.

Lady True. You talk as if you hated him.

Abi. You talk as if you loved him.

Lady True. Hold your tongue; here he comes.

Enter TINSEL.

Tin. My dear widow!

Abi. My dear widow! Marry come up! [*Aside.*

Lady True. Let him alone, Abigail; so long as he does not call me my dear wife, there's no harm done.

Tin. I have been most ridiculously diverted since I left you——Your servants have made a convert of my booby: his head is so filled with this foolish story of a drummer, that I expect the rogue will be afraid hereafter to go a message by moon-light.

Lady True. Aye, Mr Tinsel, what a loss of billet-doux would that be to many a fine lady!

Abi. Then you still believe this to be a foolish story? I thought my lady had told you, that she had heard it herself.

Tin. Ha, ha, ha!

Abi. Why, you would not persuade us out of our senses?

Tin. Ha, ha, ha!

Abi. There's manners for you, madam! [*Aside.*

Lady True. Admirably rallied! That laugh was unanswerable! Now, I'll be hanged if you could forbear being witty upon me, if I should

tell you I heard it no longer ago than last night.

Tin. Fancy!

Lady True. But what if I should tell you my maid was with me?

Tin. Vapours, vapours! Pray, my dear widow, will you answer me one question? Had you ever this noise of a drum in your head, all the while your husband was living? Believe me, madam, I could prescribe you a cure for these imaginations.

Abi. Don't tell my lady of imaginations, sir; I have heard it myself.

Tin. Hark thee, child——Art thou an old maid?

Abi. Sir, if I am, it is my own fault.

Tin. Whims! Freaks! Megrims! indeed, Mrs Abigail.

Abi. Marry, sir, by your talk, one would believe you thought every thing that was good is a megrim.

Lady True. Though you give no credit to stories of apparitions, I hope you believe there are such things as spirits?

Tin. Simplicity!

Abi. I fancy you don't believe women have souls, d'ye, sir?

Tin. Foolish enough! But where's this ghost? this son of a whore of a drummer? I'd fain hear him, methinks.

Abi. Pray, madam, don't suffer him to give the ghost such ill language, especially when you have reason to believe it is my master.

Tin. That's well enough, faith, Nab; dost thou think thy master so unreasonable, as to continue his claim to his relict after his bones are laid? Pray, widow, remember the words of your contract—you have fulfilled them to a tittle—Did not you marry sir George to the tune of *Till death us do part?*

Lady True. I must not hear sir George's memory treated in so slight a manner.

Tin. Give me but possession of your person, and I'll whirl you up to town for a winter, and cure you at once. Oh, we'd pass all our time in London. 'Tis the scene of pleasure and diversions, where there's something to amuse you every hour of the day. Life's not life in the country.

Lady True. Well, then, you have an opportunity of shewing the sincerity of that love to me which you profess. You may give a proof that you have an affection to my person, not my jointure.

Tin. Your jointure! How can you think me such a dog? But, child, won't your jointure be the same thing in London, as in the country?

Lady True. No; you're deceived. You must know it is settled on me by marriage articles, on condition that I live in this old mansion-house, and keep it up in repair.

Tin. How!

Abi. That's well put, madam.

Tin. Why, faith, I have been looking upon this house, and think it is the prettiest habitation I ever saw in my life.

Lady True. Aye, but then this cruel drum!

Tin. Something so venerable in it!

Lady True. Aye, but the drum!

Tin. For my part, I like this Gothic way of building better than any of your new orders—— it would be a thousand pities it should fall to ruin.

Lady True. Aye, but the drum!

Tin. How pleasantly we two could pass our time in this delicious situation! Our lives would be a continued dream of happiness Come, faith, widow, let's go upon the leads, and take a view of the country.

Lady True. Aye, but the drum! the drum!

Tin. My dear, take my word for it, 'tis all fancy: besides, should he drum in thy very bedchamber, I should only hug thee the closer.

Clasped in the folds of love, I'd meet my doom,
And act my joys, though thunder shook the room. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Opens and discovers* VELLUM *in his office, and a letter in his hand.*

Vel. This letter astonisheth; may I believe my own eyes—or rather my spectacles——To Humphrey Vellum, esq. steward to the lady Trueman.

'VELLUM,

'I doubt not but you will be glad to hear your 'master is alive, and designs to be with you in 'half an hour. The report of my being slain in 'the Netherlands, has, I find, produced some 'disorders in my family. I am now at the 'George Inn. If an old man with a grey beard, 'in a black cloak, enquires after you, give him 'admittance. He passes for a conjurer, but is 'really

'Your faithful friend,

'G. TRUEMAN.

'P. S. Let this be a secret, and you shall find 'your account in it.'

This amazeth me! and yet the reasons why I should believe he is still living are manifold—— First, because this has often been the case of other military adventurers. Secondly, because this news of his death was first published in Dyer's Letter. Thirdly, because this letter can be written by none but himself——I know his hand, and manner of spelling. Fourthly——

Enter BUTLER.

But. Sir, here's a strange old gentleman that asks for you; he says he's a coujurer, but he looks very suspicious; I wish he ben't a Jesuit.

Vel. Admit him immediately,

But. I wish he ben't a Jesuit; but he says he's nothing but a conjurer.

Vel. He says right—He is no more than a conjurer. Bring him in, and withdraw. [*Exit Butler.*]——And fourthly, as I was saying, because——

Enter Butler, with SIR GEORGE.

But. Sir, here's the conjurer———What a devilish long beard he has! I warrant it has been growing these hundred years. [*Aside. Exit.*

Sir Geo. Dear Vellum, you have received my letter: but, before we proceed, lock the door.

Vel. It is his voice. [*Shuts the door.*

Sir Geo. In the next place, help me off with this cumbersome cloak.

Vel. It is his shape.

Sir Geo. So; now, lay my beard upon the table.

Vel. [*After having looked on* SIR GEORGE *through his spectacles.*] It is his face, every lineament!

Sir Geo. Well, now I have put off the conjurer and the old man, I can talk to thee more at my ease.

Vel. Believe me, my good master, I am as much rejoiced to see you alive, as I was upon the day you were born. Your name is in all the newspapers in the list of those that were slain.

Sir Geo. We have not time to be particular. I shall only tell thee, in general, that I was taken prisoner in the battle, and was under close confinement several months. Upon my release, I was resolved to surprize my wife with the news of being alive. I know, Vellum, you are a person of so much penetration, that I need not use any further arguments to convince you that I am so.

Vel. I am—and moreover, I question not but your good lady will likewise be convinced of it. Her honour is a discerning lady.

Sir Geo. I am only afraid she could be convinced of it to her sorrow. Is she not pleased with her imaginary widowhood? Tell me truly; was she afflicted at the report of my death?

Vel. Sorely.

Sir Geo. How long did her grief last?

Vel. Longer than I have known any widow's—at least three days.

Sir Geo. Three days, say'st thou?—Three whole days!—I am afraid thou flatterest me—Oh, woman, woman!

Vel. Grief is twofold———

Sir Geo. This blockhead is as methodical as ever—but I know he is honest. [*Aside.*

Vel. There is a real grief, and there is a methodical grief: she was drowned in tears till such time as the tailor had made her widow's weeds———Indeed, they became her.

Sir Geo. Became her! and was that her comfort? Truly, a most seasonable consolation!

Vel. I must needs say she paid a due regard to your memory, and could not forbear weeping when she saw company.

Sir Geo. That was kind, indeed! I find she grieved with a great deal of good breeding. But how comes this gang of lovers about her?

Vel. Her jointure is considerable.

Sir Geo. How this fool torments me! [*Aside.*

Vel. Her person is amiable.

Sir Geo. Death! [*Aside.*

Vel. But her character is unblemished. She has been as virtuous in your absence as a Penelope——

Sir Geo. And has had as many suitors?

Vel. Several have made their overtures.

Sir Geo. Several!

Vel. But she has rejected all.

Sir Geo. There thou revivest me! But what means this Tinsel? Are his visits acceptable?

Vel. He is young.

Sir Geo Does she listen to him?

Vel. He is gay.

Sir Geo. Sure she could never entertain a thought of marrying such a coxcomb!

Vel. He is not ill made.

Sir Geo. Are the vows and protestations that passed between us come to this? I can't bear the thought of it! Is Tinsel the man designed for my worthy successor?

Vel. You do not consider that you have been dead these fourteen months———

Sir Geo. Was there ever such a dog! [*Aside.*

Vel. And I have often heard her say, that she must never expect to find a second sir George Trueman—meaning your ho—nour.

Sir Geo. I think she loved me! but I must search into this story of the drummer, before I discover myself to her. I have put on this habit of a conjurer, in order to introduce myself. It must be your business to recommend me as a most profound person, that, by my great knowledge in the curious arts, can silence the drummer, and dispossess the house.

Vel. I am going to lay my accounts before my lady; and I will endeavour to prevail upon her ho—nour to admit the trial of your art.

Sir Geo. I have scarce heard of any of these stories, that did not arise from a love-intrigue.—Amours raise as many ghosts as murders.

Vel. Mrs Abigail endeavours to persuade us, that 'tis your ho—nour who troubles the house.

Sir Geo. That convinces me 'tis a cheat; for I think, Vellum, I may be pretty well assured it is not me.

Vel. I am apt to think so, truly. Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Geo. Abigail had always an ascendant over her lady; and if there is a trick in this matter, depend upon it, she is at the bottom of it. I'll be hanged if this ghost is not one of Abigail's familiars!

Vel. Mrs Abigail has of late been very mysterious.

Sir Geo. I fancy, Vellum, thou couldst worm it out of her. I know formerly there was an amour between you.

Vel. Mrs Abigail hath her allurements; and she knows I have picked up a competency in your honour's service.

Sir Geo. If thou hast, all I ask of thee, in return, is, that thou wouldst immediately renew thy addresses to her. Coax her up. Thou hast such a silver tongue, Vellum, as 'twill be impossible for her to withstand. Besides, she is so very a woman, that she'll like you the better for giving her the pleasure of telling a secret. In short, wheedle her out of it, and I shall act by the advice which thou givest me.

Vel. Mrs Abigail was never deaf to me, when I talked upon that subject. I will take an opportunity of addressing myself to her in the most pathetic manner.

Sir Geo. In the mean time, lock me up in your office, and bring me word what success you have——Well, sure I am the first that ever was employed to lay himself!

Vel. You act, indeed, a threefold part in this house; you are a ghost, a conjurer, and my ho—noured master, sir George Trueman; he, he, he! You will pardon me for being jocular.

Sir Geo. Oh, Mr Vellum, with all my heart! You know I love you men of wit and humour. Be as merry as thou pleasest, so thou dost thy business. [*Mimicking him.*] You will remember, Vellum, your commission is twofold; first, to gain admission for me to your lady; and, secondly, to get the secret out of Abigail.

Vel. It sufficeth. [*The scene shuts.*

Enter LADY TRUEMAN.

Lady True. Women, who have been happy in a first marriage, are the most apt to venture upon a second. But, for my part, I had a husband so every way suited to my inclinations, that I must entirely forget him, before I can like another man. I have now been a widow but fourteen months, and have had twice as many lovers, all of them professed admirers of my person, but passionately in love with my jointure. I think it is a revenge I owe my sex, to make an example of this worthless tribe of fellows. But, here comes Abigail; I must tease the baggage; for, I find she has taken it into her head, that I'm entirely at her disposal.

Enter ABIGAIL.

Abi. Madam, madam! yonder's Mr Tinsel has as good as taken possession of your house. Marry, he says, he must have sir George's apartment enlarged; for, truly, says he, I hate to be straiten ed. Nay, he was so impudent as to shew me the chamber where he intends to consummate, as he calls it.

Lady True. Well, he's a wild fellow.

Abi. Indeed, he's a very sad man, madam.

Lady True. He's young, Abigail; 'tis a thousand pities he should be lost; I should be mighty glad to reform him!

Abi. Reform him! marry, hang him!

Lady True. Has he not a great deal of life?

Abi. Ay! enough to make your heart ache.

Lady True. I dare say thou think'st him a very agreeable fellow.

Abi. He thinks himself so, I'll answer for him.

Lady True. He's very good-natured.

Abi. He ought to be so; for he's very silly.

Lady True. Dost thou think he loves me?

Abi. Mr Fantome did, I'm sure.

Lady True. With what raptures he talked!

Abi. Yes; but 'twas in praise of your jointure-house.

Lady True. He has kept bad company.

Abi. They must be very bad, indeed, if they were worse than himself.

Lady True. I have a strong fancy a good woman might reform him.

Abi. It would be a fine experiment, if it should not succeed.

Lady True. Well, Abigail, we'll talk of that another time. Here comes the steward. I have no further occasion for you at present.

[*Exit* ABI.

Enter VELLUM.

Vel. Madam, is your ho-nour at leisure to look into the accounts of the last week? They rise very high. Housekeeping is chargeable in a house that is haunted.

Lady True. How comes that to pass? I hope the drum neither eats nor drinks. But read your account, Vellum.

Vel. [*Putting on and off his spectacles in this scene.*] A hogshead and a half of ale—It is not for the ghost's drinking; but your ho—nour's servants say, they must have something to keep up their courage against this strange noise. They tell me, they expect a double quantity of malt in their small beer, so long as the house continues in this condition.

Lady True. At this rate, they'll take care to be frightened all the year round, I'll answer for them. But go on.

Vel. Item, Two sheep, and a—Where is the ox?—Oh, here I have him!—and an ox—Your ho—nour must always have a piece of cold beef in the house, for the entertainment of so many strangers, who come from all parts to hear this drum. *Item*, Bread, ten peck loaves—They cannot eat beef without bread. *Item*, Three barrels of table beer—They must have drink with their meat.

Lady True. Sure no woman in England has

a steward that makes such ingenious comments on his works! [*Aside.*

Vel. Item, To Mr Tinsel's servants, five bottles of port wine—It was by your ho—nour's order. *Item,* Three bottles of sack, for the use of Mrs Abigail.

Lady True. I suppose that was by your own order.

Vel. We have been long friends; we are your honour's ancient servants. Sack is an innocent cordial; and gives her spirit to chide the servants, when they are tardy in their business; he, he, he! Pardon me for being jocular.

Lady True. Well, I see you'll come together at last.

Vel. Item, A dozen pound of watch-lights, for the use of the servants.

Lady True. For the use of the servants! What! are the rogues afraid of sleeping in the dark? What an unfortunate woman am I! This is such a particular distress, it puts me to my wits end. Vellum, what would you advise me to do?

Vel. Madam, your ho—nour has two points to consider. *Imprimis,* To retrench these extravagant expences, which bring so many strangers upon you—Secondly, to clear the house of this invisible drummer.

Lady True. This learned division leaves me just as wise as I was. But how must we bring these two points to bear?

Vel. I beseech your ho—nour to give me the hearing.

Lady True. I do; but, prithee, take pity on me, and be not tedious.

Vel. I will be concise. There is a certain person arrived this morning, an aged man, of a venerable aspect, and of a long, hoary beard, that reacheth down to his girdle. The common people call him a wizard, a white-witch, a conjurer, a cunning man, a necromancer, a ——

Lady True. No matter for his titles. But what of all this?

Vel. Give me the hearing, good my lady. He pretends to great skill in the occult sciences, and is come hither upon the rumour of this drum. If one may believe him, he knows the secret of laying ghosts, or of quieting houses that are haunted.

Lady True. Pho! these are idle stories, to amuse the country people: this can do us no good.

Vel. It can do us no harm, my lady.

Lady True. I dare say, thou dost not believe there is any thing in it thyself?

Vel. I cannot say I do; there is no danger, however, in the experiment. Let him try his skill; if it should succeed, we are rid of the drum; if it should not, we may tell the world that it has, and, by that means, at least get out of this expensive way of living; so that it must turn to your advantage, one way or another.

Lady True. I think you argue very rightly. But where is the man? I would fain see him. He must be a curiosity.

Vel. I have already discoursed him, and he is to be with me, in my office, half an hour hence. He asks nothing for his pains till he has done his work—No cure, no money.

Lady True. That circumstance, I must confess, would make one believe there is more in his art than one would imagine. Pray, Vellum, go and fetch him hither immediately.

Vel. I am gone. He shall be forth-coming forthwith. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Opens, and discovers SIR GEORGE *in* VELLUM'S *office.*

Sir Geo. I WONDER I don't hear of Vellum yet. But I know his wisdom will do nothing rashly. This fellow has been so used to form in business, that it has infected his whole conversation. But I must not find fault with that punctual and exact behaviour which has been of so much use to me; my estate is the better for it.

Enter VELLUM.

Well, Vellum, I'm impatient to hear your success.

Vel. First, let me lock the door.

Sir Geo. Will your lady admit me?

Vel. If this lock is not mended soon, it will be quite spoiled.

Sir Geo. Prithee, let the lock alone at present, and answer me.

Vel. Delays in business are dangerous—I must send for the smith next week; and, in the mean time, will take a minute of it.

Sir Geo. But what says your lady?

Vel. This pen is naught, and wants mending—My lady, did you say?

Sir Geo. Does she admit me?

Vel. I have gained admission for you as a conjurer.

Sir Geo. That's enough—I'll gain admission for myself as a husband. Does she believe there's any thing in my art?

Vel. It is hard to know what a woman believes.

Sir Geo. Did she ask no questions about me?

Vel. Sundry——She desires to talk with you herself, before you enter upon your business.

Sir Geo. But when?

Vel. Immediately—this instant.

Sir Geo. Pugh! what hast thou been doing all this while? Why didst not tell me so? Give me my cloak—Have you met with Abigail?

Vel. I have not yet had an opportunity of talking with her; but we have interchanged some languishing glances.

Sir Geo. Let thee alone for that, Vellum. I have formerly seen thee ogle her through thy spectacles. Well, this is a most venerable cloak. After the business of this day is over, I'll make thee a present of it. 'Twill become thee mightily.

Vel. He, he, he! Would you make a conjurer of your steward?

Sir Geo. Prithee, don't be jocular; I'm in haste. Help me on with my beard.

Vel. And what will your honour do with your cast beard?

Sir Geo. Why, faith, thy gravity wants only such a beard to it. If thou wouldst wear it with the cloak, thou wouldst make a most complete heathen philosopher. But where's my wand?

Vel. A fine taper stick—It is well chosen. I will keep this till you are sheriff of the county. It is not my custom to let any thing be lost.

Sir Geo. Come, Vellum, lead the way. You must introduce me to your lady. Thou art the fittest fellow in the world to be master of the ceremonies to a conjurer. [*Exeunt.*

Enter ABIGAIL, *crossing the stage*, TINSEL *following.*

Tin. Nabby, Nabby! whither so fast, child?

Abi. Keep your hands to yourself. I'm going to call the steward to my lady.

Tin. What, Goodman Twofold? I met him walking with a strange old fellow yonder. I suppose he belongs to the family, too. He looks very antique. He must be some of the furniture of this old mansion-house.

Abi. What does the man mean? Don't think to palm me, as ye do my lady.

Tin. Prithee, Nabby, tell me one thing—— What's the reason thou art my enemy?

Abi. Marry, because I'm a friend to my lady.

Tin. Dost thou see any thing about me thou dost not like? Come hither, hussy—Give me a kiss. Don't be ill-natured.

Abi. Sir, I know how to be civil. [*Kisses her.*] This rogue will carry off my lady, if I don't take care. [*Aside.*

Tin. Thy lips are as soft as velvet, Abigail. I must get thee a husband.

Abi. Ay, now you don't speak idly—I can talk to you.

Tin. I have one in my eye for thee. Dost thou love a young lusty son of a whore?

Abi. Lud! how you talk!

Tin. This is a thundering dog.

Abi. What is he?

Tin. A private gentleman.

Abi. Ay! where does he live?

Tin. In the Horse-Guards. But he has one fault I must tell thee of; if thou canst bear with that, he's a man for thy purpose.

Abi. Pray, Mr Tinsel, what may that be?

Tin. He's but five-and-twenty years old.

Abi. 'Tis no matter for his age, if he has been well educated.

Tin. No man better, child; he'll tie a wig, toss a die, make a pass, and swear with such a grace, as would make thy heart leap to hear him.

Abi. Half these accomplishments will do, provided he has an estate. Pray, what has he?

Tin. Not a farthing.

Abi. Pox on him! what do I give him the hearing for? [*Aside.*

Tin. But as for that, I would make it up to him.

Abi. How?

Tin. Why, look ye, child, as soon as I have married thy lady, I design to discard this old prig of a steward, and to put this honest gentleman I am speaking of, into his place.

Abi. [*Aside.*] This fellow's a fool——I'll have no more to say to him.——Hark! my lady's a-coming.

Tin. Depend upon it, Nab, I'll remember my promise.

Abi. Ay, and so will I too, to your cost. [*Aside. Exit* ABI.

Tin. My dear is purely fitted up with a maid—But I shall rid the house of her.

Enter LADY TRUEMAN.

Lady True. Oh, Mr Tinsel, I am glad to meet you here. I am going to give you an entertainment that won't be disagreeable to a man of wit and pleasure of the town. There may be something diverting in a conversation between a conjurer, and this conceited ass. [*Aside.*

Tin. She loves me to distraction, I see that. [*Aside.*]—Prithee, widow, explain thyself.

Lady True. You must know, here is a strange sort of man come to town, who undertakes to free the house from this disturbance. The steward believes him a conjurer.

Tin. Ay, thy steward is a deep one.

Lady True. He's to be here immediately. It is indeed an odd figure of a man.

Tin. Oh, I warrant you, he has studied the black art! Ha, ha, ha! Is he not an Oxford scholar?——Widow, thy house is the most extraordinarily inhabited of any widow's this day in Christendom. I think thy four chief domestics are, a withered Abigail, a superannuated steward, a ghost, and a conjurer.

Lady True. [*Mimicking* TIN.] And you would have it inhabited by a fifth, who is a more extraordinary person than any of all these four.

Tin. 'Tis a sure sign a woman loves you, when she imitates your manner. [*Aside.*] Thou'rt very smart, my dear. But see, smoke the doctor.

Enter VELLUM *and* SIR GEORGE, *in his conjurer's habit.*

Vel. I will introduce this profound person to your ladyship, and then leave him with you—— Sir, this is her ho—nour.

Sir Geo. I know it well. [*Exit* VEL. [*Aside, walking in a musing posture.*] That dear woman! the sight of her unmans me. I could weep for tenderness, did not I, at the same time, feel an indignation rise in me to see that wretch with her. And yet, I cannot but smile to see her in the company of her first and second husband at the same time.

Lady True. Mr Tinsel, do you speak to him; you are used to the company of men of learning.

Tin. Old gentleman, thou dost not look like an inhabitant of this world; I suppose thou art lately come down from the stars. Pray, what news is stirring in the Zodiac?

Sir Geo. News that ought to make the heart of a coward tremble. Mars is now entering into the first house, and will shortly appear in all his domal dignities——

Tin. Mars!—Prithee, father Grey-beard, explain thyself.

Sir Geo. The entrance of Mars into his house, portends the entrance of a master into this family—and that soon.

Tin. D'ye hear that, widow? The stars have cut me out for thy husband. This house is to have a master, and that soon. Hark thee, old Gadbury? Is not Mars very like a young fellow called Tom Tinsel?

Sir Geo. Not so much as Venus is like this lady.

Tin. A word in your ear, doctor; these two planets will be in conjunction by and by; I can tell you that.

Sir Geo. [*Aside, walking disturbed.*] Curse on this impertinent fop! I shall scarce forbear discovering myself——Madam, I am told that your house is visited with strange noises.

Lady True. And I am told that you can quiet them. I must confess, I had a curiosity to see the person I had heard so much of; and indeed your aspect shows, that you have had much experience in the world. You must be a very aged man.

Sir Geo. My aspect deceives you: what do you think is my real age?

Tin. I should guess thee within three years of Methusalah. Prithee, tell me, wast thou not born before the flood?

Lady True. Truly, I should guess you to be in your second or third century.

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! If there be truth in man, I was but five-and-thirty last August. Oh, the study of the occult sciences makes a man's beard grow faster than you would imagine!

Lady True. What an escape you have had, Mr Tinsel, that you were not bred a scholar!

Tin. And so I fancy, doctor, thou thinkest me an illiterate fellow, because I have a smooth chin?

Sir Geo. Hark ye, sir; a word in your ear. You are a coxcomb, by all the rules of physiognomy: but let that be a secret between you and me. [*Aside to* TIN.

Lady True. Pray, Mr Tinsel, what is it the doctor whispers?

Tin. Only a compliment, child, upon two or three of my features. It does not become me to repeat it.

Lady True. Pray, doctor, examine this gentleman's face, and tell me his fortune.

Sir Geo. If I may believe the lines of his face, he likes it better than I do, or—than you do, fair lady.

Tin. Widow, I hope now thou'rt convinced he's a cheat.

Lady True. For my part, I believe he's a witch——Go on, doctor.

Sir Geo. He will be crossed in love; and that soon.

Tin. Prithee, doctor, tell us the truth. Dost not thou live in Moorfields?

Sir Geo. Take my word for it, thou shalt never live in my lady Trueman's mansion-house.

Tin. Pray, old gentleman, hast thou never been plucked by the beard when thou wert saucy?

Lady True. Nay, Mr Tinsel, you are angry: do you think I would marry a man that dares not have his fortune told?

Sir Geo. Let him be angry——I matter not—He is but short-lived. He will soon die of——

Tin. Come, come, speak out, old Hocus; he, he, he! This fellow makes me burst with laughing. [*Forces a laugh.*

Sir Geo. He will soon die of a fright—or of the—let me see your nose—Ay—'tis so!

Tin. You son of a whore! I'll run ye through the body. I never yet made the sun shine through a conjurer.

Lady True. Oh, fy, Mr Tinsel! you will not kill an old man?

Tin. An old man! The dog says he's but five-and-thirty.

Lady True. Oh, fy, Mr Tinsel! I did not think you could have been so passionate! I hate a passionate man. Put up your sword, or I must never see you again.

Tin. Ha, ha, ha! I was but in jest, my dear. I had a mind to have made an experiment upon the doctor's body. I would but have drilled a little eyelet hole in it, and have seen whether he had art enough to close it up again.

Sir Geo. Courage is but ill shown before a lady. But know, if ever I meet thee again, thou shalt find this arm can wield other weapons besides this wand.

Tin. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady True. Well, learned sir, you are to give a proof of your art, not of your courage. Or, if you will shew your courage, let it be at nine o'clock—for that is the time the noise is generally heard.

Tin. And look ye, old gentleman, if thou dost not do thy business well, I can tell thee, by the little skill I have, that thou wilt be tossed in a blanket before ten. We'll do our endeavour to send thee back to the stars again.

Sir Geo. I'll go and prepare myself for the ceremonies——And, lady, as you expect they should succeed to your wishes, treat that fellow with the contempt he deserves.

[*Exit* SIR GEORGE.

Tin. The sauciest dog I ever talked with in my whole life!

Lady True. Methinks he's a diverting fellow; one may see he's no fool.

Tin. No fool! Ay, but thou dost not take him for a conjurer?

Lady True. Truly, I don't know what to take him for; I am resolved to employ him however. When a sickness is desperate, we often try remedies that we have no great faith in.

Enter ABIGAIL.

Abi. Madam, the tea is ready in the parlour, as you ordered.

Lady True. Come, Mr Tinsel, we may there talk of the subject more at leisure.

[*Exeunt* LADY TRUE. *and* TIN.

Abi. Sure never any lady had such servants as mine has! Well, if I get this thousand pounds, I hope to have some of my own. Let me see, I'll have a pretty tight girl—just such as I was ten years ago (I'm afraid I may say twenty); she shall dress me and flatter me——for I will be flattered, that's pos! My lady's cast suits will serve her after I have given them the wearing. Besides, when I am worth a thousand pounds, I shall certainly carry off the steward——Madam Vellum——how prettily that will sound! Here, bring out Madam Vellum's chaise—Nay, I do not know but it may be a chariot—It will break the attorney's wife's heart—for I shall take place of every body in the parish but my lady. If I have a son, he shall be called Fantome. But see, Mr Vellum, as I could wish. I know his humour, and will do my utmost to gain his heart.

Enter VELLUM, *with a pint of sack.*

Vel. Mrs Abigail, don't I break in upon you unseasonably?

Abi. Oh, no, Mr Vellum; your visits are always seasonable.

Vel. I have brought with me a taste of fresh canary, which, I think, is delicious.

Abi. Pray set it down—I have a dram-glass just by—[*Brings in a rummer.*] I'll pledge you; my lady's good health.

Vel. And your own with it—sweet Mrs Abigail.

Abi. Pray, good Mr Vellum, buy me a little parcel of this sack, and put it under the article of tea——I would not have my name appear to it.

Vel. Mrs Abigail, your name seldom appears in my bills—and yet——if you will allow me a merry expression—you have been always in my books, Mrs Abigail. Ha, ha, ha!

Abi. Ha, ha, ha! Mr Vellum, you are such a dry jesting man!

Vel. Why, truly, Mrs Abigail, I have been looking over my papers—and I find you have been a long time my debtor.

Abi. Your debtor! For what, Mr Vellum?

Vel. For my heart, Mrs Abigail—And our accounts will not be balanced between us, till I have yours in exchange for it. Ha, ha, ha!

Abi. Ha, ha, ha! You are the most gallant dun, Mr Vellum!

Vel. But I am not used to be paid by words only, Mrs Abigail; when will you be out of my debt?

Abi. Oh, Mr Vellum, you make one blush—My humble service to you.

Vel. I must answer you, Mrs Abigail, in the country phrase.—Your love is sufficient. Ha, ha, ha!

Abi. Ha, ha, ha! Well, I must own I love a merry man!

Vel. Let me see! how long is it, Mrs Abigail, since I first broke my mind to you?—It was, I think, *undecimo Gulielmi.*————We have conversed together these fifteen years—and yet, Mrs Abigail, I must drink to our better acquaintance. He, he, he!——Mrs Abigail, you know I am naturally jocose.

Abi. Ah! you men love to make sport with us silly creatures.

Vel. Mrs Abigail, I have a trifle about me, which I would willingly make you a present of. It is indeed but a little toy.

Abi. You are always exceedingly obliging.

Vel. It is but a little toy—scarce worth your acceptance.

Abi. Pray, don't keep me in suspense; what is it, Mr Vellum?

Vel. A silver thimble.

Abi. I always said Mr Vellum was a generous lover.

Vel. But I must put it on myself, Mrs Abigail—You have the prettiest tip of a finger—I must take the freedom to salute it.

Abi. Oh, fy! you make me ashamed, Mr Vellum; how can you do so? I protest I am in such a confusion———— [*A feigned struggle.*

Vel. This finger is not the finger of idleness; it bears the honourable scars of the needle.——But why are you so cruel as not to pair your nails?

Abi. Oh, I vow, you press it so hard! pray, give me my finger again.

Vel. This middle finger, Mrs Abigail, has a pretty neighbour—a wedding ring would become it mightily——He, he, he!

Abi. You're so full of your jokes. Ay; but where must I find one for it?

Vel. I design this thimble only as the forerunner of it; they will set off each other, and are—indeed, a twofold emblem. The first will put you in mind of being a good housewife, and the other, of being a good wife. Ha, ha, ha!

Abi. Yes, yes; I see you laugh at me.

Vel. Indeed, I am serious.

Abi. I thought you had quite forsaken me—I am sure you cannot forget the many repeated vows and promises you formerly made me.

Vel. I should as soon forget the multiplication table.

Abi. I have always taken your part before my lady.

Vel. You have so; and I have *itemed* it in my memory.

Abi. For I have always looked upon your interest as my own.

Vel. It is nothing but your cruelty can hinder them from being so.

Abi. I must strike while the iron's hot. [*Aside.*] —Well, Mr Vellum, there is no refusing you; you have such a bewitching tongue!

Vel. How? speak that again!

Abi. Why, then, in plain English, I love you.

Vel. I am overjoyed!

Abi. I must own my passion for you.

Vel. I'm transported!

[*Catching her in his arms.*

Abi. Dear, charming man!

Vel. Thou sum total of all my happiness! I shall grow extravagant! I can't forbear!—to drink thy virtuous inclinations in a bumper of sack. Your lady must make haste, my duck, or we shall provide a young steward to the estate, before she has an heir to it.—Pr'ythee, my dear, does she intend to marry Mr Tinsel?

Abi. Marry him, my love! No, no; we must take care of that! there would be no staying in the house for us, if she did. That young rakehell would send all the old servants a-grazing. You and I should be discarded before the honeymoon was at an end.

Vel. Pr'ythee, sweet one, does not this drum put the thoughts of marriage out of her head?

Abi. This drum, my dear, if it be well managed, will be no less than a thousand pounds in our way.

Vel. Ay, say'st thou so, my turtle?

Abi. Since we are now as good as man and wife——I mean, almost as good as man and wife ——I ought to conceal nothing from you.

Vel. Certainly, my dove; not from thy yokefellow, thy help-mate, thy own flesh and blood!

Abi. Hush! I hear Mr Tinsel's laugh; my lady and he are coming this way; if you will take a turn without, I'll tell you the whole contrivance.

Vel. Give me your hand, chicken.

Abi. Here, take it; you have my heart already.

Vel. We shall have much issue. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter VELLUM *and Butler.*

Vel. John, I have certain orders to give you—and therefore be attentive.

But. Attentive! Ay, let me alone for that—I suppose he means, being sober. [*Aside.*

Vel. You know I have always recommended to you a method in your business; I would have your knives and forks, your spoons and napkins, your plate and glasses, laid in a method.

But. Ay, master Vellum! you are such a sweet-spoken man, it does one's heart good to receive your orders.

Vel. Method, John, makes business easy; it banishes all perplexity and confusion out of families.

But. How he talks! I could hear him all day.

Vel. And now, John, let me know whether your table-linen, your side-board, your cellar, and every thing else within your province, are properly and methodically disposed for an entertainment this evening?

But. Master Vellum, they shall be ready at a quarter of an hour's warning. But pray, sir, is this entertainment to be made for the conjurer?

Vel. It is, John, for the conjurer; and yet it is not for the conjurer.

But. Why, look you, master Vellum, if it is for the conjurer, the cook-maid should have orders to get him some dishes to his palate. Perhaps he may like a little brimstone in his sauce.

Vel. This conjurer, John, is a complicated creature, an amphibious animal, a person of a twofold nature—But he eats and drinks like other men.

But. Marry, master Vellum, he should eat and drink as much as two other men, by the account you give of him.

Vel. Thy conceit is not amiss; he is indeed a double man; ha, ha, ha!

But. Ha! I understand you; he's one of your hermaphrodites, as they call them.

Vel. He is married, and he is not married—— He hath a beard, and he hath no beard. He is old, and he is young.

But. How charmingly he talks! I fancy, master Vellum, you could make a riddle. The same

man old and young! How do you make that out, master Vellum?

Vel. Thou hast heard of a snake casting his skin, and recovering his youth? Such is this sage person.

But. Nay, 'tis no wonder a conjurer should be like a serpent.

Vel. When he has thrown aside the old conjurer's slough, that hangs about him, he'll come out as fine a young gentleman as ever was seen in this house.

But. Does he intend to sup in his slough?

Vel. That, time will shew.

But. Well, I have not a head for these things. Indeed, Mr Vellum, I have not understood one word you have said this half hour.

Vel. I did not intend thou shouldst——But to our business——Let there be a table spread in the great hall. Let your pots and glasses be washed, and in a readiness. Bid the cook provide a plentiful supper; and see that all the servants are in their best liveries.

But. Ay, now I understand every word you say. But I would rather hear you talk a little in that t'other way.

Vel. I shall explain to thee what I have said, by and by—Bid Susan lay two pillows upon your lady's bed.

But. Two pillows! Madam won't sleep upon them both! She is not a double woman, too?

Vel. She will sleep upon neither. But hark! Mrs Abigail; I think I hear her chiding the cook-maid.

But. Then I'll away, or it will be my turn next: she, I am sure, speaks plain English; one may easily understand every word she says.

[*Exit Butler.*

Vel. Servants are good for nothing, unless they have an opinion of the person's understanding who has the direction of them.—But see, Mrs Abigail! she has a bewitching countenance; I wish I may not be tempted to marry her in good earnest.

Enter ABIGAIL.

Abi. Ha! Mr Vellum.

Vel. What brings my sweet one hither?

Abi. I am coming to speak to my friend behind the wainscot. It is fit, child, he should have an account of this conjurer, that he may not be surprised.

Vel. That would be as much as thy thousand pounds is worth.

Abi. I'll speak low———Walls have ears.

[*Pointing at the wainscot.*

Vel. But hark you, duckling! be sure you do not tell him that I am let into the secret.

Abi. That's a good one, indeed! as if I should ever tell what passes between you and me.

Vel. No, no, my child; that must not be; he, he, he! that must not be; he, he, he!

Abi. You will always be waggish.

Vel. Adieu; and let me hear the result of your conference.

Abi. How can you leave one so soon? I shall think it an age till I see you again.

Vel. Adieu, my pretty one!

Abi. Adieu, sweet Mr Vellum!

Vel. My pretty one——— [*As he is going off.*

Abi. Dear Mr Vellum!

Vel. My pretty one! [*Exit.*

Abi. I have him——If I can but get this thousand pounds.

[FANTOME *gives three raps upon his drum behind the wainscot.*]

Abi. Three raps upon the drum? the signal Mr Fantome and I agreed upon, when he had a mind to speak with me. [FANTOME *raps again.*] Very well, I hear you: come, fox, come out of your hole.

SCENE II.

Opens, and FANTOME *comes out.*

Abi. You may leave your drum in the wardrobe, till you have occasion for it.

Fan. Well, Mrs Abigail, I want to hear what's doing in the world.

Abi. You are a very inquisitive spirit. But I must tell you, if you do not take care of yourself, you will be laid this evening.

Fan. I have overheard something of that matter. But let me alone for the doctor—I'll engage to give a good account of him. I am more in pain about Tinsel. When a lady's in the case, I'm more afraid of one fop than twenty conjurers.

Abi. To tell you truly, he presses his attacks with so much impudence, that he has made more progress with my lady in two days, than you did in two months.

Fan. I shall attack her in another manner, if thou canst but procure me another interview. There's nothing makes a lover so keen, as being kept in the dark.

Abi. Pray, no more of your distant bows, your respectful compliments———Really, Mr Fantome, you're only fit to make love across a tea-table.

Fan. My dear girl, I can't forbear hugging thee for thy good advice.

Abi. Ay, now I have some hopes of you; but, why don't you do so to my lady?

Fan. Child, I always thought your lady loved to be treated with respect.

Abi. Believe me, Mr Fantome, there is not so great a difference between woman and woman, as you imagine. You see Tinsel has nothing but his sauciness to recommend him.

Fan. Tinsel is too great a coxcomb to be capable of love—And let me tell thee, Abigail, a man, who is sincere in his passion, makes but a very awkward profession of it——But I'll mend my manners.

Abi. Ay, or you'll never gain a widow—— Come, I must tutor you a little; suppose me to be my lady; and let me see how you'll behave yourself?

Fan. I'm afraid, child, we han't time for such a piece of mummery.

Abi. Oh, it will be quickly over, if you play your part well.

Fan. Why then, dear Mrs Ab—I mean, my lady Trueman.

Abi. Ay; but you han't saluted me.

Fan. That's right; faith, I forgot that circumstance. [*Kisses her.*] Nectar and ambrosia!

Abi. That's very well——

Fan. How long must I be condemned to languish? when shall my sufferings have an end? My life, my happiness, my all, is wound up in you——

Abi. Well! why don't you squeeze my hand?

Fan. What! thus?

Abi. Thus! Ay—now throw your arm about my middle: hug me closer.—You are not afraid of hurting me! Now, pour forth a volley of rapture and nonsense, till you are out of breath.

Fan. Transport and ecstacy! where am I?—my life, my bliss!—I rage, I burn, I bleed, I die!

Abi. Go on, go on.

Fan. Flames and darts!——Bear me to the gloomy shade, rocks and grottos!—Flowers, zephyrs, and purling streams!

Abi. Oh, Mr Fantome, you have a tongue would undo a vestal! You were born for the ruin of our sex.

Fan. This will do, then, Abigail?

Abi. Ay; this is talking like a lover: though I only represent my lady, I take pleasure in hearing you. Well, o' my conscience, when a man of sense has a little dash of the coxcomb in him, no woman can resist him. Go on at this rate, and the thousand pounds is as good as in my pocket.

Fan. I shall think it an age, till I have an opportunity of putting this lesson in practice.

Abi. You may do it soon, if you make good use of your time. Mr Tinsel will be here with my lady at eight, and at nine the conjurer is to take you in hand.

Fan. Let me alone with both of them.

Abi. Well! forewarned, fore-armed. Get into your box, and I'll endeavour to dispose every thing in your favour.

[FANTOME *goes in.* *Exit* ABIGAIL.

Enter VELLUM.

Vel. Mrs Abigail is withdrawn—I was in hopes to have heard what passed between her and her invisible correspondent.

Enter TINSEL.

Tin. Vellum! Vellum!

Vel. [*Aside.*] Vellum! We are, methinks, very familiar! I am not used to be called so by any but their ho—nours———What would you, Mr Tinsel?

Tin. Let me beg a favour of thee, old gentleman.

Vel. What is that, good sir?

Tin. Prithee, run and fetch me the rent-roll of thy lady's estate.

Vel. The rent-roll!

Tin. The rent-roll! Ay, the rent-roll. Dost not understand what that means?

Vel. Why, have you thoughts of purchasing of it?

Tin. Thou hast hit it, old boy; that is my very intention.

Vel. The purchase will be considerable.

Tin. And for that reason I have bid thy lady very high—She is to have no less for it than this entire person of mine.

Vel. Is your whole estate personal, Mr Tinsel?—he, he, he!

Tin. Why, you queer old dog, you don't pretend to jest, d'ye? Look ye, Vellum, if you think of being continued my steward, you must learn to walk with your toes out.

Vel. [*Aside.*] An insolent companion!

Tin. Thou'rt confounded rich, I see, by that dangling of thy arms.

Vel. [*Aside.*] An ungracious bird!

Tin. Thou shalt lend me a couple of thousand pounds.

Vel. [*Aside.*] A very profligate!

Tin. Look ye, Vellum, I intend to be kind to you—I'll borrow some money of you.

Vel. I cannot but smile to consider the disappointment this young fellow will meet with; I will make myself merry with him. [*Aside.*]—And so, Mr Tinsel, you promise you will be a very kind master to me? [*Stifling a laugh.*

Tin. What will you give for a life in the house you live in?

Vel. What do you think of five hundred pounds?—Ha, ha, ha!

Tin. That's too little.

Vel. And yet it is more than I shall give you—And I will offer you two reasons for it.

Tin. Prithee, what are they?

Vel. First, because the tenement is not in your disposal; and, secondly, because it never will be in your disposal: and so fare thee well, good Mr Tinsel——Ha, ha, ha! You will pardon me for being jocular. [*Exit* VELLUM.

Tin. This rogue is as saucy as the conjurer: I'll be hanged if they are not a-kin!

Enter LADY TRUEMAN.

Lady True. Mr Tinsel! what, all alone? You free-thinkers are great admirers of solitude.

Tin. No, faith; I have been talking with thy steward; a very grotesque figure of a fellow; the very picture of one of our benchers. How can you bear his conversation?

Lady True. I keep him for my steward, and not my companion. He's a sober man.

Tin. Yes, yes; he looks like a put, a queer old dog, as ever I saw in my life: we must turn him off, widow. He cheats thee confoundedly, I see that.

Lady True. Indeed you're mistaken; he has always had the reputation of being a very honest man.

Tin. What! I suppose he goes to church?

Lady True. Goes to church! so do you, too, I hope.

Tin. I would, for once, widow, to make sure of you.

Lady True. Ah, Mr Tinsel! a husband, who would not continue to go thither, would quickly forget the promise he made there.

Tin. Faith, very innocent, and very ridiculous! Well, then, I warrant thee, widow, thou wouldst not, for the world, marry a sabbath-breaker!

Lady True. Truly, they generally come to a bad end. I remember the conjurer told you, you were short-lived.

Tin. The conjurer! Ha, ha, ha!

Lady True. Indeed, you're very witty!

Tin. Thou art the idol I adore: here must I pay my devotion—Prithee, widow, hast thou any timber upon thy estate?

Lady True. The most impudent fellow I ever met with! [*Aside.*

Tin. I take notice thou hast a great deal of old plate here in the house, widow.

Lady True. Mr Tinsel, you are a very observing man.

Tin. Thy large silver cistern would make a very good coach: and half a dozen salvers, that I saw on the sideboard, might be turned into six as pretty horses as any that appear in the ring.

Lady True. You have a very good fancy, Mr Tinsel! What pretty transformations you could make in my house!——But I'll see where 'twill end. [*Aside.*

Tin. Then, I observe, child, you have two or three services of gilt plate; we'd eat always in china, my dear.

Lady True. I perceive you are an excellent manager—How quickly you have taken an inventory of my goods!

Tin. Now, hark ye, widow; to shew you the love that I have for you——

Lady True. Very well; let me hear.

Tin. You have an old-fashioned gold caudle-cup, with a figure of a saint upon the lid on't.

Lady True. I have—What, then?

Tin. Why, look ye, I'd sell the caudle-cup with the old saint, for as much money as they'd fetch; which I would convert into a diamond-buckle, and make you a present of it.

Lady True. Oh, you are generous to an extravagance! But, pray, Mr Tinsel, don't dispose of my goods before you are sure of my person. I find you have taken a great affection to my moveables.

Tin. My dear, I love every thing that belongs to you.

Lady True. I see you do, sir; you need not make any protestations upon that subject.

Tin. Pho, pho, my dear, we are growing serious; and, let me tell you, that's the very next step to being dull.

Lady True. Believe me, sir, whatever you think, marriage is a serious subject.

Tin. For that very reason, my dear, let us run over it as fast as we can. I'll tell you a story, widow: I know a certain lady, who, considering the craziness of her husband, had, in case of mortality, engaged herself to two young fellows of my acquaintance. They grew such desperate rivals for her, while her husband was alive, that one of them pinked the other in a duel. But the good lady was no sooner a widow, but what did my dowager do? Why, faith, being a woman of honour, she married a third, to whom, it seems, she had given her first promise.

Lady True. And this is a true story, upon your own knowledge?

Tin. Every tittle, as I hope to be married, or never believe Tom Tinsel.

Lady True. Pray, Mr Tinsel, do you call this talking like a wit, or like a rake?

Tin. Nay, now you grow vapourish; thou'lt begin to fancy thou hearest the drum, by and by.

Lady True. If you had been here last night, about this time, you would not have been so merry.

Tin. About this time, say'st thou! Come, faith, for humour's sake, we'll sit down and listen.

Lady True. I will, if you'll promise to be serious.

Tin. Serious! never fear me, child; ha, ha, ha! Dost not hear him?

Lady True. You break your word already.

Tin. I'll tell thee what, now, widow—I would engage, by the help of a white sheet, and a pennyworth of link, in a dark night, to frighten you a whole country village out of their senses, and the vicar into the bargain.—[*Drum beats.*]—Hark! Hark! What noise is that? Heaven defend us! This is more than fancy.

Lady True. It beats more terrible than ever.

Tin. 'Tis very dreadful! What a dog have I been, to speak against my conscience, only to shew my parts!

Lady True. It comes nearer and nearer. I wish you have not angered it, by your foolish discourse.

Tin. Indeed, madam, I did not speak from my heart. I hope it will do me no hurt, for a little harmless raillery.

Lady True. Harmless, d'ye call it? It beats hard by us, as if it would break through the wall.

Tin. What a devil had I to do with a white sheet?

[*Scene opens, and discovers* FANTOME.
Mercy on us, it appears!

Lady True. Oh, 'tis he! 'tis he himself! 'tis sir George! 'tis my husband! [*She faints.*

Tin. Now, would I give ten thousand pounds that I were in town.—[FANTOME *advances to him, drumming.*]—I beg ten thousand pardons: I'll never talk at this rate any more.—[FANTOME *still advances, drumming.*]—By my soul, sir George, I was not in earnest.—[*Falls on his knees.*]—Have compassion on my youth, and consider I am but a coxcomb.—[FANTOME *points to the door.*]—But see, he waves me off.—Aye, with all my heart——What a devil had I to do with a white sheet?

[*He steals off the stage, mending his pace as the drum beats.*

Fan. The scoundrel is gone, and has left his mistress behind him. I'm mistaken if he makes love in this house any more. I have now only the conjurer to deal with. I don't question but I shall make his reverence scamper as fast as the lover; and then the day's my own. But the servants are coming; I must get into my cup-board.

[*He goes in.*

Enter ABIGAIL *and Servants.*

Abi. Oh, my poor lady! This wicked drum has frighted Mr Tinsel out of his wits, and my lady into a swoon. Let me bend her a little forward—She revives——Here, carry her into the fresh air, and she'll recover.—[*They carry her off.*]—This is a little barbarous to my lady; but 'tis all for her good: and I know her so well, that she would not be angry with me, if she knew what I was to get by it. And, if any of her friends should blame me for it hereafter,

I'll clap my hand upon my purse, and tell 'em,
'Twas for a thousand pounds, and Mr Vellum.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter SIR GEORGE *in his conjurer's habit; the Butler marching before him, with two large candles; and the two Servants coming after him, one bringing a little table, and another a chair.*

But. An't please your worship, Mr Conjurer, the steward has given all of us orders to do whatsoever you shall bid us, and to pay you the same respect as if you were our master.

Sir Geo. Thou say'st well.

Gard. An't please your conjurership's worship, shall I set the table down here?

Sir Geo. Here, Peter.

Gard. Peter! He knows my name by his learning. [*Aside.*

Coach. I have brought you, reverend sir, the largest elbow-chair in the house; 'tis that the steward sits in, when he holds a court.

Sir Geo. Place it there.

But. Sir, will you please to want any thing else?

Sir Geo. Paper, and pen and ink.

But. Sir, I believe we have paper that is fit for your purpose; my lady's mourning paper, that is blacked at the edges. Would you choose to write with a crow-quill?

Sir Geo. There is none better.

But. Coachman, go fetch the paper and standish out of the little parlour.

Coach. [*To* GARDENER.]—Peter, prithee, do thou go along with me——I'm afraid——You know I went with you last night into the garden, when the cook-maid wanted a handful of parsley.

But. Why, you don't think I'll stay with the conjurer by myself?

Gard. Come, we'll all three go, and fetch the pen and ink together.

[*Exeunt Servants.*

Sir Geo. There's nothing, I see, makes such strong alliances as fear. These fellows are all entered into a confederacy against the ghost.—There must be abundance of business done in the family, at this rate. But here comes the triple-alliance. Who could have thought these three rogues could have found each of them an employment in fetching a pen and ink?

Enter Gardener with a sheet of paper, Coachman with a standish, and Butler with a pen.

Gard. Sir, there is your paper.

Coach. Sir, there is your standish.

But. Sir, there is your crow-quill pen——I'm glad I have got rid on't. [*Aside.*

Gard. [*Aside.*]—He forget's that he's to make a circle——Doctor, shall I help you to a bit of chalk?

Sir Geo. It is no matter.

But. Look ye, sir, I shewed you the spot, where he's heard oftenest. If your worship can but ferret him out of that old wall in the next room——

Sir Geo. We shall try.

Gard. That's right, John. His worship must let fly all his learning at that old wall.

But. Sir, if I was worthy to advise you, I would have a bottle of good October by me.—Shall I set a cup of old stingo at your elbow?

Sir Geo. I thank thee——We shall do without it.

Gard. John, he seems a very good-natured man for a conjurer.

But. I'll take this opportunity of inquiring after a bit of plate I have lost. I fancy, whilst he is in my lady's pay, one may hedge in a question or two into the bargain. Sir, sir, may I beg a word in your ear?

Sir Geo. What wouldst thou?

But. Sir, I know I need not tell you, that I lost one of my silver spoons last week.

Sir Geo. Marked with a swan's neck——

But. My lady's crest! He knows every thing. [*Aside.*]—How would your worship advise me to recover it again?

Sir Geo. Hum——

But. What must I do to come at it?

Sir Geo. Drink nothing but small-beer for a fortnight:——

But. Small-beer! rot-gut!

Sir Geo. If thou drink'st a single drop of ale before fifteen days are expired—it is as much—as thy spoon—is worth.

But. I shall never recover it that way——I'll e'en buy a new one. [*Aside.*

Coach. D'ye mind how they whisper?

Gard. I'll be hanged if he be not asking him something about Nell——

Coach. I'll take this opportunity of putting a question to him about poor Dobbin. I fancy he could give me better counsel than the farrier.

But. [*To* GARDENER.]—A prodigious man! He knows every thing. Now is the time to find out thy pick-axe.

Gard. I have nothing to give him. Does not he expect to have his hand crossed with silver?

Coach. [*To* SIR GEORGE.]—Sir, may a man venture to ask you a question?

Sir Geo. Ask it.

Coach. I have a poor horse in the stable, that's bewitched——

Sir Geo. A bay gelding.

Coach. How could he know that? [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Bought at Banbury.

Coach. Whew!—So it was, on my conscience! [*Whistles.*

Sir Geo. Six years old, last Lammas.

Coach. To a day!—[*Aside.*]—Now, sir, I would know whether the poor beast is bewitched by Goody Crouch, or Goody Fly?

Sir Geo. Neither.

Coach. Then it must be Goody Gurton; for she is the next oldest woman in the parish.

Gard. Hast thou done, Robin?

Coach. [*To* GARDENER.]—He can tell thee any thing.

Gard. [*To* SIR GEORGE.]—Sir, I would beg to take you a little further out of hearing.

Sir Geo. Speak.

Gard. The butler and I, Mr Doctor, were both of us in love, at the same time, with a certain person.

Sir Geo. A woman.

Gard. How could he know that? [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Go on.

Gard. This woman has lately had two children at a birth.

Sir Geo. Twins.

Gard. Prodigious! Where could he hear that? [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Proceed.

Gard. Now, because I used to meet her sometimes in the garden, she has laid them both—

Sir Geo. To thee.

Gard. What a power of learning he must have! he knows every thing. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Hast thou done?

Gard. I would desire to know, whether I am really father to them both?

Sir Geo. Stand before me: let me survey thee round.

[*Lays his wand upon his head, and makes him turn about.*

Coach. Look yonder, John, the silly dog is turning about under the conjurer's wand. If he has been saucy to him, we shall see him puffed off in a whirlwind immediately.

Sir Geo. Twins, dost thou say?

[*Still turning him.*

Gard. Aye; are they both mine, d'ye think?

Sir Geo. Own but one of them.

Gard. Aye, but Mrs Abigail will have me take care of them both—she's always for the butler. If my poor master, sir George, had been alive, he would have made him go halves with me.

Sir Geo. What, was sir George a kind master?

Gard. Was he! Aye, my fellow servants will bear me witness.

Sir Geo. Did ye love sir George?

But. Every body loved him.

Coach. There was not a dry eye in the parish at the news of his death——

Gard. He was the best neighbour——

But. The kindest husband——

Coach. The truest friend to the poor——

But. My lady took on mightily; we all thought it would have been the death of her——

Sir Geo. I protest these fellows melt me—I think the time long till I am their master again, that I may be kind to them. [*Aside.*

Enter VELLUM.

Vel. Have you provided the doctor every thing he has occasion for? If so—you may depart.

[*Exeunt servants.*

Sir Geo. I can, as yet, see no hurt in my wife's behaviour; but still have some certain pangs and doubts, that are natural to the heart of a fond man.—[*Aside.*]—Dear Vellum, I am impatient

to hear some news of my wife. How does she, after her fright?

Vel. It is a saying, somewhere in my lord Coke, that a widow———

Sir Geo. I ask of my wife, and thou talkest to me of my lord Coke—Prithee, tell me how she does, for I am in pain for her?

Vel. She is pretty well recovered. Mrs Abigail has put her in good heart; and I have given her great hopes from your skill.

Sir Geo. That, I think, cannot fail, since thou hast got this secret out of Abigail. But I could not have thought my friend Fantome would have served me thus.

Vel. You will still fancy you are a living man.

Sir Geo. That he should endeavour to ensnare my wife———

Vel. You have no right in her after your demise. Death extinguishes all property—*Quoad hanc*—It is a maxim in the law.

Sir Geo. A pox on your learning! Well, but what is become of Tinsel?

Vel. He rushed out of the house, called for his horse, clapped spurs to his sides, and was out of sight in less time than I can call ten.

Sir Geo. This is whimsical enough! My wife will have a quick succession of lovers in one day. Fantome has driven out Tinsel, and I shall drive out Fantome.

Vel. Even as one wedge driveth out another—He, he, he! You must pardon me for being jocular.

Sir Geo. Was there ever such a provoking blockhead! But he means me well—You must remember, Vellum, you have abundance of business upon your hands; and I have but just time to tell it you over. All I require of you is dispatch; therefore, hear me.

Vel. There is nothing more requisite in business than dispatch———

Sir Geo. Then, hear me.

Vel. It is, indeed, the life of business——

Sir Geo. Hear me, then, I say.

Vel. And, as one hath rightly observed, the benefit that attends it is four-fold. First———

Sir Geo. There is no bearing this. Thou art going to describe dispatch, when thou shouldst be practising it.

Vel. But your ho—nour will not give me the hearing——

Sir Geo. Thou wilt not give me the hearing. [*Angrily.*

Vel. I am still.

Sir Geo. In the first place, you are to lay my wig, hat, and sword, ready for me in the closet, and one of my scarlet coats. You know how Abigail has described the ghost to you.

Vel. It shall be done.

Sir Geo. Then you must remember, whilst I am laying this ghost, you are to prepare my wife for the reception of her real husband. Tell her the whole story, and do it with all the art you are master of, that the surprise may not be too great for her.

Vel. It shall be done. But since her ho—nour has seen this apparition, she desires to see you once more, before you encounter it.

Sir Geo. I shall expect her impatiently; for now I can talk to her without being interrupted by that impertinent rogue, Tinsel. I hope thou hast not told Abigail any thing of the secret?

Vel. Mrs Abigail is a woman; there are many reasons why she should not be acquainted with it: I shall only mention six——

Sir Geo. Hush, here she comes! Oh, my heart!

Enter LADY TRUEMAN *and* ABIGAIL.

Sir Geo. [*Aside, while* VELLUM *talks in dumb shew to* LADY TRUEMAN.] Oh, that loved woman! How I long to take her in my arms! If I find I am still dear to her memory, it will be a return to life indeed! But I must take care of indulging this tenderness, and put on a behaviour more suitable to my present character.

[*Walks at a distance in a pensive posture, waving his wand.*

Lady True. [*To* VELLUM.] This is surprising indeed! So all the servants tell me; they say he knows every thing that has happened in the family.

Abi. [*Aside.*] A parcel of credulous fools! they first tell him their secrets, and then wonder how he comes to know them.

[*Exit* VELLUM, *exchanging fond looks with* ABIGAIL.

Lady True. Learned sir, may I have some conversation with you, before you begin your ceremonies?

Sir Geo. Speak—But hold—First, let me feel your pulse.

Lady True. What can you learn from that?

Sir Geo. I have already learned a secret from it, that will astonish you.

Lady True. Pray, what is it?

Sir Geo. You will have a husband within this half hour.

Abi. [*Aside.*] I am glad to hear that—He must mean Mr Fantome. I begin to think there's a good deal of truth in his art.

Lady True. Alas! I fear you mean I shall see sir George's apparition a second time.

Sir Geo. Have courage; you shall see the apparition no more. The husband I mention, shall be as much alive as I am.

Abi. Mr Fantome, to be sure. [*Aside.*

Lady True. Impossible; I loved my first too well.

Sir Geo. You could not love the first better than you will love the second.

Lady True. Alas! you did not know sir George!

Sir Geo. As well as I do myself——I saw him

with you in the red damask room, when he first made love to you; your mother left you together, under pretence of receiving a visit from Mrs Hawthorn, on her return from London.

Lady True. This is astonishing!

Sir Geo. You were a great admirer of a single life for the first half hour; your refusals then grew still fainter and fainter. With what ecstacy did sir George kiss your hand, when you told him you should always follow the advice of your mamma!

Lady True. Every circumstance to a tittle!

Sir Geo. Then, lady, the wedding-night! I saw you in your white satin night-gown. You would not come out of your dressing-room, till sir George took you out by force. He drew you gently by the hand——You struggled——but he was too strong for you——You blushed; he——

Lady True. Oh, stop there! go no further—He knows every thing! [*Aside.*

Abi. Truly, Mr Conjurer, I believe you have been a wag in your youth.

Sir Geo. Mrs Abigail, you know what your good word cost sir George; a purse of broad pieces, Mrs Abigail.

Abi. The devil's in him! [*Aside.*] Pray, sir, since you have told so far, you should tell my lady, that I refused to take them.

Sir Geo. 'Tis true, child; he was forced to thrust them into your bosom.

Abi. This rogue will mention the thousand pounds, if I don't take care. [*Aside.*] Pray, sir, though you are a conjurer, methinks you need not be a blab.

Lady True. Sir, since I have now no reason to doubt your art, I must beseech you to treat this apparition gently. It has the resemblance of my deceased husband. If there be any undiscovered secret, any thing that troubles his rest, learn it of him.

Sir Geo. I must, to that end, be sincerely informed by you, whether your heart be engaged to another.—Have not you received the addresses of many lovers since his death?

Lady True. I have been obliged to receive more visits than have been agreeable.

Sir Geo. Was not Tinsel welcome?—I'm afraid to hear an answer to my own question. [*Aside.*

Lady True. He was well recommended.

Sir Geo. Racks! [*Aside.*

Lady True. Of a good family.

Sir Geo. Tortures! [*Aside.*

Lady True. Heir to a considerable estate.

Sir Geo. Death! [*Aside.*] And you still love him?——I'm distracted! [*Aside.*

Lady True. No, I despise him. I found he had a design upon my fortune; was base, profligate, cowardly, and every thing that could be expected from a man of the vilest principles.

Sir Geo. I'm recovered. [*Aside.*

Abi. Oh, madam, had you seen how like a scoundrel he looked, when he left your ladyship in a swoon! Where have you left my lady? says I. In an elbow-chair, child, says he. And where are you going? says I. To town, child, says he; for, to tell thee truly, child, says he, I don't care for living under the same roof with the devil, says he.

Sir Geo. Well, lady, I see nothing in all this, that may hinder sir George's spirit from being at rest.

Lady True. If he knows any thing of what passes in my heart, he cannot but be satisfied of that fondness which I bear to his memory. My sorrow for him is always fresh, when I think of him. He was the kindest, truest, tenderest—— Tears will not let me go on————

Sir Geo. This quite overpowers me!—I shall discover myself before my time. [*Aside.*] Madam, you may now retire, and leave me to myself.

Lady True. Success attend you!

Abi. I wish Mr Fantome gets well off from this old Don—I know he'll be with him immediately.

[*Exeunt* LADY TRUEMAN *and* ABIGAIL.

Sir Geo. My heart is now at ease!—she is the same dear woman I left her. Now for my revenge upon Fantome! I shall cut the ceremonies short—A few words will do his business.—Now, let me seat myself in form—A good easy chair for a conjurer this—Now for a few mathematical scratches—A good lucky scrawl that—Faith, I think it looks very astrological—These two or three magical pot-hooks about it, make it a complete conjurer's scheme. [*Drum beats.*] Ha, ha, ha! sir, are you there? Enter, drummer—Now must I pore upon my paper.

Enter FANTOME, *beating his drum.*

Pr'ythee, don't make a noise; I'm busy. [FANTOME *beats.*] A pretty march! Pr'ythee beat that over again. [*He beats and advances.*] [*Rising.*] Ha! you're very perfect in the step of a ghost. You stalk it majestically. [FANTOME *advances.*] How the rogue stares! he acts it to admiration! I'll be hanged if he has not been practising this half hour in Mrs Abigail's wardrobe! [FANTOME *stares, gives a rap with his drum.*] Pr'ythee, don't play the fool. [FANTOME *beats.*] Nay, nay; enough of this, good Mr Fantome.

Fan. [*Aside.*] Death! I am discovered. This jade, Abigail, has betrayed me.

Sir Geo. Mr Fantome, upon the word of an astrologer, your thousand pound bribe will never gain my lady Trueman.

Fan. 'Tis plain, she has told him all. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Let me advise you to make off as fast as you can, or I plainly perceive by my art, Mr Ghost will have his bones broke.

Fan. [*To* SIR GEORGE.] Look ye, old gentleman, I perceive you have learned this secret from Mrs Abigail.

Sir Geo. I have learned it from my art,

Fan. Thy art! prithee, no more of that.—— Look ye, I know you are a cheat as much as I am. And if thou'lt keep my counsel, I'll give thee ten broad pieces.

Sir Geo. I am not mercenary. Young man, I scorn thy gold.

Fan. I'll make them up twenty——

Sir Geo. Avaunt! and that quickly, or I'll raise such an apparition as shall——

Fan. An apparition, old gentleman! you mistake your man; I'm not to be frighted with bugbears!

Sir Geo. Let me retire but for a few moments, and I will give thee such a proof of my art——

Fan. Why, if thou hast any *hocus-pocus* tricks to play, why canst thou not do them here?

Sir Geo. The raising of a spirit requires certain secret mysteries to be performed, and words to be muttered in private——

Fan. Well, if I see through your trick, will you promise to be my friend?

Sir Geo. I will——Attend and tremble!

[*Exit.*

Fan. A very solemn old ass! but I smoke him—he has a mind to raise his price upon me. I could not think this slut would have used me thus. I begin to grow horribly tired of my drum. I wish I was well rid of it. However, I have got this by it, that it has driven off Tinsel for good and all: I shan't have the mortification to see my mistress carried off by such a rival.—— Well, whatever happens, I must stop this old fellow's mouth; I must not be sparing in hush-money. But here he comes.

Enter SIR GEORGE *in his own habit.*

Ha! what's that! Sir George Trueman! This can be no counterfeit. His dress, his shape, his face, the very wound of which he died! Nay, then, 'tis time to decamp. [*Runs off.*

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! Fare you well, good sir George. The enemy has left me master of the field; here are the marks of my victory. This drum will I hang up in my great hall, as the trophy of the day.

Enter ABIGAIL.—SIR GEORGE *stands with his hand before his face, in a musing posture.*

Abi. Yonder he is. O' my conscience, he has driven off the conjurer! Mr Fantome, Mr Fantome! I give you joy, I give you joy! What do you think of your thousand pounds now? Why does not the man speak?

[*Pulls him by the sleeve.*

Sir Geo. Ha!

[*Taking his hands from his face.*

Abi. Oh 'tis my master! [*Shrieks.*

[*Running away, he catches her.*

Sir Geo. Good Mrs Abigail, not so fast.

Abi. Are you alive, sir? He has given my shoulder such a cursed tweak! they must be real fingers; I feel them, I'm sure.

Sir Geo. What dost thou think?

Abi. Think, sir! think!—Troth I don't know what to think. Pray, sir, how——

Sir Geo. No questions, good Abigail; thy curiosity shall be satisfied in due time. Where's your lady?

Abi. Oh, I'm so frighted—and so glad—

Sir Geo. Where's your lady, I ask you?

Abi. Marry, I don't know where I am myself—I can't forbear weeping for joy——

Sir Geo. Your lady? I say, your lady? I must bring you to yourself with one pinch more.

Abi. Oh, she has been talking a good while with the steward.

Sir Geo. Then he has opened the whole story to her. I'm glad he has prepared her. Oh, here she comes!

Enter LADY TRUEMAN, *followed by* VELLUM.

Lady True. Where is he? Let me fly into his arms! my life! my soul! my husband!

Sir Geo. Oh, let me catch thee to my heart, dearest of women!

Lady True. Are you, then, still alive, and are you here! I can scarce believe my senses! Now am I happy indeed!

Sir Geo. My heart is too full to answer thee.

Lady True. Was ever woman so blessed! to find again the darling of her soul, when she thought him lost for ever! to enter into a kind of second marriage with the only man, whom she was ever capable of loving!

Sir Geo. May it be as happy as our first! I desire no more. Believe me, my dear, I want words to express those transports of joy and tenderness, which are every moment rising in my heart whilst I speak to thee.

Enter Servants.

But. Just as the steward told us, lads! Look you there, if he ben't with my lady already!

Gard. He, he, he! what a joyful night will this be for madam.

Coach. As I was coming in at the gate, a strange gentleman whisked by me; but he took to his heels, and made away to the George. If I did not see master before me, I should have sworn it had been his honour!

Gard. Hast thou given orders for the bells to be set a ringing?

Coach. Never trouble thy head about that; it is done.

Sir Geo. [*To* LADY TRUEMAN.] My dear, I long as much to tell you my whole story, as you do to hear it. In the mean while, I am to look upon this as my wedding-day. I'll have nothing but the voice of mirth and feasting in my house. My poor neighbours and my servants shall rejoice with me. My hall shall be free to every one, and let my cellars be thrown open.

But. Ah, bless your honour, may you never die again!

Coach. The same good man that he ever was.

Gard. Whurra!

Sir Geo. Vellum, thou hast done me much service to-day. I know thou lovest Abigail; but she's disappointed in a fortune. I'll make it up to both of you. I'll give thee a thousand pounds with her. It is not fit there should be one sad heart in my house to-night.

Abi. Mr Vellum, you are a well-spoken man: pray, do you thank my master and my lady.

Sir Geo. Vellum, I hope you are not displeased with the gift I make you?

Vel. The gift is two-fold. I receive from you
A virtuous partner, and a portion, too;
For which, in humble wise, I thank the donours:
And so we bid good-night to both your ho—nours.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

A BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE.

BY

MRS CENTLIVRE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

COLONEL FAINWELL, *in love with* MRS LOVELY.
SIR PHILIP MODELOVE, *an old beau.*
PERIWINKLE, *a kind of silly virtuoso.*
TRADELOVE, *a change broker.*
OBADIAH PRIM, *a quaker hosier.*
FREEMAN, *the colonel's friend, a merchant.*
SIMON PURE, *a quaking preacher.*
MR SACKBUT, *a vintner.*

WOMEN.

MRS LOVELY, *a fortune of thirty thousand pounds.*
MRS PRIM, *wife to* PRIM *the hosier.*
BETTY, *servant to* MRS LOVELY.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A tavern.*

COLONEL FAINWELL *and* FREEMAN *over a bottle.*

Free. COME, colonel, his majesty's health. You are as melancholy as if you were in love! I wish some of the beauties of Bath han't snapt your heart.

Col. Why, faith, Freeman, there is something in't: I have seen a lady at Bath, who has kindled such a flame in me, that all the waters there can't quench.

Free. Women, like some poisonous animals, carry their antidote about them——Is she not to be had, colonel?

Col. That's a difficult question to answer; however, I resolve to try: perhaps you may be able to serve me; you merchants know one another. The lady told me herself she was under the charge of four persons.

Free. Odso! 'tis Mrs Anne Lovely.

Col. The same—Do you know her?

Free. Know her! ay——Faith, colonel, your condition is more desperate than you imagine: why, she is the talk and pity of the whole town; and it is the opinion of the learned, that she must die a maid.

Col. Say you so? That's somewhat odd, in this charitable city. She's a woman, I hope?

Free. For aught I know—but it had been as well for her, had nature made her any other part of the creation. The man who keeps this house served her father; he is a very honest fellow, and may be of use to you; we'll send for him to take a glass with us: he'll give you her whole history, and 'tis worth your hearing.

Col. But may one trust him?

Free. With your life: I have obligations enough upon him to make him do any thing: I serve him with wine. [*Knocks.*

Col. Nay, I know him very well myself. I once used to frequent a club that was kept here.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Gentlemen, d'ye call?

Free. Ay; send up your master.

Draw. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Col. Do you know any of this lady's guardians, Freeman?

Free. Yes, I know two of them very well.

Enter SACKBUT.

Here comes one will give you an account of them all. Mr Sackbut, we sent for you to take a glass with us. 'Tis a maxim among the friends of the bottle, that as long as the master is in company, one may be sure of good wine.

Sack. Sir, you shall be sure to have as good wine as you send in. Colonel, your most humble servant; you are welcome to town.

Col. I thank you, Mr Sackbut.

Sack. I am as glad to see you as I should a hundred tun of French claret, custom free. My service to you, sir. [*Drinks.*] You don't look so merry as you used to do; arn't you well, colonel?

Free. He has got a woman in his head, landlord; can you help him?

Sack. If 'tis in my power, I shan't scruple to serve my friend.

Col. 'Tis one perquisite of your calling.

Sack. Aye, at t'other end of the town, where you officers use, women are good forcers of trade; a well-customed house, a handsome barkeeper, with clean, obliging drawers, soon get the master an estate; but our citizens seldom do any thing but cheat within the walls. But as to the lady, colonel; point you at particulars? or have you a good Champagne stomach? Are you in full pay, or reduced, colonel?

Col. Reduced, reduced, landlord.

Free. To the miserable condition of a lover!

Sack. Pish! that's preferable to half-pay; a woman's resolution may break before the peace: push her home, colonel; there's no parlying with the fair sex.

Col. Were the lady her own mistress, I have some reasons to believe I should soon command in chief.

Free. You know Mrs Lovely, Mr Sackbut?

Sack. Know her! Aye, poor Nancy: I have carried her to school many a frosty morning.—Alas! if she's the woman, I pity you, colonel: her father, my old master, was the most whimsical, out-of-the-way tempered man I ever heard of, as you will guess by his last will and testament. This was his only child: and I have heard him wish her dead a thousand times.

Col. Why so?

Sack. He hated posterity, you must know, and wished the world were to expire with himself.—He used to swear, if she had been a boy, he would have qualified him for the opera.

Free. 'Twas a very unnatural resolution in a father.

Sack. He died worth thirty thousand pounds, which he left to his daughter, provided she married with the consent of her guardians: but that she might be sure never to do so, he left her in the care of four men, as opposite to each other as the four elements; each has his quarterly rule, and three months in a year she is obliged to be subject to each of their humours, and they are pretty different, I assure you. She is just come from Bath.

Col. 'Twas there I saw her.

Sack. Aye, sir; the last quarter was her beau guardian's. She appears in all public places during his reign.

Col. She visited a lady who boarded in the same house with me: I liked her person, and found an opportunity to tell her so. She replied, she had no objection to mine; but if I could not reconcile contradictions, I must not think of her; for that she was condemned to the caprice of four persons, who never yet agreed in any one thing, and she was obliged to please them all.

Sack. 'Tis most true, sir; I'll give you a short description of the men, and leave you to judge of the poor lady's condition. One is a kind of virtuoso; a silly, half-witted fellow, but positive and surly, fond of every thing antique and foreign, and wears his clothes of the fashion of the last century; doats upon travellers, and believes more of sir John Mandeville than he does of the Bible.

Col. That must be a rare odd fellow!

Sack. Another is a 'Change-broker; a fellow that will out-lye the devil for the advantage of stock, and cheat his father that got him, in a bargain: he is a great stickler for trade, and hates every man that wears a sword.

Free. He is a great admirer of the Dutch management, and swears they understand trade better than any nation under the sun.

Sack. The third is an old beau, that has May in his fancy and dress, but December in his face and his heels: he admires all the new fashions, and those must be French; loves operas, balls, masquerades, and is always the most tawdry of the whole company on a birth-day.

Col. These are pretty opposite to one another, truly; and the fourth, what is he, landlord?

Sack. A very rigid quaker, whose quarter began this day. I saw Mrs Lovely go in, not above two hours ago—sir Philip set her down.—What think you now, colonel; is not the poor lady to be pitied?

Col. Aye, and rescued too, landlord.

Free. In my opinion, that's impossible.

Col. There is nothing impossible to a lover.—What would not a man attempt for a fine woman and thirty thousand pounds? Besides, my honour is at stake; I promised to deliver her, and she bid me win her and wear her.

Sack. That's fair, faith.

Free. If it depended upon knight-errantry, I should not doubt your setting free the damsel; but to have avarice, impertinence, hypocrisy, and pride, at once to deal with, requires more

cunning than generally attends a man of honour.

Col. My fancy tells me I shall come off with glory. I am resolved to try, however. Do you know all the guardians, Mr Sackbut?

Sack. Very well, sir; they all use my house.

Col. And will you assist me, if occasion requires?

Sack. In every thing I can, colonel.

Free. I'll answer for him; and whatever I can serve you in, you may depend on. I know Mr Periwinkle and Mr Tradelove; the latter has a very great opinion of my interest abroad. I happened to have a letter from a correspondent two hours before the news arrived of the French king's death: I communicated it to him: upon which he bought all the stock he could, and what with that, and some wagers he laid, he told me he had got to the tune of five hundred pounds; so that I am much in his good graces.

Col. I don't know but you may be of service to me, Freeman.

Free. If I can, command me, colonel.

Col. Isn't it possible to find a suit of clothes ready made at some of these sale-shops fit to rig out a beau, think you, Mr Sackbut?

Sack. O, hang them—No, colonel; they keep nothing ready made that a gentleman would be seen in: but I can fit you with a suit of clothes, if you'd make a figure—Velvet and gold brocade—They were pawned to me by a French count, who had been stript at play, and wanted money to carry him home; he promised to send for them, but I have not heard any thing of him.

Free. He has not fed upon frogs long enough yet to recover his loss; ha, ha!

Col. Ha, ha! Well, the clothes will do, Mr Sackbut; though we must have three or four fellows in tawdry liveries: they can be procured, I hope?

Free. Egad! I have a brother come from the West Indies that can match you; and, for expedition-sake, you shall have his servants: there's a black, a tawney-moor, and a Frenchman; they don't speak one word of English, so can make no mistake.

Col. Excellent! Egad! I shall look like an Indian prince. First, I'll attack my beau guardian; where lives he?

Sack. Faith, somewhere about St James; though, to say in what street, I cannot; but any chairman will tell you where sir Philip Modelove lives.

Free. Oh! you'll find him in the Park at eleven every day; at least, I never pass through at that hour without seeing him there. But what do you intend?

Col. To address him in his own way, and find what he designs to do with the lady.

Free. And what then?

Col. Nay, that I cannot tell; but I shall take my measures accordingly.

Sack. Well, 'tis a mad undertaking, in my mind: but here's to your success, colonel.

[*Drinks.*

Col. 'Tis something out of the way, I confess; but fortune may chance to smile, and I succeed. Come, landlord, let me see those clothes. Freeman, I shall expect you'll leave word with Mr Sackbut where one may find you upon occasion; and send my Indian equipage immediately; d'ye hear?

Free. Immediately. [*Exit.*

Col. Bold was the man who ventured first to sea,
But the first venturing lovers bolder were.
The path of love's a dark and dangerous way,
Without a landmark, or one friendly star,
And he that runs the risque deserves the fair.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—PRIM'S *house.*

Enter MRS LOVELY, *and her maid* BETTY.

Bet. Bless me, madam! Why do you fret and tease yourself so? This is giving them the advantage, with a witness.

Mrs Love. Must I be condemned all my life to the preposterous humours of other people, and pointed at by every boy in town? Oh! I could tear my flesh, and curse the hour I was born—Isn't it monstrously ridiculous, that they should desire to impose their quaking dress upon me at these years? When I was a child, no matter what they made me wear; but now——

Bet. I would resolve against it, madam; I'd see them hanged before I'd put on the pinched cap again.

Mrs Love. Then I must never expect one moment's ease: she has rung such a peal in my ears already, that I shan't have the right use of them this month. What can I do?

Bet. What can you not do, if you will but give your mind to it? Marry, madam.

Mrs Love. What! and have my fortune go to build churches and hospitals?

Bet. Why, let it go. If the colonel loves you, as he pretends, he'll marry you without a fortune, madam; and, I assure you, a colonel's lady is no despicable thing; a colonel's post will maintain you like a gentlewoman, madam.

Mrs Love. So, you would advise me to give up my own fortune, and throw myself upon the colonel's?

Bet. I would advise you to make yourself easy, madam.

Mrs Love. That's not the way, I'm sure. No, no, girl; there are certain ingredients to be mingled with matrimony, without which I may as well change for the worse as the better. When the woman has fortune enough to make the man happy, if he has either honour or good manners, he'll make her easy. Love makes but a slovenly figure in a house, where poverty keeps the door.

Bet. And so you resolve to die a maid, do you, madam?

Mrs Love. Or have it in my power to make the man I love master of my fortune.

Bet. Then you don't like the colonel so well as I thought you did, madam, or you would not take such a resolution.

Mrs Love. It is because I do like him, Betty, that I do take such a resolution.

Bet. Why, do you expect, madam, the colonel can work miracles? Is it possible for him to marry you with the consent of all your guardians?

Mrs Love. Or he must not marry me at all: and so I told him; and he did not seem displeased with the news. He promised to set me free; and I, on that condition, promised to make him master of that freedom.

Bet. Well! I have read of enchanted castles, ladies delivered from the chains of magic, giants killed, and monsters overcome; so that I shall be the less surprised if the colonel should conjure you out of the power of your four guardians; if he does, I am sure he deserves your fortune.

Mrs Love. And shall have it, girl, if it were ten times as much—For I'll ingenuously confess to thee, that I do like the colonel above all the men I ever saw: there's something so *jantée* in a soldier, a kind of *je ne sçai quoi* air, that makes them more agreeable than the rest of mankind. They command regard, as who shall say, We are your defenders. We preserve your beauties from the insults of rude and unpolished foes, and ought to be preferred before those lazy, indolent mortals, who, by dropping into their fathers' estates, set up their coaches, and think to rattle themselves into our affections.

Bet. Nay, madam, I confess that the army has engrossed all the prettiest fellows—a laced coat and a feather have irresistible charms.

Mrs Love. But the colonel has all the beauties of the mind, as well as the body. O all ye powers that favour happy lovers, grant that he may be mine! Thou god of love, if thou be'st aught but name, assist my Fainwell!

Point all thy darts to aid his just design,
And make his plots as prevalent as thine.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

Enter COLONEL, *finely drest, three Footmen after him.*

Col. So, now if I can but meet this beau! Egad! Methinks, I cut a smart figure, and have as much of the tawdry air as any Italian count or French marquis of them all. Sure, I shall know this knight again——Ah! Yonder he sits, making love to a mask, i'faith! I'll walk up the Mall, and come down by him.

[*Exit* COLONEL.

Scene draws, and discovers SIR PHILIP *upon a bench, with a woman masked.*

Sir Phi. Well, but, my dear, are you really constant to your keeper?

Wom. Yes, really, sir. Hey-day! Who comes yonder? He cuts a mighty figure.

Sir Phi. Ha! A stranger, by his equipage keeping so close at his heels. He has the appearance of a man of quality. Positively French, by his dancing air!

Wom. He crosses, as if he meant to sit down here.

Sir Phi. He has a mind to make love to thee, child.

Enter COLONEL, *and seats himself upon the bench by* SIR PHILIP.

Wom. It will be to no purpose, if he does.

Sir Phi. Are you resolved to be cruel, then?

Col. You must be very cruel indeed, if you can deny any thing to so fine a gentleman, madam. [*Takes out his watch.*

Wom. I never mind the outside of a man.

Col. And I'm afraid thou art no judge of the inside.

Sir Phi. I am positively of your mind, sir; for creatures of her function seldom penetrate beyond the pocket.

Wom. Creatures of your composition, have, indeed, generally more in their pockets, than in their heads. [*Aside.*

Sir Phi. Pray, what says your watch? mine is down. [*Pulling out his watch.*

Col. I want thirty-six minutes of twelve, sir.

[*Puts up his watch, and takes out his snuff-box.*

Sir Phi. May I presume, sir?

Col. Sir, you honour me.

[*Presenting the box.*

Sir Phi. He speaks good English—though he must be a foreigner.—[*Aside.*]—This snuff is extremely good—and the box prodigious fine; the work is French, I presume, sir?

Col. I bought it in Paris, sir—I do think the workmanship pretty neat.

Sir Phi. Neat! 'tis exquisitely fine, sir. Pray, sir, if I may take the liberty of inquiring—What country is so happy to claim the birth of the finest gentleman in the universe? France, I presume?

Col. Then you don't think me an Englishman?

Sir Phi. No, upon my soul, don't I.

Col. I'm sorry for't.

Sir Phi. Impossible, you should wish to be an Englishman! Pardon me, sir, this island could not produce a person of such alertness.

Col. As this mirror shews you, sir.

[*Puts up a pocket glass to* SIR PHILIP'S *face.*

Wom. Coxcombs! I'm sick to hear them praise one another. One seldom gets any thing by such animals; not even a dinner, unless one can dine upon soup and celery.

Sir Phi. O Gad, sir? Will you leave us, madam? Ha, ha, ha! [*Exit Woman.*

Col. She fears 'twill be only losing time to stay here, ha, ha, ha! I know not how to distinguish you, sir; but your mien and address speak you right honourable.

Sir Phi. Thus, great souls judge of others by themselves—I am only adorned with knighthood, that's all, I assure you, sir; my name is sir Philip Modelove.

Col. Of French extraction?

Sir Phi. My father was French.

Col. One may plainly perceive it—There is a certain gaiety peculiar to my nation (for I will own myself a Frenchman) which distinguishes us every where—A person of your figure would be a vast addition to a coronet.

Sir Phi. I must own I had the offer of a barony about five years ago; but I abhorred the fatigue which must have attended it. I could never yet bring myself to join with either party.

Col. You are perfectly in the right, Sir Philip—a fine person should not embark himself in the slovenly concern of politics: dress and pleasure are objects proper for the soul of a fine gentleman.

Sir Phi. And love—

Col. Oh! that's included under the article of pleasure.

Sir Phi. Parbleu il est un homme d'esprit! I must embrace you—[*Rise and embrace.*]—Your sentiments are so agreeable to mine, that we appear to have but one soul, for our ideas and conceptions are the same.

Col. I should be sorry for that. [*Aside.*]—You do me too much honour, sir Philip.

Sir Phi. Your vivacity and jantee mien assured me, at first sight, there was nothing of this foggy island in your composition. May I crave your name, sir?

Col. My name is La Fainwell, sir, at your service.

Sir Phi. The La Fainwells are French, I know; though the name is become very numerous in Great-Britain of late years—I was sure you was French the moment I laid my eyes upon you; I could not come into the supposition of your being an Englishman: this island produces few such ornaments.

Col. Pardon me, sir Philip; this island has two things superior to all nations under the sun.

Sir Phi. Ah! what are they?

Col. The ladies, and the laws.

Sir Phi. The laws, indeed, do claim a preference of other nations—but, by my soul, there are fine women every where.—I must own I have felt their power in all countries.

Col. There are some finished beauties, I confess, in France, Italy, Germany, nay, even in Holland, mais elles sont bien rare: but les belles Angloises! Oh, sir Philip, where find we such women! such symmetry of shape! such elegance of dress! such regularity of features! such sweetness of temper! such commanding eyes! and such bewitching smiles!

Sir Phi. Ah! parbleu vous etes attrapé.

Col. Non, je vous assure, Chevalier.—But I declare there is no amusement so agreeable to my goût as the conversation of a fine woman.——I could never be prevailed upon to enter into what the vulgar call the pleasure of the bottle.

Sir Phi. My own taste, positivement.—A ball, or a masquerade, is certainly preferable to all the productions of the vineyard.

Col. Infinitely! I hope the people of quality in England will support that branch of pleasure which was imported with the peace, and since naturalized by the ingenious Mr. Heidegger.

Sir Phi. The ladies assure me it will become part of the constitution—upon which I subscribed a hundred guineas—It will be of great service to the public, at least to the company of surgeons; and the city in general.

Col. Ha, ha! it may help to ennoble the blood of the city. Are you married, sir Philip?

Sir Phi. No; nor do I believe I ever shall enter into that honourable state: I have an absolute tendre for the whole sex.

Col. That's more than they have for you, I dare swear. [*Aside.*

Sir Phi. And I have the honour to be very well with the ladies, I can assure you, sir; and I won't affront a million of fine women to make one happy.

Col. Nay, marriage is reducing a man's taste to a kind of half pleasure: but then it carries the blessings of peace along with it; one goes to sleep without fear, and wakes without pain.

Sir Phi. There's something of that in't; a wife is a very good dish for an English stomach,—but gross feeding for nicer palates, ha, ha, ha!

Col. I find I was very much mistaken—I imagined you had been married to that young lady, whom I saw in the chariot with you this morning in Grace-church-Street.

Sir Phi. Who, Nancy Lovely? I am a piece of a guardian to that lady: you must know, her father, I thank him, joined me with three of the most preposterous old fellows—that, upon my soul, I am in pain for the poor girl:——she must certainly lead apes, as the saying is; ha, ha!

Col. That's pity, sir Philip. If the lady would

give me leave, I would endeavour to avert that curse.

Sir Phi. As to the lady, she'd gladly be rid of us at any rate, I believe; but here's the mischief! he who marries Miss Lovely, must have the consent of us all four—or not a penny of her portion.—For my part, I shall never approve of any but a man of figure,—and the rest are not only averse to cleanliness, but have each a peculiar taste to gratify.—For my part, I declare I would prefer you to all the men I ever saw.

Col. And I her to all women—

Sir Phi. I assure you, Mr Fainwell, I am for marrying her; for I hate the trouble of a guardian, especially among such wretches; but resolve never to agree to the choice of any one of them, —and I fancy they'll be even with me, for they never came into any proposal of mine yet.

Col. I wish I had your leave to try them, sir Philip.

Sir Phi. With all my soul, sir; I can refuse a person of your appearance nothing.

Col. Sir, I am infinitely obliged to you.

Sir Phi. But do you really like matrimony?

Col. I believe I could with that lady.

Sir Phi. The only point in which we differ—But you are master of so many qualifications, that I can excuse one fault; for I must think it a fault in a fine gentleman; and that you are such, I'll give it under my hand.

Col. I wish you'd give me your consent to marry Mrs Lovely under your hand, sir Philip.

Sir Phi. I'll do't, if you'll step into St James's Coffee-house, where we may have pen and ink—though I can't foresee what advantage my consent will be to you, without you could find a way to get the rest of the guardians. But I'll introduce you, however: she is now at a Quaker's, where I carried her this morning, when you saw us in Gracechurch-Street.—I assure you she has an odd ragout of guardians, as you will find when you hear the characters, which I'll endeavour to give you as we go along.—Hey! Pierre, Jaque, Renno—where are you all, scoundrels?——Order the chariots to St James's Coffee-house.

Col. Le Noir, la Brun, la Blanc.——Morbleu, ou sont ces coquins la? Allons, Monsieur le Chevalier.

Sir Phi. Ah! Pardonnez moi, monsieur.

Col. Not one step, upon my soul, sir Philip.

Sir Phi. The best bred man in Europe, positively! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* OBADIAH PRIM'S *house.*

Enter MRS LOVELY, *followed by* MRS PRIM.

Mrs Prim. Then, thou wilt not obey me? and thou dost really think those fallals become thee?

Mrs Love. I do, indeed.

Mrs Prim. Now will I be judged by all sober people, if I don't look more like a modest woman than thou dost, Anne.

Mrs Love. More like a hypocrite you mean, Mrs Prim.

Mrs Prim. Ah! Anne, Anne, that wicked Philip Modelove will undo thee—Satan so fills thy heart with pride, during the three months of his guardianship, that thou becomest a stumbling block to the upright.

Mrs Love. Pray, who are they? Are the pinched cap and formal hood the emblems of sanctity? Does your virtue consist in your dress, Mrs Prim?

Mrs Prim. It doth not consist in cut hair, spotted face, and a bare neck.—Oh the wickedness of the generation! The primitive women knew not the abomination of hooped petticoats.

Mrs Love. No; nor the abomination of cant neither. Don't tell me, Mrs Prim, don't. I know you have as much pride, vanity, self-conceit, and ambition among you, couched under that formal habit, and sanctified countenance, as the proudest of us all; but the world begins to see your prudery.

Mrs Prim. Prudery! What! do they invent new words as well as new fashions? Ah! poor fantastic age, I pity thee—Poor deluded Anne, which dost thou think most resembles the saint, and which the sinner, thy dress or mine? Thy naked bosom allureth the eye of the by-stander, —encourageth the frailty of human-nature—and corrupteth the soul with evil longings.

Mrs Love. And, pray, who corrupted your son Tobias with evil longings? Your maid Tabitha wore a handkerchief, and yet he made the saint a sinner.

Mrs Prim. Well, well, spit thy malice. I confess Satan did buffet my son Tobias, and my servant Tabitha: the evil spirit was at that time too strong, and they both became subject to its workings, not from any outward provocation, but from an inward call: he was not tainted with the rottenness of the fashions, nor did his eyes take in the drunkenness of beauty.

Mrs Love. No! that's plainly to be seen.

Mrs Prim. Tabitha is one of the faithful; he fell not with a stranger.

Mrs Love. So! Then you hold wenching no crime, provided it be within the pale of your own tribe.——You are an excellent casuist, truly!

Enter OBADIAH PRIM.

Oba. Prim. Not stripped of thy vanity yet, Anne!—Why dost thou not make her put it off, Sarah?

Mrs Prim. She will not do it.

Oba. Prim. Verily, thy naked breast troubleth my outward man; I pray thee hide them, Anne; put on an handkerchief, Anne Lovely.

Mrs Love. I hate handkerchiefs when 'tis not cold weather, Mr Prim.

Mrs Prim. I have seen thee wear a handker-

chief, nay, and a mask to boot, in the middle of July.

Mrs Love. Ay; to keep the sun from scorching me.

Oba. Prim. If thou couldst not bear the sunbeams, how dost thou think man can bear thy beams? Those breasts inflame desire; let them be hid, I say.

Mrs Love. Let me be quiet, I say. Must I be tormented thus for ever? Sure no woman's condition ever equalled mine! Foppery, folly, avarice, and hypocrisy, are, by turns, my constant companions—and I must vary shapes as often as a player—I cannot think my father meant this tyranny! No, you usurp an authority which he never intended you should take.

Oba. Prim. Hark thee; dost thou call good counsel tyranny? Do I, or my wife, tyrannize, when we desire thee, in all love, to put off thy tempting attire, and veil thy provokers to sin?

Mrs Love. Deliver me, good Heaven! or I shall go distracted. [*Walks about.*

Mrs Prim. So! now thy pinners are tost, and thy breasts pulled up! Verily, they were seen enough before. Fy upon the filthy tailor who made thy stays!

Mrs Love. I wish I were in my grave! Kill me rather than treat me thus.

Oba. Prim. Kill thee! ha, ha! thou thinkest thou art acting some lewd play, sure!—kill thee! Art thou prepared for death, Anne Lovely? No, no; thou wouldst rather have a husband, Anne—Thou wantest a gilt coach, with six lazy fellows behind, to flaunt it in the ring of vanity, among the princes and rulers of the land, who pamper themselves with the fatness thereof; but I will take care that none shall squander away thy father's estate; thou shalt marry none such, Anne.

Mrs Love. Would you marry me to one of your own canting sect?

Oba. Prim. Yea, verily; no one else shall ever get my consent, I do assure thee, Anne.

Mrs Love. And, I do assure thee, Obadiah, that I will as soon turn Papist, and die in a convent.

Mrs Prim. Oh, wickedness!

Mrs Love. Oh, stupidity!

Oba. Prim. Oh, blindness of heart!

Mrs Love. Thou blinder of the world, don't provoke me—lest I betray your sanctity, and leave your wife to judge of your purity:—What were the emotions of your spirit—when you squeezed Mary by the hand last night in the pantry—when she told you, you bussed so filthily? Ah! you had no aversion to naked bosoms, when you begged her to shew you a little, little, little bit of her delicious bubby:—don't you remember those words, Mr Prim?

Mrs Prim. What does she say, Obadiah?

Ob. Prim. She talketh unintelligibly, Sarah. Which way did she hear this? This should not have reached the ears of the wicked ones:—verily, it troubleth me. [*Aside.*

Enter Servant.

Ser. Philip Modelove, whom they call sir Philip, is below, and such another with him; shall I send them up?

Oba. Prim. Yea. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR PHILIP *and* COLONEL.

Sir Phi. How dost thou do, friend Prim? Odso! my she-friend here, too! What, are you documenting Miss Nancy? Reading her a lecture upon the pinched coif, I warrant ye!

Mrs Prim. I am sure thou didst never read her any lecture that was good. My flesh riseth so at these wicked ones, that prudence adviseth me to withdraw from their sight. [*Exit.*

Col. Oh! that I could find means to speak with her! How charming she appears! I wish I could get this letter into her hand. [*Aside.*

Sir Phi. Well, Miss Cockey, I hope thou hast got the better of them.

Mrs Love. The difficulties of my life are not to be surmounted, sir Philip.——I hate the impertinence of him, as much as the stupidity of the other. [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. Verily, Philip, thou wilt spoil this maiden.

Sir Phi. I find we still differ in opinion; but that we may none of us spoil her, prithee, Prim, let us consent to marry her.—I have sent for our brother guardians to meet me here about this very thing—Madam, will you give me leave to recommend a husband to you? Here's a gentleman, whom, in my mind, you can have no objection to.

[*Presents the Colonel to her, she looks another way.*

Mrs Love. Heaven deliver me from the formal, and the fantastic fool!

Col. A fine woman——a fine horse, and fine equipage, are the finest things in the universe: and if I am so happy to possess you, madam, I shall become the envy of mankind, as much as you outshine your whole sex.

[*As he takes her hand to kiss it, he endeavours to put a letter into it; she lets it drop*—PRIM *takes it up.*

Mrs Love. I have no ambition to appear conspicuously ridiculous, sir. [*Turning from him.*

Col. So fail the hopes of Fainwell.

Mrs Love. Ha! Fainwell! 'Tis he! What have I done? Prim has the letter, and it will be discovered! [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. Friend, I know not thy name, so cannot call thee by it; but thou seest thy letter is unwelcome to the maiden; she will not read it.

Mrs Love. Nor shall you; [*Snatches the letter.*] I'll tear it in a thousand pieces, and scatter

it, as I will the hopes of all those that any of you shall recommend to me. [*Tears the letter.*

Sir Phil. Ha! Right woman, faith!

Col. Excellent woman! [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. Friend, thy garb savoureth too much of the vanity of the age for my approbation; nothing that resembleth Philip Modelove shall I love; mark that——therefore, friend Philip, bring no more of thy own apes under my roof.

Sir Phi. I am so entirely a stranger to the monsters of thy breed, that I shall bring none of them, I am sure.

Col. I am likely to have a pretty task by that time I have gone through them all; but she's a city worth taking; and, 'egad! I'll carry on the siege: if I can but blow up the outworks, I fancy I am pretty secure of the town. [*Aside.*

Enter Servant.

Ser. Toby Periwinkle and Thomas Tradelove demand to see thee. [*To* SIR PHILIP.

Sir Phi. Bid them come up.

Mrs Love. Deliver me from such an inundation of noise and nonsense. Oh, Fainwell! whatever thy contrivance be, prosper it Heaven—but, oh! I fear thou never canst redeem me!

Sir Phil. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

Enter MR PERIWINKLE *and* TRADELOVE.

These are my brother guardians, Mr Fainwell; prithee, observe the creatures. [*Aside to* COL.

Trade. Well, sir Philip, I obey your summons.

Per. Pray, what have you to offer for the good of Mrs Lovely, sir Philip?

Sir. Phi. First, I desire to know what you intend to do with that lady? Must she be sent to the Indies for a venture—or live an old maid, and then be entered amongst your curiosities, and shewn for a monster, Mr Periwinkle?

Col. Humph, curiosities; that must be the virtuoso. [*Aside.*

Per. Why, what would you do with her?

Sir Phi. I would recommend this gentleman to her for a husband, sir—a person, whom I have picked out from the whole race of mankind.

Oba. Prim. I would advise thee to shuffle him again with the rest of mankind: for I like him not.

Col. Pray, sir, without offence to your formality, what may be your objections?

Oba. Prim. Thy person; thy manners; thy dress; thy acquaintance;——thy every thing, friend.

Sir Phi. You are most particularly obliging, friend, ha, ha!

Trade. What business do you follow, pray, sir?

Col. Humph! by that question he must be the broker. [*Aside.*] Business, sir! the business of a gentleman.

Trade. That is as much as to say, you dress fine, feed high, lie with every woman you like, and pay your surgeon's bill better than your tailor's, or your butcher's.

Col. The court is much obliged to you, sir, for your character of a gentleman.

Trade. The court, sir! What would the court do without us citizens?

Sir Phi. Without your wives and daughters, you mean, Mr Tradelove?

Per. Have you ever travelled, sir?

Col. That question must not be answered now ——In books I have, sir.

Per. In books! That's fine travelling, indeed! ——Sir Philip, when you present a person I like, he shall have my consent to marry Mrs Lovely; till then, your servant. [*Exit.*

Col. I'll make you like me before I have done with you, or I am mistaken. [*Aside.*

Trade. And when you can convince me that a beau is more useful to my country than a merchant, you shall have mine; till then, you must excuse me. [*Exit.*

Col. So much for trade—I'll fit you, too. [*Aside.*

Sir Phi. In my opinion, this is very inhuman treatment, as to the lady, Mr Prim.

Oba. Prim. Thy opinion and mine happen to differ as much as our occupations, friend; business requireth my presence, and folly thine; and so I must bid thee farewell. [*Exit.*

Sir Phi. Here's breeding for you, Mr Feignwell! Gad take me,

Half my estate I'd give to see them bit.

Col. I hope to bite you all, if my plot hit.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Tavern.*

SACKBUT *and the Colonel, in an Egyptian dress.*

Sack. A lucky beginning, colonel——you have got the old beau's consent.

Col. Ay, he's a reasonable creature; but the other three will require some pains.—Shall I pass upon him, think you? 'Egad, in my mind, I look as antique as if I had been preserved in the ark.

Sack. Pass upon him! ay, ay, as roundly as white wine dash'd with sack does for mountain and sherry, if you have assurance enough——

Col. I have no apprehension from that quarter; assurance is the cockade of a soldier.

Sack. Ay, but the assurance of a soldier differs much from that of a traveller.—Can you lie with a good grace?

Col. As heartily, when my mistress is the prize, as I would meet the foe, when my country called, and king commanded; so don't you fear that part: if he don't know me again, I am safe—I hope he'll come.

Sack. I wish all my debts would come as sure. I told him you had been a great traveller, had many valuable curiosities, and was a person of a most singular taste. He seemed transported, and begged me to keep you till he came.

Col. Ay, ay; he need not fear my running away.—Let's have a bottle of sack, landlord; our ancestors drank sack.

Sack. You shall have it.

Col. And whereabouts is the trap-door you mentioned?

Sack. There's the conveyance, sir. [*Exit.*

Col. Now, if I should cheat all these roguish guardians, and carry off my mistress in triumph, it would be what the French call a *grand coup d'eclat*—Odso! here comes Periwinkle.——Ah! Deuce take this beard; pray Jupiter it does not give me the slip, and spoil all!

Enter SACKBUT *with wine, and* PERIWINKLE *following.*

Sack. Sir, this gentleman, hearing you have been a great traveller, and a person of fine speculation, begs leave to take a glass with you; he is a man of a curious taste himself.

Col. The gentleman has it in his face and garb——Sir, you are welcome.

Per. Sir, I honour a traveller, and men of your inquiring disposition; the oddness of your habit pleases me exceedingly; 'tis very antique; and for that I like it.

Col. 'Tis very antique, sir;—this habit once belonged to the famous Claudius Ptolemeus, who lived in the year one hundred and thirty-five.

Sack. If he keeps up to the sample, he shall lie with the devil for a bean-stack, and win it, every straw. [*Aside.*

Per. A hundred and thirty-five! why, that's prodigious, now!—Well, certainly 'tis the finest thing in the world to be a traveller.

Col. For my part, I value none of the modern fashions a fig-leaf.

Per. No more don't I, sir; I had rather be the jest of a fool, than his favourite.—I am laughed at here for my singularity——This coat, you must know, sir, was formerly worn by that ingenious and very learned person, Mr John Tradescant, of Lambeth.

Col. John Tradescant! Let me embrace you, sir—John Tradescant was my uncle by my mother's side; and I thank you for the honour you do his memory; he was a very curious man, indeed.

Per. Your uncle, sir!——Nay, then, 'tis no wonder that your taste is so refined; why, you have it in your blood.——My humble service to you, sir; to the immortal memory of John Tradescant, your never-to-be-forgotten uncle! [*Drinks.*

Col. Give me a glass, landlord.

Per. I find you are primitive, even in your wine; Canary was the drink of our wise forefathers; 'tis balsamic, and saves the charge of apothecaries' cordials—Oh, that I had lived in your uncle's days! or rather, that he were now alive!—Oh, how proud he'd be of such a nephew!

Sack. Oh, pox! that would have spoil'd the jest. [*Aside.*

Per. A person of your curiosity must have collected many rarities.

Col. I have some, sir, which are not yet come ashore; as, an Egyptian idol.

Per. Pray, what may that be?

Col. It is, sir, a kind of ape, which they formerly worshipped in that country; I took it from the breast of a female mummy.

Per. Ha, ha! our women retain part of their idolatry to this day; for many an ape lies upon a lady's bosom: ha, ha!——

Sack. A smart old thief. [*Aside.*

Col. Two tusks of an hippopotamus, two pair of Chinese nut-crackers, and one Egyptian mummy.

Per. Pray, sir, have you never a crocodile?

Col. Humph!—The boatswain brought one with a design to shew it; but touching at Rotterdam, and hearing it was no rarity in England, he sold it to a Dutch poet.

Sack. The devil's in that nation, it rivals us in every thing!

Per. I should have been very glad to have seen a living crocodile.

Col. My genius led me to things more worthy of regard——Sir, I have seen the utmost limits

of this globular world; I have seen the sun rise and set; know in what degree of heat he is at noon, to the breadth of a hair; and what quantity of combustibles he burns in a day; and how much of it turns to ashes, and how much to cinders.

Per. To cinders! You amaze me, sir! I never heard that the sun consumed any thing.——Descartes tells us———

Col. Descartes, with the rest of his brethren, both ancient and modern, knew nothing of the matter.—I tell you, sir, that nature admits of an annual decay, though imperceptible to vulgar eyes.—Sometimes his rays destroy below, sometimes above.——You have heard of blazing comets, I suppose?

Per. Yes, yes; I remember to have seen one; and our astrologers tell us of another which will happen very quickly.

Col. Those comets are little islands bordering on the sun, which, at certain times, are set on fire by that luminous body's moving over them perpendicular, which will one day occasion a general conflagration.

Sack. One need not scruple the colonel's capacity, faith! [*Aside.*

Per. This is marvellous strange! These cinders are what I never read of in any of our learned dissertations.

Col. I don't know how the devil you should. [*Aside.*

Sack. He has it at his finger's ends; one would swear he had learned to lie at school, he does it so cleverly. [*Aside.*

Per. Well! you travellers see strange things! Pray, sir, have you any of those cinders?

Col. I have, among my other curiosities.

Per. Oh, what have I lost for want of travelling!—Pray, what have you else?

Col. Several things worth your attention.—I have a muff made of the feathers of those geese that saved the Roman Capitol.

Per. Is't possible!

Sack. Yes, if you are such a gander as to believe him. [*Aside.*

Col. I have an Indian leaf, which, open, will cover an acre of land, yet folds up in so little a compass, you may put it into your snuff-box.

Sack. Humph! That's a thunderer! [*Aside.*

Per. Amazing!

Col. Ah! mine is but a little one; I have seen some of them that would cover one of the Caribbee Islands.

Per. Well, if I don't travel before I die, I shan't rest in my grave——Pray, what do the Indians with them?

Col. Sir, they use them in their wars for tents; the old women for riding-hoods, the young for fans and umbrellas.

Sack. He has a fruitful invention! [*Aside.*

Per. I admire our East India Company imports none of them; they would certainly find their account in them.

Col. Right; if they could find the leaves. [*Aside.*]——Look ye, sir, do you see this little phial?

Per. Pray you, what is it?

Col. This is called Poluflosboio.

Per. Poluflosboio!———It has a rumbling sound.

Col. Right, sir; it proceeds from a rumbling nature.——This water was part of those waves which bore Cleopatra's vessel when she sailed to meet Antony.

Per. Well, of all that ever travelled, none had a taste like you!

Col. But here's the wonder of the world.—This, sir, is called Zona, or Moros Musphonon; the virtues of this are inestimable.

Per. Moros Musphonon! What, in the name of wisdom, can that be? To me it seems a plain belt.

Col. This girdle has carried me all the world over.

Per. You have carried it, you mean.

Col. I mean as I say, sir. Whenever I am girded with this, I am invisible; and, by turning this little screw, can be in the court of the Great Mogul, the Grand Signior, and king George, in as little time as your cook can poach an egg.

Per. You must pardon me, sir; I cannot believe it.

Col. If my landlord pleases, he shall try the experiment immediately.

Sack. I thank you kindly, sir; but I have no inclination to ride post to the devil.

Col. No, no, you shan't stir a foot; I'll only make you invisible.

Sack. But if you could not make me visible again?

Per. Come, try it upon me, sir; I am not afraid of the devil, nor all his tricks. 'Sbud, I'll stand them all.

Col. There, sir; put it on. Come; landlord, you and I must face to the east.—[*They turn about.*]—Is it on, sir!

Per. 'Tis on. [*They turn about again.*

Sack. Heaven protect me! Where is he?

Per. Why here, just where I was.

Sack. Where, where, in the name of virtue? Ah, poor Mr Periwinkle! Egad, look to't, you had best, sir; and let him be seen again, or I shall have you burnt for a wizard.

Col. Have patience, good landlord.

Per. But really don't you see me now?

Sack. No more than I see my grandmother, that died forty years ago.

Per. Are you sure you don't lie? Methinks, I stand just where I did, and see you as plain as I did before.

Sack. Ah! I wish I could see you once again.

Col. Take off the girdle, sir. [*He takes it off.*

Sack. Ah, sir, I am glad to see you, with all my heart. [*Embraces him.*

Per. This is very odd; certainly there must be some trick in't. Pray, sir, will you do me the favour to put it on yourself?

Col. With all my heart.

Per. But, first, I'll secure the door.

Col. You know how to turn the screw, Mr Sackbut?

Sack. Yes, yes. Come, Mr Periwinkle, we must turn full east.

[*They turn, the* COLONEL *sinks down the trap-door.*

Col. 'Tis done; now turn. [*They turn.*

Per. Ha! Mercy upon me! my flesh creeps upon my bones. This must be a conjurer, Mr Sackbut.

Sack. He is the devil, I think.

Per. Oh, Mr Sackbut, why do you name the devil, when, perhaps, he may be at your elbow?

Sack. At my elbow? marry, Heaven forbid!

Col. Are you satisfied?

[*From under the stage.*

Per. Yes, sir, yes——How hollow his voice sounds!

Sack. Yours seemed just the same—Faith, I wish this girdle were mine, I'd sell wine no more. Hark ye, Mr Periwinkle—[*Takes him aside till the* COLONEL *rises again.*]—if he would sell this girdle, you might travel with great expedition.

Col. But it is not to be parted with for money.

Per. I'm sorry for't, sir, because I think it the greatest curiosity I ever heard of.

Col. By the advice of a learned physiognomist in Grand Cairo, who consulted the lines in my face, I returned to England, where he told me I should find a rarity in the keeping of four men, which I was born to possess for the benefit of mankind; and the first of the four that gave me his consent, I should present him with this girdle—Till I have found this jewel, I shall not part with the girdle.

Per. What can that rarity be? Didn't he name it to you?

Col. Yes, sir: he called it a chaste, beautiful, unaffected woman.

Per. Pish! Women are no rarities——I never had any taste that way. I married, indeed, to please my father, and I got a girl to please my wife; but she and the child, (thank Heaven) died together——Women are the very gewgaws of the creation; playthings for boys, which, when they write man, they ought to throw aside.

Sack. A fine lecture to be read to a circle of ladies! [*Aside.*

Per. What woman is there, drest in all the pride and foppery of the times, can boast of such a foretop as the cockatoo?

Col. I must humour him—[*Aside.*]—Such a skin as the lizard?

Per. Such a shining breast as the humming bird?

Col. Such a shape as the antelope?

Per. Or, in all the artful mixture of their various dresses, have they half the beauty of one box of butterflies?

Col. No, that must be allowed—For my part, if it were not for the benefit of mankind, I'd have nothing to do with them; for they are as indifferent to me as a sparrow, or a flesh-fly.

Per. Pray, sir, what benefit is the world to reap from this lady?

Col. Why, sir, she is to bear me a son, who shall revive the art of embalming, and the old Roman manner of burying their dead; and, for the benefit of posterity, he is to discover the longitude, so long sought for in vain.

Per. Od! these are valuable things, Mr Sackbut!

Sack. He hits it off admirably, and t'other swallows it like sack and sugar—[*Aside.*]—Certainly this lady must be your ward, Mr Periwinkle, by her being under the care of four persons.

Per. By the description, it should——'Egad, if I could get that girdle, I'd ride with the sun, and make the tour of the world in four and twenty hours.—[*Aside.*]—And are you to give that girdle to the first of the four guardians that shall give his consent to marry that lady, say you, sir?

Col. I am so ordered, when I can find him.

Per. I fancy I know the very woman——her name is Anne Lovely.

Col. Excellent! he said, indeed, that the first letter of her name was L.

Per. Did he really? Well, that's prodigiously amazing, that a person in Grand Cairo should know any thing of my ward!

Col. Your ward!

Per. To be plain with you, sir, I am one of those four guardians.

Col. Are you, indeed, sir? I am transported to find the man who is to possess this Moros Musphonon is a person of so curious a taste! Here is a writing, drawn up by that famous Egyptian, which, if you will please to sign, you must turn your face full north, and the girdle is yours.

Per. If I live till this boy is born, I'll be embalmed, and sent to the Royal Society, when I die.

Col. That you shall most certainly.

Enter a Drawer.

Draw. Here's Mr Staytape the tailor inquires for you, colonel.

Col. Who do you speak to, you son of a whore?

Per. Ha! colonel! [*Aside.*

Col. Confound the blundering dog! [*Aside.*

Draw. Why, to colonel——

Sack. Get out, you rascal!

[*Kicks him out, and goes after him.*

Draw. What the devil is the matter?

Col. This dog has ruined all my schemes, I see by Periwinkle's looks. [*Aside.*

Per. How finely I should have been chousedl!—Colonel, you'll pardon me that I did not give you your title before——It was pure ignorance; faith it was—Pray—hem, hem! Pray, colonel, what post had this learned Egyptian in your regiment?

Col. A pox of your sneer!—[*Aside.*]—I don't understand you, sir.

Per. No, that's strange! I understand you, colonel——An Egyptian of Grand Cairo! Ha, ha, ha! I am sorry such a well-invented tale should do you no more service——We old fellows can see as far into a mill-stone as them that pick it—I am not to be tricked out of my trust—mark that.

Col. The devil! I must carry it off; I wish I were fairly out.—[*Aside.*]—Look ye, sir, you may make what jest you please—but the stars will be obeyed, sir; and, depend upon't, I shall have the lady, and you none of the girdle. Now for Mr Freeman's part of the plot.—[*Aside.*]

[*Exit* COLONEL.

Per. The stars! ha, ha! No star has favoured you, it seems——The girdle! ha, ha, ha! none of your legerdemain tricks can pass upon me—Why, what a pack of trumpery has this rogue picked up!—His Pagod, Poluflosboio, his Zonos, Moros Musphonons, and the devil knows what—But I'll take care—Ha, gone! Aye, 'twas time to sneak off. Soho! the house!

Enter SACKBUT.

Where is this trickster? Send for a constable; I'll have this rascal before the lord mayor; I'll Grand Cairo him, with a pox to him!——I believe you had a hand in putting this imposture upon me, Sackbut.

Sack. Who, I, Mr Periwinkle? I scorn it. I perceived he was a cheat, and left the room on purpose to send for a constable to apprehend him, and endeavoured to stop him when he went out—But the rogue made but one step from the stairs to the door, called a coach, leaped into it, and drove away like the devil, as Mr Freeman can witness, who is at the bar, and desires to speak with you; he is this minute come to town.

Per. Send him in.—[*Exit* SACKBUT.]—What a scheme this rogue has laid! How I should have been laughed at, had it succeeded!

Enter FREEMAN, *booted and spurred.*

Mr Freeman, your dress commands your welcome to town; what will you drink? I had like to have been imposed upon here by the veriest rascal—

Free. I am sorry to hear it——The dog flew for't; he had not escaped me, if I had been aware of him; Sackbut struck at him, but missed his blow, or he had done his business for him.

Per. I believe you never heard of such a contrivance, Mr Freeman, as this fellow had found out.

Free. Mr Sackbut has told me the whole story, Mr Periwinkle; but now I have something to tell you of much more importance to yourself. I happened to lie one night at Coventry, and, knowing your uncle, sir Toby Periwinkle, I paid him a visit, and, to my great surprise, found him dying.

Per. Dying!

Free. Dying, in all appearance; the servants weeping, the room in darkness: the apothecary, shaking his head, told me the doctors had given him over; and then there are small hopes, you know.

Per. I hope he made his will—he always told me he would make me his heir.

Free. I have heard you say as much, and therefore resolved to give you notice. I should think it would not be amiss if you went down to-morrow morning.

Per. It is a long journey, and the roads very bad.

Free. But he has a great estate, and the land very good——Think upon that.

Per. Why, that's true, as you say; I'll think upon it: in the mean time, I give you many thanks for your civility, Mr Freeman, and should be glad of your company to dine with me.

Free. I am obliged to be at Jonathan's coffee-house at two, and now it is half an hour after one. If I dispatch my business, I'll wait on you; I know your hour.

Per. You shall be very welcome, Mr Freeman; and so your humble servant.

[*Exit* PERIWINKLE.

Re-enter COLONEL *and* SACKBUT.

Free. Ha, ha, ha! I have done your business, colonel; he has swallowed the bait.

Col. I overheard all, though I am a little in the dark; I am to personate a highwayman, I suppose—that's a project I am not fond of; for though I may fright him out of his consent, he may fright me out of my life, when he discovers me, as he certainly must in the end.

Free. No, no; I have a plot for you without danger. But first, we must manage Tradelove—Has the tailor brought your clothes?

Sack. Yes, pox take the thief!

Free. Well, well, no matter; I warrant we have him yet—But now you must put on the Dutch merchant.

Col. The deuce of this trading plot! I wish he had been an old soldier, that I might have attacked him in my own way, heard him fight o'er all the battles of the late war—But for trade—by Jupiter, I shall never do it.

Sack. Never fear, colonel; Mr Freeman will instruct you.

Free. You'll see what others do; the coffee-house will instruct you.

Col. I must venture, however——But I have a farther plot in my head upon Tradelove, which you must assist me in, Freeman; you are in credit with him, I heard you say.

Free. I am, and will scruple nothing to serve you, colonel.

Col. Come along, then—Now for the Dutchman——Honest Ptolomy, by your leave.

Now must bag-wig and business come in play;
A thirty thousand pound girl leads the way.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—JONATHAN'S *coffee-house, in 'Change-alley. A crowd of people, with rolls of paper and parchment in their hands; a bar, and coffee-boys waiting.*

Enter TRADELOVE *and Stock-jobbers, with rolls of paper and parchment.*

1*st Stock.* SOUTH-SEA at seven-eights; who buys?

2*d Stock.* South-sea bonds due at Michaelmas, 1718. Class lottery-tickets?

3*d Stock.* East India bonds?

4*th Stock.* What, all sellers and no buyers? Gentlemen, I'll buy a thousand pound for Tuesday next, at three-fourths.

Cof. Boy. Fresh coffee, gentlemen; fresh coffee?

Trade. Hark ye, Gabriel, you'll pay the difference of that stock we transacted for t'other day?

Gab. Aye, Mr Tradelove, here's a note for the money upon the Sword Blade Company.
[*Gives him a note.*

Cof. Boy. Bohea tea, gentlemen?

Enter a Man.

Man. Is Mr Smuggler here?

1*st Cof. Boy.* Mr Smuggler's not here, sir;—you will find him at the books.

2*d Stock.* Ho! here come two sparks from t'other end of the town; what news bring they?

Enter two Gentlemen.

Trade. I would fain bite the spark in the brown coat; he comes very often into the alley, but never employs a broker.

Enter COLONEL *and* FREEMAN.

2*d Stock.* Who does any thing in the Civil List Lottery? or Caco? Zounds, where are all the Jews this afternoon? Are you a bull or a bear to-day, Abraham?

3*d Stock.* A bull, faith! but I have a good put for next week.

Trade. Mr Freeman, your servant! Who is that gentleman?

Free. A Dutch merchant just come to England. But hark ye, Mr Tradelove—I have a piece of news will get you as much as the French king's death did if you are expeditious. [*Shewing a letter.*] Read there; I received it just now from one that belongs to the Emperor's minister.

Trade. [*Reads.*] 'Sir, as I have many obliga-
'tions to you, I cannot miss any opportunity to
'shew my gratitude; this moment my lord has re-
'ceived a private express, that the Spaniards have
'raised their siege from before Cagliari. If this
'proves any advantage to you, it will answer
'both the ends and wishes of, sir, your most ob-
'bliged humble servant,
'HENRICUS DUSSELDORP.

Postscript.

'In two or three hours the news will be pub-
'lic.'

May one depend upon this, Mr Freeman?
[*Aside to* FREEMAN.

Free. You may. I never knew this person send me a false piece of news in my life.

Trade. Sir, I am much obliged to you—'Egad, 'tis rare news! Who sells South Sea for next week?

Stock-Job. [*Altogether.*] I sell; I, I, I, I, I sell.

1*st Stock.* I'll sell 5000l. for next week, at five eighths.

2*d Stock.* I'll sell ten thousand at five-eighths for the same time.

Trade. Nay, nay; hold, hold; not all together, gentlemen; I'll be no bull, I'll buy no more than I can take: will you sell ten thousand pounds at a half, for any day next week, except Saturday?

1*st Stock.* I'll sell it you, Mr Tradelove.

Free. [*Whispers to one of the gentlemen.*]

Gent. [*Aside.*] The Spaniards raised the siege of Cagliari; I don't believe one word of it.

2*d Gent.* Raised the siege! as much as you have raised the monument.

Free. 'Tis raised, I assure you, sir.

2*d Gent.* What will you lay on it?

Free. What you please.

1*st Gent.* Why, I have a brother upon the spot, in the Emperor's service; I am certain, if there were any such thing, I should have had a letter.

2*d Stock.* How's this? the siege of Cagliari raised? I wish it may be true, 'twill make business stir, and stocks rise.

1*st Stock.* Tradelove's a cunning fat bear; if this news proves true, I shall repent I sold him the five thousand pounds. Pray, sir, what assurance have you that the siege is raised?

Free. There is come an express to the Emperor's minister.

2*d Stock.* I'll know that presently.

1st Gent. Let it come where it will, I'll hold you fifty pounds 'tis false.

Free. 'Tis done.

2d Gent. I'll lay you a brace of hundreds upon the same.

Free. I'll take you.

4th Stock. 'Egad, I'll hold twenty pieces 'tis not raised, sir.

Free. Done with you, too.

Trade. I'll lay any man a brace of thousands the siege is raised.

Free. The Dutch merchant is your man to take in. [*Aside to* TRADELOVE.

Trade. Does not he know the news?

Free. Not a syllable; if he did, he would bet a hundred thousand pounds as soon as one penny; he's plaguy rich, and a mighty man at wagers. [*To* TRADELOVE.

Trade. Say you so—'Egad, I'll bite him, if possible. Are you from Holland, sir?

Col. Ya, mynheer.

Trade. Had you the news before you came away?

Col. What believe you, mynheer?

Trade. What do I believe? Why, I believe that the Spaniards have actually raised the siege of Cagliari.

Col. What duyvel's news is dat? 'Tis niet waer, mynheer——'tis no true, sir.

Trade. 'Tis so true, mynheer, that I'll lay you two thousand pounds upon it. You are sure the letter may be depended upon, Mr Freeman?

Free. Do you think I would venture my money, if I were not sure of the truth of it?

[*Aside to* TRADELOVE.

Col. Two duysend pound, mynheer, 'tis gadaen—dis gentleman sal hold de gelt.

[*Gives* FREEMAN *money.*

Trade. With all my heart—this binds the wager.

Free. You have certainly lost, mynheer, the siege is raised indeed.

Col. Ik gelov't niet, mynheer Freeman, ik sal ye dubbled honden, if you please.

Free. I am let into the secret; therefore, won't win your money.

Trade. Ha, ha, ha! I have snapt the Dutchman, faith, ha, ha! this is no ill day's work. Pray, may I crave your name, mynheer?

Col. Myn naem, mynheer! myn naem is Jan Van Timtamtirelereletta Heer Van Fainwell.

Trade. Zounds, 'tis a damned long name, I shall never remember it—Myn heer van, Tim, Tim, Tim——What the devil is it?

Free. Oh! never heed, I know the gentleman, and will pass my word for twice the sum.

Trade. That's enough.

Col. You'll hear of me sooner than you'll wish, old gentleman, I fancy. [*Aside.*] You'll come to Sackbut's, Freeman? [*Exit* COL.

Free. Immediately. [*Aside to the* COL.

1st Man. Humphry Hump here?

2d Boy. Mr Humphry Hump is not h er you'll find him upon the Dutch walk.

Trade. Mr Freeman, I give you many thanks for your kindness———

Free. I fear you'll repent, when you know all. [*Aside.*

Trade. Will you dine with me?

Free. I'm engaged at Sackbut's; adieu.

[*Exit* FREE.

Trade. Sir, your humble servant. Now I'll see what I can do upon Change with my news.

[*Exit* TRADE.

SCENE II.—*The tavern.*

Enter FREEMAN *and* COLONEL.

Free. Ha, ha, ha! The old fellow swallowed the bait as greedily as a gudgeon.

Col. I have him, faith, ha, ha, ha!—His two thousand pounds secure—If he would keep his money, he must part with the lady, ha, ha!——What came of your two friends? they performed their part very well; you should have brought them to take a glass with us.

Free. No matter, we'll drink a bottle together another time. I did not care to bring them hither; there's no necessity to trust them with the main secret, you know, colonel.

Col. Nay, that's right, Freeman.

Enter SACKBUT.

Sack. Joy, joy, colonel! the luckiest accident in the world!

Col. What sayest thou?

Sack. This letter does your business.

Col. [*Reads.*] 'To Obadiah Prim, hosier, near 'the building called the Monument, in London.'

Free. A letter to Prim! How came you by it?

Sack. Looking over the letters our post-woman brought, as I always do, to see what letters are directed to my house (for she can't read, you must know), I espied this directed to Prim, so paid for it among the rest; I have given the old jade a pint of wine on purpose to delay time, till you see if the letter be of any service; then I'll seal it up again, and tell I took it by mistake;—I have read it, and fancy you'll like the project. Read, read, colonel.

Col. [*Reads.*] 'Friend Prim, there is arrived 'from Pennsylvania one Simon Pure, a leader of 'the faithful, who hath sojourned with us eleven 'days, and hath been of great comfort to the 'brethren. He intendeth for the quarterly meet-'ing in London; I have recommended him to thy 'house. I pray thee treat him kindly, and let 'thy wife cherish him, for he's of weakly consti-'tution——he will depart from us the third day; 'which is all from thy friend in the faith,

AMINADAB HOLDFAST.'

Ha, ha! excellent! I understand you, landlord; I am to personate this Simon Pure, am I not?

Sack. Don't you like the hint?

Col. Admirably well!

Free. 'Tis the best contrivance in the world, if the right Simon gets not there before you——

Col. No, no; the quakers never ride post; he can't be here before to-morrow at soonest: do you send and buy me a quaker's dress, Mr Sackbut; and suppose, Freeman, you should wait at the Bristol coach, that if you see any such person, you might contrive to give me notice.

Free. I will—the country dress and boots, are they ready?

Sack. Yes, yes; every thing, sir.

Free. Bring them in then. [*Exit* SACK.] Thou must dispatch Periwinkle first—remember his uncle, sir Toby Periwinkle, is an old batchelor of seventy-five—that he has seven hundred a year, most in abbey-land—that he was once in love with your mother, shrewdly suspected by some to be your father—that you have been thirty years his steward—and ten years his gentleman—remember to improve these hints.

Col. Never fear; let me alone for that—but what's the steward's name?

Free. His name is Pillage.

Col. Enough—[*Enter* SACKBUT *with clothes.*] —Now for the country put—— [*Dresses.*

Free. Egad, landlord, thou deservest to have the first night's lodging with the lady for thy fidelity; what say you, colonel? shall we settle a club here? you'll make one?

Col. Make one! I'll bring a set of honest officers, that will spend their money as freely to the king's health, as they would their blood in his service.

Sack. I thank you, colonel; here, here.

[*Bell rings.* *Exit* SACK.

Col. So, now for my boots. [*Puts on boots.*] Shall I find you here, Freeman, when I come back?

Free. Yes——or I'll leave word with Sackbut where he may send for me—Have you the writings, the will———and every thing?

Col. All, all!———

Enter SACKBUT.

Sack. Zounds! Mr Freeman! yonder is Tradelove in the damnedest passion in the world—He swears you are in the house—he says you told him you were to dine here.

Free. I did so; ha, ha, ha! he has found himself bit already.——

Col. The devil! he must not see me in this dress.

Sack. I told him I expected you here, but you were not come yet——

Free. Very well—make you haste out, colonel, and let me alone to deal with him: where is he?

Sack. In the King's Head.

Col. You remember what I told you?

Free. Ay, ay, very well. Landlord, let him know I am come in——and now, Mr Pillage, success attend you! [*Exit* SACKBUT.

Col. Mr Proteus rather———

From changing shape, and imitating Jove,
I draw the happy omens of my love.
I'm not the first young brother of the blade,
Who made his fortune in a masquerade.

[*Exit* COLONEL.

Enter TRADELOVE.

Free. Zounds! Mr Tradelove, we're bit, it seems.

Trade. Bit, do you call it, Mr Freeman! I am ruined.——Pox on your news!

Free. Pox on the rascal that sent it me!——

Trade. Sent it you! Why Gabriel Skinflint has been at the minister's, and spoke with him, and he has assured him 'tis every syllable false; he received no such express.

Free. I know it: I this minute parted with my friend, who protested he never sent me any such letter——Some roguish stock-jobber has done it, on purpose to make me lose my mone y that's certain: I wish I knew who he was; I'd make him repent it—I have lost three hundred pounds by it.

Trade. What signifies your three hundred pounds, to what I have lost? There's two thousand pounds to that Dutchman with a cursed long name, besides the stock I bought: the devil! I could tear my flesh—I must never shew my face upon 'Change more;———for, by my soul, I can't pay it.

Free. I am heartily sorry for it! What can I serve you in? Shall I speak to the Dutch merchant, and try to get you time for the payment?

Trade. Time! Ads'heart, I shall never be able to look up again.

Free. I am very much concerned that I was the occasion, and wish I could be an instrument of retrieving your misfortune; for my own, I value it not. Adso! a thought comes into my head, that, well improved, may be of service.

Trade. Ah! there's no thought can be of any service to me, without paying the money, or running away.

Free. How do we know? What do you think of my proposing Mrs Lovely to him? He is a single man—and I heard him say, he had a mind to marry an English woman—nay, more than that, he said somebody told him you had a pretty ward—he wished you had betted her instead of your money.

Trade. Ay, but he'd be hanged before he'd take her instead of the money; the Dutch are too covetous for that. Besides, he did not know that there were three of us, I suppose?

Free. So much the better; you may venture to give him your consent, if he'll forgive you the wager: It is not your business to tell him, that your consent will signify nothing.

Trade. That's right, as you say; but will he do it, think you?

Free. I can't tell that; but I'll try what I can do with him———He has promised to meet me here an hour hence; I'll feel his pulse, and let you know: if I find it feasible, I'll send for you; if not, you are at liberty to take what measures you please.

Trade. You must extol her beauty, double her portion, and tell him I have the entire disposal of her, and that she can't marry without my consent; ——and that I am a covetous rogue, and will never part with her without a valuable consideration.

Free. Ay, ay; let me alone for a lye at a pinch.

Trade. 'Egad, if you can bring this to bear, Mr Freeman, I'll make you whole again; I'll pay the three hundred pounds you lost, with all my soul.

Free. Well, I'll use my best endeavours—— Where will you be?

Trade. At home; pray Heaven you prosper— If I were but the sole trustee now, I should not fear it. Who the devil would be a guardian,

If, when cash runs low, our coffers t'enlarge,
We can't, like other stocks, transfer our charge?

[*Exit* TRADELOVE.

Free. Ha, ha, ha!—He has it.

[*Exit* FREEMAN.

SCENE III—*Changes to* PERIWINKLE'S *house.*

Enter PERIWINKLE *on one side, and Footman on the other.*

Foot. A gentleman from Coventry inquires for you, sir.

Per. From my uncle, I warrant you; bring him up——This will save me the trouble, as well as the expence, of a journey.

Enter COLONEL.

Col. Is your name Periwinkle, sir?

Per. It is, sir.

Col. I am sorry for the message I bring—My old master, whom I served these forty years, claims the sorrow due from a faithful servant to an indulgent master. [*Weeps.*

Per. By this I understand, sir, my uncle, sir Toby Periwinkle, is dead?

Col. He is, sir, and he has left you heir to seven hundred a-year, in as good abbey-land as ever paid Peter-pence to Rome.——I wish you long to enjoy it; but my tears will flow when I think of my master.—[*Weeps.*] Ah! he was a good man————he has not left many of his fellows——the poor lament him sorely.

Per. I pray, sir, what office bore you?

Col. I was his steward, sir.

Per. I have heard him mention you with much respect; your name is———

Col. Pillage, sir.

Per. Ay, Pillage; I do remember he called you Pillage.——Pray, Mr Pillage, when did my uncle die?

Col. Monday last, at four in the morning. About two he signed his will, and gave it into my hands, and strictly charged me to leave Coventry the moment he expired, and deliver it to you with what speed I could: I have obeyed him, sir, and there is the will. [*Gives it to* PER.

Per. 'Tis very well; I'll lodge it in the Commons.

Col. There are two things which he forgot to insert; but charged me to tell you, that he desired you'd perform them as readily as if you had found them written in the will—which is, to remove his corpse, and bury him by his father at St Paul's, Covent-Garden, and to give all his servants mourning.

Per. That will be a considerable charge; a pox of all modern fashions! [*Aside.*]—Well, it shall be done. Mr Pillage, I will agree with one of death's fashion-mongers, called an undertaker, to go down, and bring up the body.

Col. I hope, sir, I shall have the honour to serve you in the same station I did your worthy uncle; I have not many years to stay behind him, and would gladly spend them in the family, where I was brought up—[*Weeps.*]—He was a kind and tender master to me.

Per. Pray, don't grieve, Mr Pillage, you shall hold your place, and every thing else which you held under my uncle.—You make me weep to see you so concerned. [*Weeps.*] He lived to a good old age, and we are all mortal.

Col. We are so, sir; and, therefore, I must beg you to sign this lease: you'll find sir Toby has taken particular notice of it in his will——I could not get it time enough from the lawyer, or he had signed it before he died. [*Gives him a paper.*

Per. A lease! for what?

Col. I rented a hundred a-year of sir Toby upon lease, which lease expires at Lady-day next. I desire to renew it for twenty years—that's all, sir.

Per. Let me see! [*Looks over the lease.*

Col. Matters go swimmingly, if nothing intervene! [*Aside.*

Per. Very well—Let's see what he says in his will about it.

[*Lays the lease upon the table, and looks on the will.*

Col. He's very wary; yet I fancy I shall be too cunning for him. [*Aside.*

Per. Ho, here it is—'The farm lying—now in possession of Samuel Pillage—suffer him to renew his lease—at the same rent'—Very well, Mr Pillage, I see my uncle does mention it, and I'll perform his will. Give me the lease—[COLONEL *gives it him; he looks upon it, and lays it upon the table.*] Pray you step to the door, and call for a pen and ink, Mr Pillage.

Col. I have a pen and ink in my pocket, sir. [*Pulls out an ink-horn.*] I never go without that.

Per. I think it belongs to your profession—[*He looks upon the pen, while the* COLONEL *changes the lease, and lays down the contract.*] I doubt this is but a sorry pen, though it may serve to write my name. [*Writes.*

Col. Little does he think what he signs. [*Aside.*

Per. There is your lease, Mr Pillage. [*Gives him the paper.*] Now I must desire you to make what haste you can down to Coventry, and take care of every thing, and I'll send down the undertaker for the body; do you attend it up, and whatever charge you are at, I'll repay you.

Col. You have paid me already; I thank you, sir. [*Aside.*

Per. Will you dine with me?

Col. I would rather not; there are some of my neighbours whom I met as I came along, who leave the town this afternoon, they told me, and I should be glad of their company down.

Per. Well, well, I won't detain you.

Col. I don't care how soon I am out. [*Aside.*

Per. I will give orders about mourning.

Col. You will have cause to mourn, when you know your estate imaginary only. [*Aside.*

You'll find your hopes and cares alike are vain,
In spite of all the caution you have ta'en—
Fortune rewards the faithful lover's pain.
[*Exit.*

Per. Seven hundred a year! I wish he had died seventeen years ago:—What a valuable collection of rarities might I have had by this time!—I might have travelled over all the known parts of the globe, and made my own closet rival the Vatican at Rome.——Odso, I have a good mind to begin my travels now;——let me see——I am but sixty! My father, grandfather, and great grandfather, reached ninety odd;—I have almost forty years good:—Let me consider! what will seven hundred a year amount to in—ay! in thirty years, I'll say but thirty—thirty times seven, is seven times thirty——that is—just twenty-one thousand pounds—'tis a great deal of money.—I may very well reserve sixteen hundred of it for a collection of such rarities as will make my name famous to posterity;——I would not die like other mortals, forgotten in a year or two, as my uncle will be—No,

With nature's curious works I'll raise my fame,
That men, till Doom's-day, may repeat my name.
[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to a tavern.*

FREEMAN *and* TRADELOVE *over a bottle.*

Trade. Come, Mr Freeman, here's Mynheer Jan Van Tim, Tam, Tam—I shall never think of that Dutchman's name.

Free. Mynheer Jan Van Timtamtirelireletta Heer Van Fainwell.

Trade. Ay, Heer Van Fainwell, I never heard such a confounded name in my life——Here's his health, I say.

Free. With all my heart.

Trade. Faith, I never expected to have found so generous a thing in a Dutchman.

Free. Oh, he has nothing of the Hollander in his temper——except an antipathy to monarchy. As soon as I told him your circumstances, he replied, he would not be the ruin of any man for the world—and immediately made this proposal himself—'Let him take what time he will for 'the payment,' said he; 'or, if he'll give me his 'ward, I'll forgive him the debt.'

Trade. Well, Mr Freeman, I can't but thank you—'Egad you have made a man of me again! and if ever I lay a wager more, may I rot in a gaol!

Free. I can assure you, Mr Tradelove, I was very much concerned, because I was the occasion—though very innocently, I protest.

Trade. I dare swear you was, Mr Freeman.

Enter a Fiddler.

Fid. Please to have a lesson of music, or a song, gentlemen?

Free. Song? aye, with all our hearts; have you a very merry one?

Fid. Yes, sir; my wife and I can give you a merry dialogue. [*Here is the song.*

Trade. 'Tis very pretty, faith.

Free. There's something for you to drink, friend; go, lose no time.

Fid. I thank you, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter Drawer and COLONEL, *dressed for the Dutch merchant.*

Col. Ha, Mynheer Tradelove, Ik ben sorry voor your troubles—maer Ik sal you easie maken, Ik will de gelt nie hebben——

Trade. I shall for ever acknowledge the obligation, sir.

Free. But you understand upon what condition, Mr Tradelove; Mrs Lovely.

Col. Ya, de frow sal al te regt setten, Mynheer.

Trade. With all my heart, Mynheer; you shall have my consent to marry her freely——

Free. Well, then; as I am a party concerned between you, Mynheer Jan Van Timtamtirelireletta Heer Van Fainwell shall give you a discharge of your wager under his own hand, and you shall give him your consent to marry Mrs Lovely under yours——that is the way to avoid all manner of disputes hereafter.

Col. Ya, weeragtig.

Trade. Aye, aye, so it is, Mr Freeman; I'll give it under mine this minute. [*Sits down to write.*

Col. And so Ik sal. [*Does the same.*

Free. So ho, the house!

Enter Drawer.

Bid your master come up—I'll see there be witnesses enough to the bargain. [*Aside.*

Enter SACKBUT.

Sack. Do you call, gentlemen?

Free. Aye, Mr Sackbut; we shall want your hand here———

Trade. There, Mynheer, there's my consent, as amply as you can desire; but you must insert your own name, for I know not how to spell it; I have left a blank for it.

[*Gives the Colonel a paper.*

Col. Ya Ik sal dat well doen———

Free. Now, Mr Sackbut, you and I will witness it. [*They write.*

Col. Daer, Mynheer Tradelove, is your discharge. [*Gives a paper.*

Trade. Be pleased to witness this receipt, too, gentlemen.

[FREEMAN *and* SACKBUT *put their hands.*

Free. Aye, aye, that we will.

Col. Well, Mynheer, ye most meer doen, ye most myn voorsprach to de frow syn.

Free. He means you must recommend him to the lady.

Trade. That I will, and to the rest of my brother guardians.

Col. Wat, voor, de duyvel, heb you meer guardians?

Trade. Only three, Mynheer.

Col. What donder heb ye myn betrocken Mynheer? Had Ik dat gewoeten, Ik soude eaven met you geweest syn.

Sack. But Mr Tradelove is the principal, and he can do a great deal with the rest, sir.

Free. And he shall use his interest, I promise you, mynheer.

Trade. I will say all that ever I can think on to recommend you, mynheer; and, if you please, I'll introduce you to the lady.

Col. Well, dat is waer—Maer ye must first spreken of myn to de frow, and to oudere gentlemen.

Free. Aye, that's the best way, and then I and the Heer Van Fainwell will meet you there.

Trade. I will go this moment, upon honour—Your most obedient humble servant—My speaking will do you little good, Mynheer, ha, ha, ha! we have bit you, faith, ha, ha!

Well, my debt's discharged, and for the man,
He has my consent—to get her, if he can.

[*Exit.*

Col. Ha, ha, ha! this was a masterpiece of contrivance, Freeman.

Free. He hugs himself with his supposed good fortune, and little thinks the luck's on our side! but come, pursue the fickle goddess while she's in the mood—Now, for the quaker.

Col. That's the hardest task.
Of all the counterfeits performed by man,
A soldier makes the simplest puritan.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—PRIM'S *house.*

Enter MRS PRIM *and* MRS LOVELY, *in quaker's dresses, meeting.*

Mrs Prim. So, now I like thee, Anne; art thou not better without thy monstrous hoop-coat and patches?—If Heaven should make thee so many black spots upon thy face, would it not fright thee, Anne?

Mrs Love. If it should turn your inside outward, and shew all the spots of your hypocrisy, 'twould fright me worse!

Mrs Prim. My hypocrisy! I scorn thy words, Anne; I lay no baits.

Mrs Love. If you did, you'd catch no fish.

Mrs Prim. Well, well, make thy jests—but I'd have thee to know, Anne, that I could have catched as many fish (as thou call'st them) in my time, as ever thou didst with all thy fool-traps about thee—If admirers be thy aim, thou wilt have more of them in this dress than the other—The men, take my word for't, are more desirous to see what we are most careful to conceal.

Mrs Love. Is that the reason of your formality, Mrs Prim? Truth will out: I ever thought, indeed, there was more design than goodness in the pinch'd cap.

Mrs Prim. Go, thou art corrupted with reading lewd plays, and filthy romances——good for nothing but to lead youth into the high-road of fornication. Ah! I wish thou art not already too familiar with the wicked ones!

Mrs Love. Too familiar with the wicked ones? Pray, no more of those freedoms, madam——I am familiar with none so wicked as yourself:—How dare you thus talk to me! you, you, you, unworthy woman you! [*Bursts into tears.*

Enter TRADELOVE.

Trade. What, in tears, Nancy? What have you done to her, Mrs Prim, to make her weep?

Mrs Love. Done to me! I admire I keep my senses among you; but I will rid myself of your tyranny, if there be either law or justice to be had——I'll force you to give me up my liberty.

Mrs Prim. Thou hast more need to weep for thy sins, Anne——Yea, for thy manifold sins.

Mrs Love. Don't think that I'll be still the fool which you have made me. No, I'll wear what I please——go when and where I please——and

keep what company I think fit, and not what you shall direct——I will.

Trade. For my part, I do think all this very reasonable, Mrs Lovely——'Tis fit you should have your liberty, and for that very purpose I am come.

Enter MR PERIWINKLE *and* OBADIAH PRIM, *with a letter in his hand.*

Per. I have bought some black stockings of your husband, Mrs Prim; but he tells me the glover's trade belongs to you; therefore, I pray you, look me out five or six dozen of mourning gloves, such as are given at funerals, and send them to my house.

Oba. Prim. My friend Periwinkle has got a good wind-fall to-day—seven hundred a-year.

Mrs Prim. I wish thee joy of it, neighbour.

Trade. What, is sir Toby dead, then?

Per. He is! You'll take care, Mrs Prim?

Mrs Prim. Yea, I will, neighbour.

Oba. Prim. This letter recommendeth a speaker; 'tis from Aminadab Holdfast, of Bristol; peradventure, he will be here this night; therefore, Sarah, do thou take care for his reception—[*Gives her the letter.*

Mrs Prim. I will obey thee.

[*Exit* MRS PRIM.

Oba. Prim. What art thou in the dumps for, Anne?

Trade. We must marry her, Mr Prim.

Oba. Prim. Why, truly, if we could find a husband worth having, I should be as glad to see her married as thou wouldst, neighbour.

Per. Well said; there are but few worth having.

Trade. I can recommend you a man, now, that I think you can none of you have an objection to.

Enter SIR PHILIP MODELOVE.

Per. You recommend! Nay, whenever she marries, I'll recommend the husband——

Sir Phi. What must it be, a whale or a rhinoceros, Mr Periwinkle? Ha, ha, ha! Mr Tradelove, I have a bill upon you—[*Gives him a paper*]—and have been seeking for you all over the town.

Trade. I'll accept it, sir Philip, and pay it when due.

Per. He shall be none of the fops at your end of the town, with full perukes and empty skulls—nor yet any of your trading gentry, who puzzle the heralds to find arms for their coaches. No; he shall be a man famous for travels, solidity, and curiosity; one who has searched into the profundity of nature! When Heaven shall direct such a one, he shall have my consent, because it may turn to the benefit of mankind.

Mrs Love. The benefit of mankind! What, would you anatomize me?

Sir Phi. Aye, aye, madam; he would dissect you.

Trade. Or, pore over you through a microscope, to see how your blood circulates from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot——Ha, ha! but I have a husband for you, a man that knows how to improve your fortune; one that trades to the four corners of the globe.

Mrs Love. And would send me for a venture, perhaps.

Trade. One that will dress you in all the pride of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America—a Dutch merchant, my girl.

Sir Phi. A Dutchman! Ha, ha; there's a husband for a fine lady. Ya frow, will you meet myn slapen—Ha, ha! he'll learn you to talk the language of the hogs, madam, ha, ha!

Trade. He'll learn you, that one merchant is of more service to a nation than fifty coxcombs.—The Dutch know the trading interest to be of more benefit to the state, than the landed.

Sir Phi. But what is either interest to a lady?

Trade. 'Tis the merchant makes the belle——How would the ladies sparkle in the box without the merchant? The Indian diamond! The French brocade! The Italian fan! The Flanders lace! The fine Dutch holland! How would they vent their scandal over their tea-tables? And where would your beaux have Champagne to toast their mistresses, were it not for the merchant?

Oba. Prim. Verily, neighbour Tradelove, thou dost waste thy breath about nothing—All that thou hast said, tendeth only to debauch youth, and fill their heads with the pride and luxury of this world—The merchant is a very great friend to satan, and sendeth as many to his dominions as the pope.

Per. Right; I say knowledge makes the man.

Oba. Prim. Yea, but not thy kind of knowledge——It is the knowledge of truth. Search thou for the light within, and not for baubles, friend.

Mrs Love. Ah, study your country's good, Mr Periwinkle, and not her insects. Rid you of your home-bred monsters, before you fetch any from abroad——I dare swear, you have maggots enough in your own brain, to stock all the virtuosos in Europe with butterflies.

Sir Phi. By my soul, miss Nancy's a wit!

Oba. Prim. That is more than she can say by thee, friend—Look ye, it is in vain to talk; when I meet a man worthy of her, she shall have my leave to marry him.

Mrs Love. Provided he be of the faithful——Was there ever such a swarm of caterpillars to blast the hopes of a woman!—[*Aside.*]—Know this, that you contend in vain: I'll have no husband of your choosing, nor shall you lord it over me long—I'll try the power of an English senate—Orphans have been redressed, and wills set aside----And none did ever deserve their pity

more---Oh, Fainwell! Where are thy promises to free me from these vermin? Alas! the task was more difficult than he imagined!

A harder task than what the poets tell
Of yore, the fair Andromeda befel;
She but one monster feared, I've four to fear,
And see no Perseus, no deliverer near.
[*Exit* MRS LOVELY.

Enter Servant, and whispers to PRIM.

Ser. One Simon Pure inquireth for thee.
Per. The woman is mad. [*Exit.*
Sir Phil. So you are all, in my opinion. [*Exit.*
Oba. Prim. Friend Tradelove, business requireth my presence.
Trade. Oh, I shan't trouble you---Pox take him for an unmannerly dog!---However, I have kept my word with my Dutchman, and will introduce him too, for all you. [*Exit.*

Enter COLONEL, *in a quaker's habit.*

Oba. Prim. Friend Pure, thou art welcome; how is it with friend Holdfast, and all friends in Bristol? Timothy Littleworth, John Slenderbrain, and Christopher Keepfaith?
Col. A goodly company!---[*Aside.*]—They are all in health, I thank thee for them.
Oba. Prim. Friend Holdfast writes me word, that thou camest lately from Pennsylvania. How do all friends there?
Col. What the devil shall I say? I know just as much of Pennsylvania, as I do of Bristol. [*Aside.*
Oba. Prim. Do they thrive?
Col. Yea, friend; the blessing of their good works falls upon them.

Enter MRS PRIM *and* MRS LOVELY.

Oba. Prim. Sarah, know our friend Pure.
Mrs Prim. Thou art welcome. [*He salutes her.*
Col. Here comes the sum of all my wishes---How charming she appears, even in that disguise! [*Aside.*
Oba. Prim. Why dost thou consider the maiden so attentively, friend?
Col. I will tell thee: about four days ago I saw a vision---This very maiden, but in vain attire, standing on a precipice; and heard a voice, which called me by my name—and bid me put forth my hand and save her from the pit---I did so; and, methought, the damsel grew unto my side.
Mrs Prim. What can that portend?
Oba. Prim. The damsel's conversion----I am persuaded.
Mrs Love. That's false, I'm sure—— [*Aside*
Oba. Prim. Wilt thou use the means, friend Pure?
Col. Means! What means? Is she not thy daughter, already one of the faithful?
Mrs Prim. No, alas! she's one of the ungodly.
Oba. Prim. Pray thee, mind what this good man will say unto thee; he will teach thee the way that thou shouldest walk, Anne.
Mrs Love. I know my way without his instruction: I hoped to have been quiet when once I had put on your odious formality here.
Col. Then thou wearest it out of compulsion, not choice, friend?
Mrs Love. Thou art in the right of it, friend.
Mrs Prim. Art thou not ashamed to mimic the good man? Ah, thou art a stubborn girl!
Col. Mind her not; she hurteth not me——If thou wilt leave her alone with me, I will discuss some few points with her, that may, perchance, soften her stubbornness, and melt her into compliance.
Oba. Prim. Content: I pray thee, put it home to her. Come, Sarah, let us leave the good man with her.
Mrs Love. [*Catching hold of* PRIM; *he breaks loose, and exit.*] What do you mean—to leave me with this old enthusiastical canter? Don't think, because I complied with your formality, to impose your ridiculous doctrine upon me.
Col. I pray thee, young woman, moderate thy passion.
Mrs Love. I pray thee, walk after thy leader; you will but lose your labour upon me.—These wretches will certainly make me mad!
Col. I am of another opinion; the spirit telleth me I shall convert thee, Anne.
Mrs Love. 'Tis a lying spirit; don't believe it.
Col. Say'st thou so? Why, then, thou shalt convert me, my angel. [*Catching her in his arms.*
Mrs Love. [*Shrieks.*] Ah! monster, hold off, or I'll tear thy eyes out.
Col. Hush! for Heaven's sake—dost thou not know me? I am Fainwell.
Mrs Love. Fainwell! [*Enter old* PRIM.] Oh, I'm undone! Prim here——I wish, with all my soul, I had been dumb!
Oba. Prim. What is the matter? Why did'st thou shriek out, Anne?
Mrs Love. Shriek out! I'll shriek, and shriek again; cry murder, thieves, or any thing, to drown the noise of that eternal babbler, if you leave me with him any longer.
Oba. Prim. Was that all? Fy, fy, Anne!
Col. No matter; I'll bring down her stomach, I'll warrant thee——Leave us, I pray thee.
Oba. Prim. Fare thee well. [*Exit.*
Col. My charming, lovely woman! [*Embraces her.*
Mrs Love. What meanest thou by this disguise, Fainwell?
Col. To set thee free, if thou wilt perform thy promise.
Mrs Love. Make me mistress of my fortune, and make thy own conditions.
Col. This night shall answer all my wishes.—

See here, I have the consent of three of thy guardians already, and doubt not but Prim will make the fourth. [PRIM *listening.*

Oba. Prim. I would gladly hear what arguments the good man useth to bend her. [*Aside.*

Mrs Love. Thy words give me new life, methinks.

Oba. Prim. What do I hear?

Mrs Love. Thou best of men! Heaven meant to bless me, sure, when I first saw thee.

Oba. Prim. He hath mollified her.——Oh, wonderful conversion!

Col. Ha! Prim listening.—No more, my love; we are observed; seem to be edified, and give them hopes that thou wilt turn quaker, and leave the rest to me. [*Aloud.*] I am glad to find that thou art touched with what I said unto thee, Anne; another time I will explain the other article unto thee; in the mean while, be thou dutiful to our friend Prim.

Mrs Love. I shall obey thee in every thing.

Enter OBADIAH PRIM.

Oba. Prim. Oh, what a prodigious change is here!—Thou hast wrought a miracle, friend! Anne, how dost thou like the doctrine he hath preached?

Mrs Love. So well, that I could talk to him for ever, methinks—I am ashamed of my former folly, and ask your pardon, Mr Prim.

Col. Enough, enough, that thou art sorry; he is no pope, Anne.

Oba. Prim. Verily, thou dost rejoice me exceedingly, friend; will it please thee to walk into the next room, and refresh thyself——Come, take the maiden by the hand.

Col. We will follow thee.

Enter Servant.

Ser. There is another Simon Pure inquireth for thee, master.

Col. The devil there is! [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. Another Simon Pure! I do not know him. Is he any relation of thine?

Col. No, friend; I know him not——Pox take him! I wish he were in Pennsylvania again, with all my soul. [*Aside.*

Mrs Love. What shall I do? [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. Bring him up.

Col. Humph! then one of us must go down; that's certain.—Now, impudence assist me!

Enter SIMON PURE.

Oba. Prim. What is thy will with me, friend?

Sim. Pure. Didst thou not receive a letter from Aminadab Holdfast, of Bristol, concerning one Simon Pure?

Oba. Prim. Yea; and Simon Pure is already here, friend.

Col. And Simon Pure will stay here, friend, if it be possible. [*Aside.*

Sim. Pure. That's an untruth; for I am he.

Col. Take thou heed, friend, what thou dost say; I do affirm that I am Simon Pure.

Sim. Pure. Thy name may be Pure, friend, but not that Pure.

Col. Yea, that Pure, which my good friend, Aminadab Holdfast, wrote to my friend Prim about; the same Simon Pure that came from Pennsylvania, and sojourned in Bristol eleven days——thou wouldst not take my name from me, wouldst thou?——till I have done with it. [*Aside.*

Sim. Pure. Thy name! I'm astonished!

Col. At what? at thy own assurance?

[*Going up to him,* SIMON PURE *starts back.*

Sim. Pure. Avaunt, Satan! approach me not; I defy thee and all thy works.

Mrs Love. Oh, he'll outcant him—Undone, undone for ever. [*Aside.*

Col. Hark thee, friend, thy sham will not take ——Don't exert thy voice; thou art too well acquainted with Satan to start at him, thou wicked reprobate—What can thy design be here?

Enter a Servant, and gives PRIM *a letter.*

Oba. Prim. One of these must be a counterfeit; but which, I cannot say.

Col. What can that letter be? [*Aside.*

Sim. Pure. Thou must be the devil, friend, that's certain; for no human power can stock so great a falsehood.

Oba. Prim. This letter sayeth that thou art better acquainted with that prince of darkness than any here.—Read that, I pray thee, Simon.

[*Gives it to the* COLONEL.

Col. 'Tis Freeman's hand—[*Reads.*] 'There 'is a design formed to rob your house this night, 'and cut your throat; and for that purpose there 'is a man disguised like a quaker, who is to 'pass for one Simon Pure; the gang, whereof I 'am one, though now resolved to rob no more, 'has been at Bristol; one of them came in the 'coach with the quaker, whose name he hath 'taken; and, from what he hath gathered from 'him, formed that design; and did not doubt but 'he should so far impose upon you, as to make 'you turn out the real Simon Pure, and keep 'him with you. Make the right use of this. 'Adieu.' Excellent well! [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. Dost thou hear this?

[*To* SIMON PURE.

Sim. Pure. Yea, but it moveth me not; that, doubtless, is the impostor.

[*Pointing at the* COLONEL.

Col. Ah! thou wicked one.—now I consider thy face, I remember thou didst come up in the leathern conveniency with me—thou hadst a black bob wig on, and a brown camblet coat with brass buttons.———Can'st thou deny it, ha?

Sim. Pure. Yea, I can; and with a safe conscience, too, friend.

Oba. Prim. Verily, friend, thou art the most impudent villain I ever saw.

Mrs Love. Nay, then, I'll have a fling at him. [*Aside.*]—I remember the face of this fellow at Bath—Ay, this is he that picked my lady Raffle's pocket in the Grove——Don't you remember that the mob pumped you, friend?——This is the most notorious rogue———

Sim. Pure. What does provoke thee to seek my life?—Thou wilt not hang me, wilt thou, wrongfully?

Oba. Prim. She will do thee no hurt, nor thou shalt do me none; therefore, get thee about thy business, friend, and leave thy wicked course of life, or thou mayest not come off so favourably every where.

Col. Go, friend, I would advise thee; and tempt thy fate no more.

Sim. Pure. Yea, I will go; but it shall be to thy confusion; for I shall clear myself; I will return with some proofs, that shall convince thee, Obadiah, that thou art highly imposed upon. [*Exit.*

Col. Then there will be no stay for me, that's certain—What the devil shall I do? [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. What monstrous works of iniquity are there in this world, Simon!

Col. Yea, the age is full of vice—'Sdeath, I am so confounded, I know not what to say. [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. Thou art disordered, friend——art thou not well?

Col. My spirit is greatly troubled; and something telleth me, that though I have wrought a good work in converting this maiden, this tender maiden, yet my labour will be in vain: for the evil spirit fighteth against her; and I see, yea I see with the eye of my inward man, that Satan will re-buffet her again, whenever I withdraw myself from her; and she will, yea, this very damsel will, return again to that abomination from whence I have retrieved her, as if it were, yea, as if it were out of the jaws of the fiend.

Oba. Prim. Good lack! thinkest thou so?

Mrs Love. I must second him. [*Aside.*] What meaneth this struggling within me? I feel the spirit resisteth the vanities of this world, but the flesh is rebellious, yea, the flesh—I greatly fear the flesh, and the weakness thereof—hum—

Oba. Prim. The maid is inspired. [*Aside.*

Col. Behold, her light begins to shine forth.—Excellent woman!

Mrs Love. This good man hath spoken comfort unto me, yea comfort, I say; because the words which he hath breathed into my outward ears, are gone through and fixed in mine heart; yea, verily, in mine heart, I say; and I feel the spirit doth love him exceedingly—hum——

Col. She acts it to the life! [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. Prodigious! The damsel is filled with the spirit—Sarah.

Enter MRS PRIM.

Mrs Prim. I am greatly rejoiced to see such a change in our beloved Anne. I came to tell thee that supper stayeth for thee.

Col. I am not disposed for thy food; my spirit longeth for more delicious meat!—Fain would I redeem this maiden from the tribe of sinners, and break those cords asunder wherewith she is bound——hum———

Mrs Love. Something whispers in my ears, methinks—that I must be subject to the will of this good man, and from him only must hope for consolation.——hum.—It also telleth me, that I am a chosen vessel to raise up seed to the faithful; and that thou must consent, that we two be one flesh, according to the word—hum—

Oba. Prim. What a revelation is here! This is certainly part of thy vision, friend; this is the maiden's *growing into thy side.* Ah! with what willingness should I give thee my consent, could I give thee her fortune, too!——but thou wilt never get the consent of the wicked ones.

Col. I wish I was sure of yours. [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. My soul rejoiceth; yea, rejoiceth, I say, to find the spirit within thee; for lo, it moveth thee with natural agitation—yea, with natural agitation, towards this good man—yea, it stirreth, as one may say—yea, verily I say it *stirreth* up thy inclination—yea, as one would stir a pudding.

Mrs Love. I see, I see the spirit guiding of thy hand, good Obadiah Prim! and now behold thou art signing thy consent;——and now I see myself within thy arms, my friend and brother, yea, I am become bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh. [*Embracing him.*]—hum———

Col. Admirably performed! [*Aside.*]—And I will take thee in all spiritual love for an helpmate, yea, for the wife of my bosom———and now, methinks———I feel a longing———yea, a longing, I say, for the consummation of thy love,———yea, I do long exceedingly.

Mrs Love. And verily, verily, my spirit feeleth the same longing.

Mrs Prim. The spirit hath greatly moved them both—friend Prim, thou must consent; there's no resisting of the spirit!

Oba. Prim. Yea, the light within sheweth me that I shall fight a good fight—and wrestle through those reprobate fiends, thy other guardians;———yea, I perceive the spirit will hedge thee into the flock of the righteous.—Thou art a chosen lamb—yea, a chosen lamb, and I will not push thee back—No, I will not, I say;—no, thou shalt leap-a, and frisk-a, and skip-a, and bound, and bound, I say,—yea, bound within the fold of the righteous———yea, even within thy fold, my brother.—Fetch me the pen and ink, Sarah—and my hand shall confess its obedience to the spirit.

Col. I wish it were over. [*Aside.*

Enter MRS PRIM, *with pen and ink.*

Mrs Love. I tremble lest this quaking rogue should return and spoil all. [*Aside.*

Oba. Prim. Here, friend, do thou write what the spirit prompteth, and I will sign it.

[COLONEL *sits down.*

Mrs Prim. Verily, Anne, it greatly rejoiceth me, to see thee reformed from that original wickedness wherein I found thee.

Mrs Love. I do believe thou art, and I thank thee———

Col. [Reads.] 'This is to certify all whom it 'may concern, that I do freely give all my right 'and title in Anne Lovely to Simon Pure, and 'my full consent that she shall become his wife, 'according to the form of marriage. Witness 'my hand.'

Oba Prim. That's enough; give me the pen.

[*Signs it.*

Enter BETTY, *running to* MRS LOVELY.

Betty. Oh! madam, madam, here's the quaking man again; he has brought a coachman, and two or three more.

Mrs Love. Ruined past redemption!

[*Aside to* COLONEL.

Col. No, no; one minute sooner had spoiled all; but now———here's company coming; friend, give me the paper.

[*Going up to* PRIM *hastily.*

Oba. Prim. Here it is, Simon; and I wish thee happy with the maiden.

Mrs Love. 'Tis done; and now, devil, do thy worst!

Enter SIMON PURE, *and Coachman, &c.*

S. Pure. Look thee, friend, I have brought these people, to satisfy thee that I am not that impostor which thou didst take me for; this is the man that did drive the leathern conveniency, and brought me from Bristol; and this is———

Col. Look ye, friend, to save the court the trouble of examining witnesses, I plead guilty.—Ha, ha!

Oba. Prim. How's this? Is not thy name Pure, then?

Col. No, really, sir; I only make bold with this gentleman's name—but I here give it up, safe and sound; it has done the business which I had occasion for, and now I intend to wear my own, which shall be at his service upon the same occasion at any time. Ha, ha, ha!

S. Pure. Oh! the wickedness of the age!

Coachman. Then you have no further need of us. [*Exit.*

Col. No; honest man, you may go about your business.

Oba. Prim. I am struck dumb with thy impudence. Anne, thou hast deceived me—and, perchance, undone thyself.

Mrs Prim. Thou art a dissembling baggage, and shame will overtake thee. [*Exit.*

S. Pure. I am grieved to see thy wife so much troubled: I will follow and console her. [*Exit.*

Enter Servant.

Ser. Thy brother guardians inquire for thee; here is another man with them.

Mrs Love. Who can that other man be?

[*To the* COLONEL.

Col. 'Tis one Freeman, a friend of mine, whom I ordered to bring the rest of the guardians here.

Enter SIR PHILIP, TRADELOVE, PERIWINKLE, *and* FREEMAN.

Free. [*To the* COLONEL.] Is all safe? did my letter do you service?

Col. All, all's safe! ample service. [*Aside.*

Sir Phi. Miss Nancy, how dost do, child?

Mrs Love. Don't call me miss, friend Philip; my name is Anne, thou knowest.——

Sir Phi. What! is the girl metamorphosed?

Mrs Love. I wish thou wert so metamorphosed.—Ah! Philip, throw off that gaudy attire, and wear the clothes becoming thy age.

Oba. Prim. I am ashamed to see these men.

[*Aside.*

Sir Phi. My age! the woman is possessed.

Col. No, thou art possessed rather, friend.

Trade. Hark ye, Mrs Lovely, one word with you. [*Takes hold of her hand.*

Col. This maiden is my wife, thanks to friend Prim, and thou hast no business with her.

[*Takes her from him.*

Trade. His wife! hark ye, Mr Freeman.

Per. Why, you have made a very fine piece of work of it, Mr Prim.

Sir Phi. Married to a quaker! thou art a fine fellow to be left guardian to an orphan, truly! there's a husband for a young lady!

Col. When I have put on my beau clothes, sir Philip, you'll like me better——

Sir Phi. Thou wilt make a very scurvy beau—friend———

Col. I believe I can prove it under your hand, that you thought me a very fine gentleman in the Park t'other day, about thirty-six minutes after eleven; will you take a pinch, sir Philip? One of the finest snuff-boxes you ever saw.

[*Offers him snuff.*

Sir Phi. Ha, ha, ha! I am overjoyed, faith, I am, if thou be'st the gentleman—I own I did give my consent to the gentleman I brought here to-day—but whether this is he, I can't be positive.

Oba. Prim. Can'st thou not?—Now, I think thou art a fine fellow to be left guardian to an orphan! Thou shallow-brained shuttlecock! he may be a pick-pocket for aught thou dost know.

Per. You would have been two rare fellows to have been trusted with the sole management of her fortune—would ye not, think ye? But Mr Tradelove and myself shall take care of her portion.———

Trade. Ay, ay; so we will.—Did not you tell me the Dutch merchant desired me to meet him here, Mr Freeman?

Free. I did so, and I am sure he will be here, if you'll have a little patience.

Col. What! is Mr Tradelove impatient? Nay, then, ik ben gereet voor you, heb he, Jan Van Timtamtirelireletta Heer Van Fainwell, vergeeten!

Trade. Oh! pox of the name! what! have you tricked me, too, Mr Freeman?

Col. Tricked, Mr Tradelove! did not I give you two thousand pounds for your consent fairly? And, now, do you tell a gentleman he has tricked you?

Per. So, so, you are a pretty guardian, faith, to sell your charge! what! did you look upon her as part of your stock?

Oba. Prim. Ha, ha, ha! I am glad thy knavery is found out, however——I confess the maiden over-reached me, and I had no sinister end at all.

Per. Ay, ay, one thing or other over-reached you all—but I'll take care he shall never finger a penny of her money, I warrant you—Over-reached, quoth'a! Why, I might have been over-reached, too, if I had had no more wit: I don't know but this very fellow may be him that was directed to me from Grand Cairo t'other day. Ha, ha, ha!

Col. The very same.

Per. Are you so, sir? but your trick would not pass upon me.

Col. No, as you say, at that time it did not; that was not my lucky hour——but, hark ye, sir, I must let you into one secret—you may keep honest John Tradescant's coat on, for your uncle sir Toby Periwinkle is not dead—so the charge of mourning will be saved—ha, ha, ha! Don't you remember Mr Pillage, your uncle's steward? Ha, ha, ha!

Per. Not dead! I begin to fear I am tricked, too.

Col. Don't you remember the signing of a lease, Mr Periwinkle?

Per. Well; and what signifies that lease, if my uncle is not dead?—Ha! I am sure it was a lease I signed——

Col. Ay; but it was a lease for life, sir, and of this beautiful tenement, I thank you.

[*Taking hold of* MRS LOVELY.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha! Neighbour's fare.

Free. So, then, I find you are all tricked—ha, ha!

Per. I am certain I read as plain a lease as ever I read in my life.

Col. You read a lease, I grant you; but you signed this contract. [*Shewing a paper.*

Per. How durst you put this trick upon me, Mr Freeman? Did not you tell me my uncle was dying?

Free. And would tell you twice as much to serve my friend—ha, ha!

Sir Phi. What! the learned and famous Mr Periwinkle choused, too!——Ha, ha, ha!—I shall die with laughing—ha, ha, ha!

Oba. Prim. It had been well if her father had left her to wiser heads than thine and mine, friends—ha, ha, ha!

Trade. Well, since you have outwitted us all, pray you, what and who are you, sir?

Sir Phi. Sir, the gentleman is a fine gentleman.——I am glad you have got a person, madam, who understands dress and good-breeding. I was resolved she should have a husband of my choosing.

Oba. Prim. I am sorry the maiden has fallen into such hands.

Trade. A beau! nay, then, she is finely helped up.

Mrs Love. Why, beaux are great encouragers of trade, sir. Ha, ha, ha!

Col. Look ye, gentlemen; I am the person who can give the best account of myself; and I must beg sir Philip's pardon, when I tell him, that I have as much aversion to what he calls dress and breeding, as I have to the enemies of my religion. I have had the honour to serve his majesty, and headed a regiment of the bravest fellows that ever pushed bayonet in the throat of a Frenchman; and, notwithstanding the fortune this lady brings me, whenever my country wants my aid, this sword and arm are at her service.

Therefore, my dear, if thou'lt but deign to smile,
I meet a recompense for all my toil.
Love and religion ne'er admit restraint,
And force makes many sinners, not one saint;
Still free as air the active mind does rove,
And searches proper objects for its love;
But that once fixed, 'tis past the power of art
To chase the dear idea from the heart:
'Tis liberty of choice that sweetens life,
Makes the glad husband, and the happy wife.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

BY

STEELE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR JOHN BEVIL.
MR SEALAND.
BEVIL, junior, *in love with* INDIANA.
MYRTLE, *in love with* LUCINDA.
CIMBERTON, *a coxcomb.*
HUMPHREY, *an old servant to* SIR JOHN BEVIL.
TOM, *servant to* BEVIL, junior.
DANIEL, *a country boy, servant to* INDIANA.

WOMEN.

MRS SEALAND, *second wife to* SEALAND.
ISABELLA, *sister to* SEALAND.
INDIANA, SEALAND'S *daughter, by his first wife.*
LUCINDA, SEALAND'S *daughter, by his second wife.*
PHILLIS, *maid to* LUCINDA.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—SIR JOHN BEVIL'S *house.*

Enter SIR JOHN BEVIL *and* HUMPHREY.

Sir J. Bev. Have you ordered that I should not be interrupted while I am dressing?

Humph. Yes, sir; I believed you had something of moment to say to me.

Sir J. Bev. Let me see, Humphrey; I think it is now full forty years, since I first took thee to be about myself.

Humph. I think, sir, it has been an easy forty years; and I have passed them without much sickness, care, or labour.

Sir J. Bev. Thou hast a brave constitution: you are a year or two older than I am, sirrah.

Humph. You have ever been of that mind, sir.

Sir J. Bev. You knave, you know it; I took thee for thy gravity and sobriety in my wild years.

Humph. Ah, sir! our manners were formed from our different fortunes, not our different ages; wealth gave a loose to your youth, and poverty put a restraint upon mine.

Sir J. Bev. Well, Humphrey, you know I have been a kind master to you; I have used you, for the ingenuous nature I observed in you from the beginning, more like an humble friend than a servant.

Humph. I humbly beg you'll be so tender of me, as to explain your commands, sir, without any farther preparation.

Sir J. Bev. I'll tell thee, then. In the first place, this wedding of my son's, in all probability shut the door) will never be at all.

Humph. How, sir, not be at all! for what reason is it carried on in appearance?

Sir J. Bev. Honest Humphrey, have patience, and I'll tell thee all in order. I have myself, in some part of my life, lived, indeed, with freedom, but I hope without reproach. Now, I thought liberty would be as little injurious to my son: therefore, as soon as he grew towards man, I indulged him in living after his own manner. I know not how otherwise to judge of his inclination; for what can be concluded from a behaviour under restraint and fear? But what charms me above all expression, is, that my son has never, in the least action, the most distant hint or word, valued himself upon that great estate of his mother's, which, according to our marriage-settlement, he has had ever since he came to age.

Humph. No, sir; on the contrary, he seems afraid of appearing to enjoy it before you or any belonging to you. He is as dependent and resigned to your will, as if he had not a farthing but what must come from your immediate bounty. You have ever acted like a good and generous father, and he like an obedient and grateful son.

Sir J. Bev. Nay, his carriage is so easy to all with whom he converses, that he is never assuming, never prefers himself to others, nor is ever guilty of that rough sincerity which a man is not called to, and certainly disobliges most of his acquaintance. To be short, Humphrey, his reputation was so fair in the world, that old Sealand, the great India merchant, has offered his only daughter, and sole heiress to that vast estate of his, as a wife for him. You may be sure I made no difficulties; the match was agreed on, and this very day named for the wedding.

Humph. What hinders the proceeding?

Sir J. Bev. Don't interrupt me. You know I was, last Thursday, at the masquerade; my son, you may remember, soon found us out——he knew his grandfather's habit, which I then wore; and though it was in the mode in the last age, yet the maskers, you know, followed us, as if we had been the most monstrous figures in that whole assembly.

Humph. I remember, indeed, a young man of quality, in the habit of a clown, that was particularly troublesome.

Sir J. Bev. Right—he was too much what he seemed to be. You remember how impertinently he followed and teased us, and would know who we were.

Humph. I know he has a mind to come into that particular. [*Aside.*

Sir J. Bev. Ay, he followed us, till the gentleman, who led the lady in the Indian mantle, presented that gay creature to the rustic, and bid him (like Cymon in the fable) grow polite, by falling in love, and let that worthy old gentleman alone, meaning me. The clown was not reformed, but rudely persisted, and offered to force off my mask; with that the gentleman, throwing off his own, appeared to be my son, and, in his concern for me, tore off that of the nobleman: at this they seized each other, the company called the guards, and, in the surprize, the lady swooned away: upon which my son quitted his adversary, and had now no care but of the lady—when raising her in his arms, 'Art thou gone,' cried he, 'for ever?—forbid it, Heaven!'—She revives at his known voice—and, with the most familiar, though modest gesture, hangs in safety over his shoulders, weeping, but wept as in the arms of one before whom she could give herself a loose, were she not under observation: while she hides her face in his neck, he carefully conveys her from the company.

Humph. I have observed this accident has dwelt upon you very strongly.

Sir J. Bev. Her uncommon air, her noble modesty, the dignity of her person, and the occasion itself, drew the whole assembly together; and I soon heard it buzzed about she was the adopted daughter of a famous sea-officer, who had served in France. Now, this unexpected and public discovery of my son's so deep concern for her——

Humph. Was what, I suppose, alarmed Mr Sealand, in behalf of his daughter, to break off the match?

Sir J. Bev. You are right---he came to me yesterday, and said, he thought himself disengaged from the bargain, being credibly informed my son was already married, or worse, to the lady at the masquerade. I palliated matters, and insisted on our agreement; but we parted with little less than a direct breach between us.

Humph. Well, sir, and what notice have you taken of all this to my young master?

Sir J. Bev. That's what I wanted to debate with you---I have said nothing to him yet---But look ye, Humphrey, if there is so much in this amour of his, that he denies, upon my summons, to marry, I have cause enough to be offended; and then, by my insisting upon his marrying today, I shall know how far he is engaged to this lady in masquerade, and from thence only shall be able to take my measures; in the mean time, I would have you find out how far that rogue, his man, is let into his secret—he, I know, will play tricks as much to cross me as to serve his master.

Humph. Why do you think so of him, sir? I believe he is no worse than I was for you at your son's age.

Sir J. Bev. I see it in the rascal's looks. But I have dwelt on these things too long: I'll go to my son immediately; and, while I'm gone, your part is to convince his rogue, Tom, that I am in earnest. I'll leave him to you.

[*Exit* SIR J. BEV.

Humph. Well, though this father and son live as well together as possible, yet their fear of giving each other pain is attended with constant

mutual uneasiness. I am sure I have enough to do to be honest, and yet keep well with them both; but they know I love them, and that makes the task less painful, however. Oh, here's the prince of poor coxcombs, the representative of all the better fed than taught! Ho, ho, Tom! whither so gay and so airy this morning?

Enter TOM, *singing.*

Tom. Sir, we servants of single gentlemen are another kind of people than you domestic ordinary drudges that do business; we are raised above you: the pleasures of board-wages, tavern-dinners, and many a clear gain, vails, alas! you never heard or dreamt of.

Humph. Thou hast follies and vices enough for a man of ten thousand a-year, though it is but as t'other day that I sent for you to town, to put you into Mr Sealand's family, that you might learn a little before I put you to my young master, who is too gentle for training such a rude thing as you were into proper obedience. You then pulled off your hat to every one you met in the street, like a bashful, great, awkward cub, as you were. But your great oaken cudgel, when you were a booby, became you much better than that dangling stick at your button, now you are a fop, that's fit for nothing except it hangs there to be ready for your master's hand when you are impertinent.

Tom. Uncle Humphrey, you know my master scorns to strike his servants; you talk as if the world was now just as it was when my old master and you were in your youth——when you went to dinner because it was so much a clock, when the great blow was given in the hall at the pantry-door, and all the family came out of their holes, in such strange dresses, and formal faces, as you see in the pictures in our long gallery in the country.

Humph. Why, you wild rogue!

Tom. You could not fall to your dinner, till a formal fellow, in a black gown, said something over the meat, as if the cook had not made it ready enough.

Humph. Sirrah, who do you prate after?—despising men of sacred characters! I hope you never heard my young master talk so like a profligate!

Tom. Sir, I say you put upon me when I first came to town about being orderly, and the doctrine of wearing shams to make linen last clean a fortnight, keeping my clothes fresh, and wearing a frock within doors.

Humph. Sirrah, I gave you those lessons, because I supposed, at that time, your master and you might have dined at home every day, and cost you nothing; then you might have made you a good family servant; but the gang you have frequented since at chocolate-houses and taverns, in a continual round of noise and extravagance—

Tom. I don't know what you heavy inmates call noise and extravagance; but we gentlemen, who are well fed, and cut a figure, sir, think it a fine life, and that we must be very pretty fellows, who are kept only to be looked at.

Humph. Very well, sir—I hope the fashion of being lewd and extravagant, despising of decency and order, is almost at an end, since it is arrived at persons of your quality.

Tom. Master Humphrey, ha, ha! you were an unhappy lad to be sent up to town in such queer days as you were. Why now, sir, the lacquies are the men of pleasure of the age; the top gamesters; and many a laced coat about town, have had their education in our party-coloured regiment. We are false lovers, have a taste of music, poetry, billet-doux, dress, politics, ruin damsels; and when we are weary of this lewd town, and have a mind to take up, whip into our masters' wigs and linen, and marry fortunes.

Humph. Hey day!

Tom. Nay, sir, our order is carried up to the highest dignities and distinctions: step but into the Painted Chamber—and, by our titles, you'd take us all for men of quality—then, again, come down to the Court of Requests, and you shall see us all laying our broken heads together, for the good of the nation; and though we never carry a question *nemine contradicente*, yet this I can say with a safe conscience, (and I wish every gentleman of our cloth could lay his hand upon his heart, and say the same) that I never took so much as a single mug of beer for my vote in all my life.

Humph. Sirrah, there is no enduring your extravagance; I'll hear you prate no longer: I wanted to see you to inquire how things go with your master, as far as you understand them: I suppose he knows he is to be married to-day?

Tom. Ay, sir, he knows it, and is dressed as gay as the sun; but, between you and I, my dear! he has a very heavy heart under all that gaiety. As soon as he was dressed, I retired, but overheard him sigh in the most heavy manner. He walked thoughtfully to and fro in the room, then went into his closet: when he came out, he gave me this for his mistress, whose maid you know—

Humph. Is passionately fond of your fine person.

Tom. The poor fool is so tender, and loves to hear me talk of the world, and the plays, operas, and ridottoes for the winter, the Parks and Bell-size for our summer diversions; and lard! says she, you are so wild—but you have a world of humour.

Humph. Coxcomb! Well, but why don't you run with your master's letter to Mrs Lucinda, as he ordered you?

Tom. Because Mrs Lucinda is not so easily come at as you think for.

Humph. Not easily come at! why, sir, are not her father and my old master agreed that she and

Mr Bevil are to be one flesh before to-morrow morning?

Tom. It's no matter for that: her mother, it seems, Mrs Sealand, has not agreed to it; and you must know, Mr Humphrey, that, in that family, the grey mare is the better horse.

Humph. What dost thou mean?

Tom. In one word, Mrs Sealand pretends to have a will of her own, and has provided a relation of hers, a stiff starched philosopher, and a wise fool, for her daughter; for which reason, for these ten days past, she has suffered no message nor letter from my master to come near her.

Humph. And where had you this intelligence?

Tom. From a foolish fond soul, that can keep nothing from me——one that will deliver this letter, too, if she is rightly managed.

Humph. What, her pretty handmaid, Mrs Phillis?

Tom. Even she, sir. This is the very hour, you know, she usually comes hither, under a pretence of a visit to our housekeeper forsooth, but in reality to have a glance at———

Humph. Your sweet face, I warrant you.

Tom. Nothing else in nature. You must know, I love to fret and play with the little wanton———

Humph. Play with the little wanton! what will this world come to!

Tom. I met her this morning in a new manteau and petticoat, not a bit the worse for her lady's wearing; and she has always new thoughts and new airs with new clothes———then, she never fails to steal some glance or gesture from every visitant at their house, and is indeed the whole town of coquettes at secondhand.——— But here she comes; in one motion she speaks and describes herself better than all the words in the world can.

Humph. Then I hope, dear sir! when your own affair is over, you will be so good as to mind your master's with her.

Tom. Dear Humphrey! you know my master is my friend, and those are people I never forget—

Humph. Sauciness itself! but I'll leave you to do your best for him. [*Exit.*

Enter PHILLIS.

Phil. Oh, Mr Thomas, is Mrs Sugarkey at home?—Lard! one is almost ashamed to pass along the streets. The town is quite empty, and nobody of fashion left in it; and the ordinary people do so stare to see any thing dressed like a woman of condition, as it were on the same floor with them, pass by. Alas! alas! it is a sad thing to walk! O fortune, fortune!—

Tom. What! a sad thing to walk! why, madam Phillis, do you wish yourself lame?

Phil. No, Mr Thomas, but I wish I were generally carried in a coach or chair, and of a fortune neither to stand nor go, but to totter, or slide, to be short-sighted, or stare, to fleer in the face, to look distant, to observe, to overlook, yet all become me; and if I were rich, I could twire and loll as well as the best of them. Oh Tom, Tom! is it not a pity that ou should be so great a coxcomb, and I so great a coquette, and yet be such poor devils as we are?

Tom. Mrs Phillis, I am your humble servant for that———

Phil. Yes, Mr Thomas, I know how much you are my humble servant, and know what you said to Mrs Judy, upon seeing her in one of her lady's cast manteaus, that any one would have thought her the lady, and that she had ordered the other to wear it till it sat easy—for now only it was becoming—to my lady it was only a covering, to Mrs Judy it was a habit. This you said after somebody or other. Oh Tom, Tom! thou art as false and as base as the best gentleman of them all: but, you wretch! talk to me no more on the old odious subject: don't, I say.

Tom. I know not how to resist your commands, madam. [*In a submissive tone, retiring.*

Phil. Commands about parting are grown mighty easy to you of late.

Tom. Oh, I have her! I have nettled and put her into the right temper to be wrought upon and set a-prating. [*Aside.*]—Why, truly, to be plain with you, Mrs Phillis, I can take little comfort of late in frequenting your house.

Phil. Pray, Mr Thomas, what is it, all of a sudden, offends your nicety at our house?

Tom. I don't care to speak particulars, but I dislike the whole.

Phil. I thank you, sir; I am a part of that whole.

Tom. Mistake me not, good Phillis.

Phil. Good Phillis! saucy enough. But however—

Tom. I say it is, that thou art a part, which gives me pain for the disposition of the whole. You must know, madam, to be serious, I am a man, at the bottom, of prodigious nice honour. You are too much exposed to company at your house. To be plain, I don't like so many that would be your mistress's lovers whispering to you.

Phil. Don't think to put that upon me. You say this, because I wrung you to the heart when I touched your guilty conscience about Judy.

Tom. Ah, Phillis, Phillis! if you but knew my heart!

Phil. I know too much on't.

Tom. Nay, then, poor Crispo's fate and mine are———therefore, give me leave to say, or sing at least, as he does upon the same occasion———

Se vedette, &c. [*Sings.*]

Phil. What, do you think I'm to be fobbed off

with a song?—I don't question but you have sung the same to Mrs Judy, too.

Tom. Don't disparage your charms, good Phillis, with jealousy of so worthless an object; besides, she is a poor hussy; and if you doubt the sincerity of my love, you will allow me true to my interest. You are a fortune, Phillis———

Phil. What would the fop be at now? In good time, indeed, you shall be setting up for a fortune!

Tom. Dear Mrs Phillis! you have such a spirit that we shall never be dull in marriage, when we come together. But I tell you, you are a fortune, and you have an estate in my hands.

[*He pulls out a purse, she eyes it.*

Phil. What pretence have I to what is in your hands, Mr Thomas?

Tom. As thus: there are hours, you know, when a lady is neither pleased nor displeased, neither sick nor well, when she lolls or loiters, when she is without desires, from having more of every thing than she knows what to do with.

Phil. Well, what then?

Tom. When she has not life enough to keep her bright eyes quite open to look at her own dear image in the glass.

Phil. Explain thyself, and don't be so fond of thy own prating.

Tom. There are also prosperous and good natured moments, as when a knot or a patch is happily fixed, when the complexion particularly flourishes.

Phil. Well, what then? I have not patience!

Tom. Why, then—or on the like occasions—we servants, who have skill to know how to time business, see, when such a pretty folded thing as this [*Shews a letter.*] may be presented, laid, or dropped, as best suits the present humour. And, madam, because it is a long wearisome journey to run through all the several stages of a lady's temper, my master, who is the most reasonable man in the world, presents you this to bear your charges on the road. [*Gives her the purse.*

Phil. Now, you think me a corrupt hussy?

Tom. O fy! I only think you'll take the letter.

Phil. Nay, I know you do; but I know my own innocence: I take it for my mistress's sake.

Tom. I know it, my pretty one! I know it.

Phil. Yes, I say I do it, because I would not have my mistress deluded by one who gives no proof of his passion: but I'll talk more of this as you see me on my way home. No, Tom; I assure thee I take this trash of thy master's not for the value of the thing, but as it convinces me he has a true respect for my mistress. I remember a verse to the purpose:

They may be false who languish and complain,
But they, who part with money, never feign.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—BEVIL *junior's lodgings.* BEVIL, *junior, reading.*

Bev. These moral writers practise virtue after death. This charming vision of Mirza! such an author, consulted in a morning, sets the spirits for the vicissitudes of the day better than the glass does a man's person. But what a day have I to go through! to put on an easy look with an aching heart! If this lady, my father urges me to marry, should not refuse me, my dilemma is insupportable. But why should I fear it? Is not she in equal distress with me? Has not the letter I have sent her this morning confessed my inclination to another? Nay, have I not moral assurances of her engagements, too, to my friend Myrtle? It's impossible but she must give in to it; for sure to be denied is a favour any man may pretend to. It must be so. Well, then, with the assurance of being rejected, I think I may confidently say to my father, I am ready to marry her—then, let me resolve upon (what I am not very good at) an honest dissimulation.

Enter TOM.

Tom. Sir John Bevil, sir, is in the next room.

Bev. Dunce! why did you not bring him in?

Tom. I told him, sir, you were in your closet.

Bev. I thought you had known, sir, it was my duty to see my father any where.

[*Going himself to the door.*

Tom. The devil's in my master! he has always more wit than I have. [*Aside.*

BEVIL, *junior, introducing* SIR JOHN.

Bev. Sir, you are the most gallant, the most complaisant of all parents. Sure 'tis not a compliment to say, these lodgings are yours. Why would you not walk in, sir?

Sir J. Bev. I was loath to interrupt you unseasonably on your wedding-day.

Bev. One to whom I am beholden for my birth-day might have used less ceremony.

Sir J. Bev. Well, son, I have intelligence you have writ to your mistress this morning. It would please my curiosity to know the contents of a wedding-day letter, for courtship must then be over.

Bev. I assure you, sir, there was no insolence in it upon the prospect of such a vast fortune's being added to our family, but much acknowledgement of the lady's great desert.

Sir J. Bev. But, dear Jack, are you in earnest in all this? and will you really marry her?

Bev. Did I ever disobey any command of yours, sir? nay, any inclination that I saw you bent upon?

Sir J. Bev. Why, I can't say you have, son: but, methinks, in this whole business you have not been so warm as I could have wished you;

you have visited her, it is true; but you have not been particular. Every one knows you can say and do as handsome things as any man; but you have done nothing but lived in the general, being complaisant only.

Bev. As I am ever prepared to marry if you bid me, so I am ready to let it alone if you will have me.

HUMPHREY *enters, unobserved.*

Sir J. Bev. Look you there now? Why, what am I to think of this so absolute and so indifferent a resignation?

Bev. Think that I am still your son, sir. Sir, you have been married, and I have not; and you have, sir, found the inconvenience there is when a man weds with too much love in his head. I have been told, sir, that at the time you married, you made a mighty bustle on the occasion—there was challenging and fighting, scaling walls—locking up the lady—and the gallant under an arrest, for fear of killing all his rivals. Now, sir, I suppose, you having found the ill consequence of these strong passions and prejudices in preference of one woman to another, in case of a man's becoming a widower——

Sir J. Bev. How is this?

Bev. I say, sir, experience has made you wiser in your care of me; for, sir, since you lost my dear mother, your time has been so heavy, so lonely, and so tasteless, that you are so good as to guard me against the like unhappiness, by marrying me prudentially, by way of bargain and sale; for, as you well judge, a woman, that is espoused for a fortune, is yet a better bargain if she dies; for then a man well enjoys what he did marry, the money, and is disencumbered of what he did not marry, the woman.

Sir J. Bev. But, pray, sir, do you think Lucinda, then, a woman of such little merit?

Bev. Pardon me, sir; I don't carry it so far, neither; I am rather afraid I shall like her too well; she has, for one of her fortune, a great many needless, and superfluous good qualities.

Sir J. Bev. I am afraid, son, there's something I don't see yet—something that's smothered under all this raillery.

Bev. Not in the least, sir. If the lady is dressed and ready, you see I am. I suppose the lawyers are ready, too?

Enter HUMPHREY.

Humph. Sir, Mr Sealand is at the coffee-house, and has sent to speak with you.

Sir J. Bev. Oh! that's well! then I warrant the lawyers are ready. Son, you'll be in the way, you say——

Bev. If you please, sir, I'll take a chair, and go to Mr Sealand's, where the young lady and I will wait your leisure.

Sir J. Bev. By no means—the old fellow will be so vain if he sees——

Bev. Aye—but the young lady, sir, will think me so indifferent——

Humph. Aye—there you are right—press your readiness to go to the bride—he won't let you.

[*Aside to* BEV.

Bev. Are you sure of that?

[*Aside to* HUMPH.

Humph. How he likes being prevented!

[*Aside.*

Sir J. Bev. No, no; you are an hour or two too early.

[*Looking on his watch.*

Bev. You'll allow me, sir, to think it too late to visit a beautiful, virtuous, young woman, in the pride and bloom of life, ready to give herself to my arms, and to place her happiness or misery for the future, in being agreeable or displeasing to me.——Call a chair.

Sir J. Bev. No, no, no, dear Jack! Besides, this Sealand is a moody old fellow. There's no dealing with some people, but by managing with indifference. We must leave to him the conduct of this day; it is the last of his commanding his daughter.

Bev. Sir, he cannot take it ill, that I am impatient to be hers.

Sir J. Bev. Pray, let me govern in this matter. You cannot tell how humoursome old fellows are. There's no offering reason to some of them, especially when they are rich. If my son should see him before I've brought old Sealand into better temper, the match would be impracticable.

[*Aside.*

Humph. Pray, sir, let me beg you to let Mr Bevil go. See whether he will not.—[*Aside to* SIR JOHN.]—[*Then to* BEVIL.]—Pray, sir, command yourself; since you see my master is positive, it is better you should not go.

Bev. My father commands me as to the object of my affections, but I hope he will not as to the warmth and height of them.

Sir J. Bev. So, I must even leave things as I found them, and, in the mean time, at least keep old Sealand out of his sight. Well, son, I'll go myself, and take orders in your affair—You'll be in the way, I suppose, if I send to you——I'll leave your old friend with you——Humphrey, don't let him stir, d'ye hear. Your servant, your servant.

[*Exit* SIR JOHN.

Humph. I have a sad time on't, sir, between you and my master—I see you are unwilling, and I know his violent inclinations for the match. I must betray neither, and yet deceive you both, for your common good. Heaven grant a good end of this matter! but there is a lady, sir, that gives your father much trouble and sorrow—— You'll pardon me.

Bev. Humphrey, I know thou art a friend to both, and in that confidence I dare tell thee—— That lady—is a woman of honour and virtue.—You may assure yourself I never will marry without my father's consent: but, give me leave to

say, too, this declaration does not come up to a promise that I will take whomsoever he pleases.

Humph. Come, sir; I wholly understand you: you would engage my services to free you from this woman whom my master intends you, to make way in time for the woman you have really a mind to.

Bev. Honest Humphrey! You have always been an useful friend to my father and myself; I beg you to continue your good offices, and don't let us come to the necessity of a dispute; for, if we should dispute, I must either part with more than life, or lose the best of fathers.

Humph. My dear master! were I but worthy to know this secret, that so near concerns you, my life, my all, should be engaged to serve you. This, sir, I dare promise, that I am sure I will, and can, be secret: your trust, at worst, but leaves you where you were; and, if I cannot serve you, I will at once be plain, and tell you so.

Bev. That's all I ask. Thou hast made it now my interest to trust thee. Be patient, then, and hear the story of my heart.

Humph. I am all attention, sir.

Bev. You may remember, Humphrey, that, in my last travels, my father grew uneasy at my making so long a stay at Toulon.

Humph. I remember it; he was apprehensive some woman had laid hold of you.

Bev. His fears were just; for, there, I first saw this lady. she is of English birth: her father's name was Danvers, a younger brother of an ancient family, and originally an eminent merchant of Bristol, who, upon repeated misfortunes, was reduced to go privately to the Indies. In this retreat, Providence again grew favourable to his industry, and, in six years time, restored him to his former fortunes. On this, he sent directions over, that his wife and little family should follow him to the Indies. His wife, impatient to obey such welcome orders, would not wait the leisure of a convoy, but took the first occasion of a single ship; and, with her husband's sister only, and this daughter, then scarce seven years old, undertook the fatal voyage: for, here, poor creature, she lost her liberty and life: she and her family, with all they had, were unfortunately taken by a privateer from Toulon. Being thus made a prisoner, though, as such, not ill-treated, yet the fright, the shock, and the cruel disappointment, seized with such violence upon her unhealthy frame, she sickened, pined, and died at sea.

Humph. Poor soul! Oh, the helpless infant!

Bev. Her sister yet survived, and had the care of her; the captain, too, proved to have humanity, and became a father to her; for, having himself married an English woman, and being childless, he brought home into Toulon this her little countrywoman, thus orphan, I may call her, presenting her, with all her dead mother's moveables of value, to his wife, to be educated as his own adopted daughter.

Humph. Fortune here seemed again to smile on her.

Bev. Only to make her frowns more terrible! for, in his height of fortune, this captain, too, her benefactor, unfortunately was killed at sea, and, dying intestate, his estate fell wholly to an advocate, his brother, who, coming soon to take possession, there found, among his other riches, this blooming virgin at his mercy.

Humph. He durst not, sure, abuse his power?

Bev. No wonder if his pampered blood was fired at the sight of her. In short, he loved; but, when all arts and gentle means had failed to move, he offered, too, his menaces in vain, denouncing vengeance on her cruelty, demanding her to account for all her maintenance from her childhood, seized on her little fortune as his own inheritance, and was dragging her by violence to prison, when Providence at the instant interposed, and sent me, by miracle, to relieve her.

Humph. 'Twas Providence, indeed! but pray, sir, after all this trouble, how came this lady at last to England?

Bev. The disappointed advocate, finding she had so unexpected a support, on cooler thoughts descended to a composition, which I, without her knowledge, secretly discharged.

Humph. That generous concealment made the obligation double.

Bev. Having thus obtained her liberty, I prevailed, not without some difficulty, to see her safe to England, where we no sooner arrived, but my father, jealous of my being imprudently engaged, immediately proposed this other fatal match, that hangs upon my quiet.

Humph. I find, sir, you are irrecoverably fixed upon this lady.

Bev. As my vital life dwells in my heart—— and yet you see what I do to please my father; walk in this pageantry of dress, this splendid covering of sorrow——But, Humphrey, you have your lesson.

Humph. Now, sir, I have but one material question——

Bev. Ask it freely.

Humph. Is it then your own passion for this secret lady, or hers for you, that gives you this aversion to the match your father has proposed you?

Bev. I shall appear, Humphrey, more romantic in my answer, than in all the rest of my story; for, though I dote on her to death, and have no little reason to believe she has the same thoughts for me, yet, in all my acquaintance and utmost privacies with her, I never once directly told her that I loved.

Humph. How was it possible to avoid it?

Bev. My tender obligations to my father have laid so inviolable a restraint upon my conduct, that, till I have his consent to speak, I am de-

termined, on that subject, to be dumb for ever.—An honourable retreat shall always be at least within my power, however fortune may dispose of me; the lady may pine, perhaps, but never shall reproach me.

Humph. Well, sir, to your praise be it spoken, you are certainly the most unfashionable lover in Great Britain.

Enter TOM.

Tom. Sir, Mr Myrtle's at the next door, and, if you are at leisure, will be glad to wait on you.

Bev. Whenever he pleases—Hold, Tom; did you receive no answer to my letter?

Tom. Sir, I was desired to call again; for I was told her mother would not let her be out of her sight; but, about an hour hence, Mrs Phillis said I should have one.

Bev. Very well.

Humph. Sir, I will take another opportunity; in the mean time, I only think it proper to tell you, that, from a secret I know, you may appear to your father as forward as you please to marry Lucinda, without the least hazard of its coming to a conclusion. Sir, your most obedient servant.

Bev. Honest Humphrey! Continue but my friend in this exigence, and you shall always find me yours.—[*Exit* HUMPH.]—I long to hear how my letter has succeeded with Lucinda. But I think it cannot fail; for, at worst, were it possible she should take it ill, her resentment of my indifference may as probably occasion a delay as her taking it right. Poor Myrtle! What terrors must he be in all this while!—Since he knows she is offered to me, and refused to him, there is no conversing or taking any measures with him, for his own service. But I ought to bear with my friend, and use him as one in adversity.

All his disquietudes by my own I prove;
For none exceeds perplexity in love.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE II.—*Continues.*

Enter BEVIL *and* TOM.

Tom. SIR, Mr Myrtle.

Bev. Very well. Do you step again, and wait for an answer to my letter.

[*Exit* TOM.

Enter MYRTLE.

Well, Charles, why so much care in thy countenance? Is there any thing in this world deserves it? You, who used to be so gay, so open, so vacant!

Myr. I think we have, of late, changed complexions. You, who used to be much the graver man, are now all air in your behaviour. But the cause of my concern may, for aught I know, be the same object that gives you all this satisfaction. In a word, I am told that you are this very day (and your dress confirms me in it) to be married to Lucinda.

Bev. You are not misinformed. Nay, put not on the terrors of a rival, till you hear me out. I shall disoblige the best of fathers, if I don't seem ready to marry Lucinda; and you know I have ever told you, you might make use of my secret resolution, never to marry her, for your own service as you please: but I am now driven to the extremity of immediately refusing, or complying, unless you help me to escape the match.

Myr. Escape, sir! neither her merit nor her fortune are below your acceptance. Escaping, do you call it?

Bev. Dear sir! Do you wish I should desire the match?

Myr. No——But such is my humourous and sickly state of mind, since it has been able to relish nothing but Lucinda, that, though I must owe my happiness to your aversion to this marriage, I cannot bear to hear her spoken of with levity, or unconcern.

Bev. Pardon me, sir; I shall transgress that way no more. She has understanding, beauty, shape, complexion, wit——

Myr. Nay, dear Bevil! Don't speak of her as if you loved her, neither.

Bev. Why, then, to give you ease at once, though I allow Lucinda to have good sense, wit, beauty, and virtue, I know another in whom these qualities appear to me more amiable than in her.

Myr. There you spoke like a reasonable and good-natured friend. When you acknowledge her merit, and own your prepossession for another, at once you gratify my fondness, and cure my jealousy.

Bev. But all this while you take no notice, you have no apprehension, of another man, that has twice the fortune of either of us.

Myr. Cimberton! Hang him, a formal, philosophical, pedantic coxcomb!—for the sot, with all these crude notions of divers things, under the direction of great vanity and very little judgment, shews his strongest bias is avarice, which is so predominant in him, that he will examine the limbs of his mistress with the caution of a jockey, and pays no more compliment to her personal charms than if she were a mere breeding animal.

Bev. Are you sure that is not affected? I have known some women sooner set on fire by that sort of negligence, than by all the blaze and ceremony of a court.

Myr. No, no; hang him! the rogue has no art; it is pure simple innocence and stupidity.

Bev. Yet, with all this, I don't take him for a fool.

Myr. I own the man is not a natural; he has a very quick sense, though a very slow understanding—he says, indeed, many things that want only the circumstances of time and place to be very just and agreeable.

Bev. Well, you may be sure of me, if you can disappoint him; but my intelligence says, the mother has actually sent for the conveyancer to draw articles for his marriage with Lucinda, though those for mine with her are, by her father's order, ready for signing; but it seems she has not thought fit to consult either him or his daughter in the matter.

Myr. Pshaw! a poor troublesome woman!—Neither Lucinda nor her father will ever be brought to comply with it—besides, I am sure Cimberton can make no settlement upon her, without the concurrence of his great uncle, sir Geoffry, in the west.

Bev. Well, sir, and I can tell you, that is the very point that is now laid before her counsel, to know whether a firm settlement can be made without this uncle's actually joining in it. Now, pray consider, sir, when my affair with Lucinda comes, as it soon must, to an open rupture, how are you sure that Cimberton's fortune may not then tempt her father, too, to hear his proposals?

Myr. There you are right, indeed; that must be provided against. Do you know who are her counsel?

Bev. Yes, for your service I have found out that, too: they are, serjeant Bramble and old Target.—By the way, they are neither of them known in the family: now, I was thinking why you might not put a couple of false counsels upon her, to delay and confound matters a little—besides, it may probably let you into the bottom of her whole design against you.

Myr. As how, pray?

Bev. Why, can't you slip on a black wig and a gown, and be old Bramble yourself?

Myr. Ha! I don't dislike it—but what shall I do for a brother in the case?

Bev. What think you of my fellow, Tom? The rogue's intelligent, and is a good mimic; all his part will be but to stutter heartily; for that's old Target's case—nay, it would be an immoral thing to mock him, were it not that his impatience is the occasion of its breaking out to that degree.—The conduct of the scene will chiefly lie upon you.

Myr. I like it of all things! if you'll send Tom to my chambers, I will give him full instructions. This will certainly give me occasion to raise difficulties, to puzzle or confound her project for a while, at least.

Bev. I warrant you success; so far we are right, then. And now, Charles, your apprehension of my marrying her is all you have to get over.

Myr. Dear Bevil! though I know you are my friend, yet, when I abstract myself from my own interest in the thing, I know no objection she can make to you, or you to her; and therefore hope——

Bev. Dear Myrtle! I am as much obliged to you for the cause of your suspicion, as I am offended at the effect; but, be assured, I am taking measures for your certain security, and that all things, with regard to me, will end in your entire satisfaction.

Myr. Well; I'll promise you to be as easy and as confident as I can, though I cannot but remember that I have more than life at stake on your fidelity. [*Going.*

Bev. Then, depend upon it, you have no chance against you.

Myr. Nay, no ceremony; you know I must be going. [*Exit* MYRTLE.

Bev. Well; this is another instance of the perplexities which arise, too, in faithful friendship. We must often in this life go on in our good offices, even under the displeasure of those to whom we do them, in compassion to their weaknesses and mistakes. But all this while poor Indiana is tortured with the doubt of me; she has no support or comfort but in my fidelity, yet sees me daily pressed to marriage with another. How painful, in such a crisis, must be every hour she thinks on me! I'll let her see, at least, my conduct to her is not changed: I'll take this opportunity to visit her; for though the religious vow I have made to my father restrains me from ever marrying without his approbation, yet that confines me not from seeing a virtuous woman, that is the pure delight of my eyes, and the guiltless joy of my heart. But the best condition of human life is but a gentler misery!

To hope for perfect happiness is vain,
And love has ever its allays of pain. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—INDIANA'S *lodgings.*

Enter ISABELLA *and* INDIANA.

Isa. Yes; I say 'tis artifice, dear child! I say to thee, again and again, 'tis all skill and management.

Ind. Will you persuade me there can be an ill design in supporting me in the condition of a woman of quality? attended, dressed, and lodged, like one in my appearance abroad, and my furniture at home, every way in the most sumptuous manner, and he that does it has an artifice, a design in it?

Isa. Yes, yes.

Ind. And all this without so much as explaining to me, that all about me comes from him?

Isa. Ay, ay; the more for that—that keeps the title to all you have the more in him.

Ind. The more in him!———he scorns the thought——

Isa. Then he—he—he———

Ind. Well; be not so eager.——If he's an ill man, let's look into his stratagems: here is another of them: [*Shewing a letter.*] here's two hundred and fifty pounds in bank-notes, with these words; 'To pay for the set of dressing-plate which will be brought home to-morrow.' Why, dear aunt! now here's another piece of skill for you, which I own I cannot comprehend—and it is with a bleeding heart I hear you say any thing to the disadvantage of Mr Bevil. When he is present, I look upon him as one to whom I owe my life, and the support of it; then, again, as the man who loves me with sincerity and honour. When his eyes are cast another way, and I dare survey him, my heart is painfully divided between shame and love—Oh! I could tell you—

Isa. Oh! you need not; I imagine all this for you.

Ind. This is my state of mind in his presence; and, when he is absent, you are ever dinning my ears with notions of the arts of men; that his hidden bounty, his respectful conduct, his careful provision for me, after his preserving me from the utmost misery, are certain signs he means nothing but to make I know not what of me.

Isa. Oh! you have a sweet opinion of him truly!

Ind. I have, when I am with him, ten thousand things, besides my sex's natural decency and shame, to suppress my heart, that yearns to thank, to praise, to say it loves him. I say thus it is with me, while I see him; and, in his absence, I am entertained with nothing but your endeavours to tear this amiable image from my heart, and, in its stead, to place a base dissembler, an artful invader of my happiness, my innocence, my honour!

Isa. Ah, poor soul! has not his plot taken? don't you die for him? has not the way he has taken been the most proper with you? Oh ho! he has sense, and has judged the thing right.

Ind. Go on, then, since nothing can answer you; say what you will of him.——Heigh ho!

Isa. Heigh ho! indeed. It is better to say so, as you are now, than as many others are. There are, among the destroyers of women, the gentle, the generous, the mild, the affable, the humble, who all, soon after their success in their designs, turn to the contrary of those characters. I will own to you, Mr Bevil carries his hypocrisy the best of any man living; but still he is a man, and therefore a hypocrite. They have usurped an exemption from shame, from any baseness, any cruelty, towards us. They embrace, without love; they make vows, without conscience of obligation; they are partners, nay, seducers, to the crime, wherein they pretend to be less guilty.

Ind. That's truly observed. [*Aside.*] But what's all this to Bevil?

Isa. This is to Bevil and all mankind. Trust not those who will think the worse of you for your confidence in them; serpents who lie in wait for doves. Won't you be on your guard against those who would betray you? won't you doubt those who would contemn you for believing them? Take it from me, fair and natural dealing is to invite injuries; 'tis bleating to escape wolves who would devour you: Such is the world, and such (since the behaviour of one man to myself) have I believed all the rest of the sex. [*Aside.*

Ind. I will not doubt the truth of Bevil, I will not doubt it: he has not spoken it by an organ that is given to lying: his eyes are all that have ever told me that he was mine. I know his virtue, I know his filial piety, and ought to trust his management with a father, to whom he has uncommon obligations. What have I to be concerned for? My lesson is very short. If he takes me for ever, my purpose of life is only to please him. If he leaves me, (which Heaven avert!) I know he'll do it nobly; and I shall have nothing to do but learn to die, after worse than death has happened to me.

Isa. Aye, do persist in your credulity! flatter yourself that a man of his figure and fortune will make himself the jest of the town, and marry a handsome beggar for love!

Ind. The town! I must tell you, madam, the fools that laugh at Mr Bevil will but make themselves more ridiculous; his actions are the result of thinking, and he has sense enough to make even virtue fashionable.

Isa. O' my conscience he has turned her head! Come, come; if he were the honest fool you take him for, why has he kept you here these three weeks, without sending you to Bristol in search of your father, your family, and your relations?

Ind. I am convinced he still designs it; and that nothing keeps him here but the necessity of not coming to an open breach with his father in regard to the match he has proposed him: besides, has he not writ to Bristol? and has not he advice that my father has not been heard of there almost these twenty years?

Isa. All sham, mere evasion; he is afraid, if he should carry you thither, your honest relations may take you out of his hands, and so blow up all his wicked hopes at once.

Ind. Wicked hopes! did I ever give him any such?

Isa. Has he ever given you any honest ones? Can you say in your conscience he has ever once offered to marry you?

Ind. No; but by his behaviour I am convinced he will offer it the moment 'tis in his power, or consistent with his honour, to make such a promise good to me.

Isa. His honour!

Ind. I will rely upon it; therefore, desire you will not make my life uneasy by these ungrateful jealousies of one to whom I am and wish to be obliged; for from his integrity alone I have resolved to hope for happiness.

Isa. Nay, I have done my duty; if you won't see, at your peril be it.

Ind. Let it be. This is his hour of visiting me. [*Apart.*

Isa. Oh! to be sure, keep up your form; do not see him in a bed-chamber. This is pure prudence, when she is liable, whenever he meets her to be conveyed whither he pleases.

[*Apart.*

Ind. All the rest of my life is but waiting till he comes: I live only while I'm with him. [*Exit.*

Isa. Well, go thy way, thou wilful innocent! I once had almost as much love for a man who poorly left me to marry an estate—and I am now, against my will, what they call an old maid—but I will not let the peevishness of that condition grow upon me——only keep up the suspicion of it, to prevent this creature's being any other than a virgin, except upon proper terms.

[*Exit.*

Re-enter INDIANA, *speaking to a servant.*

Ind. Desire Mr Bevil to walk in. Design! impossible! a base designing mind could never think of what he hourly puts in practice—and yet, since the late rumour of his marriage, he seems more reserved than formerly—he sends in, too, before he sees me, to know if I am at leisure. Such new respect may cover coldness in the heart—it certainly makes me thoughtful—I'll know the worst at once; I'll lay such fair occasions in his way, that it shall be impossible to avoid an explanation——for these doubts are insupportable. But see, he comes and clears them all.

Enter BEVIL, *Jun.*

Bev. Madam, your most obedient. I am afraid I broke in upon your rest last night—'twas very late before we parted, but 'twas your own fault; I never saw you in such agreeable humour.

Ind. I am extremely glad we are both pleased; for I thought I never saw you better company.

Bev. Me, madam! you rally; I said very little.

Ind. But I am afraid you heard me say a great deal; and when a woman is in the talking vein, the most agreeable thing a man can do, you know, is to have patience to hear her.

Bev. Then 'tis pity, madam, you should ever be silent, that we might be always agreeable to one another.

Ind. If I had your talent or power to make my actions speak for me, I might, indeed, be silent, and yet pretend to something more than the agreeable.

Bev. If I might be vain of any thing in my power, madam, it is, that my understanding, from all your sex, has marked you out as the deserving object of my esteem.

Ind. Should I think I deserve this, it were enough to make my vanity forfeit the esteem you offer me.

Bev. How so, madam?

Ind. Because esteem is the result of reason, and to deserve it from good sense the height of human glory.—Nay, I had rather a man of honour should pay me that, than all the homage of a sincere and humble love.

Bev. You certainly distinguish right, madam; love often kindles from external merit only—

Ind. But esteem arises from a higher source, the merit of the soul———

Bev. True———and great souls only can deserve it. [*Bowing respectfully.*

Ind. Now I think they are greater still, that can so charitably part with it.

Bev. Now, madam, you make me vain, since the utmost pride and pleasure of my life is, that I esteem you---as I ought.

Ind. [*Aside.*] As he ought! still more perplexing! he neither saves nor kills my hope.

Bev. But, madam, we grow grave, methinks---let's find some other subject.——Pray how did you like the opera last night?

Ind. First give me leave to thank you for my tickets.

Bev. Oh! your servant, madam.---But pray tell me; you, now, who are never partial to the fashion, I fancy, must be the properest judge of a mighty dispute among the ladies, that is, whether Crispo or Griselda is the more agreeable entertainment.

Ind. With submission, now, I cannot be a proper judge of this question.

Bev. How so, madam?

Ind. Because I find I have a partiality for one of them.

Bev. Pray, which is that?

Ind. I do not know—there's something in that rural cottage of Griselda, her forlorn condition, her poverty, her solitude, her resignation, her innocent slumbers, and that lulling *dolce sogno* that's sung over her, it had an effect upon me, that---In short, I never was so well deceived at any of them.

Bev. Oh! now, then, I can account for the dispute: Griselda, it seems, is the distress of an injured, innocent woman; Crispo that only of a man in the same condition; therefore, the men are mostly concerned for Crispo, and, by a natural indulgence, both sexes for Griselda.

Ind. So that judgment, you think, ought to be for one, though fancy and complaisance have got ground for the other. Well, I believe you will never give me leave to dispute with you on any

subject, for I own Crispo has its charms for me, too, though, in the main, all the pleasure the best opera gives us, is but a keen sensation.——Methinks, 'tis pity the mind can't have a little more share in the entertainment.—The music is certainly fine; but, in my thoughts, there's none of your composers come up to old Shakespeare and Otway.

Bev. How, madam! why, if a woman of your sense were to say this in a drawing-room———

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, here's Signor Carbonelli says he waits your commands in the next room.

Bev. A propos! you were saying yesterday, madam, you had a mind to hear him.—Will you give him leave to entertain you now?

Ind. By all means. Desire the gentleman to walk in. [*Exit Servant.*

Bev. I fancy you will find something in his hand that is uncommon.

Ind. You are always finding ways, Mr Bevil, to make life seem less tedious to me.

Enter music-master.

When the gentleman pleases.

[*After a sonata is played,* BEVIL *jun. waits on the master to the door, &c.*]

Bev. You smile, madam, to see me so complaisant to one whom I pay for his visit. Now, I own, I think it not enough barely to pay those whose talents are superior to our own (I mean such talents as would become our condition if we had them); methinks we ought to do something more than barely gratify them for what they do at our command, only because their fortune is below us.

Ind. You say I smile; I assure you it was a smile of approbation; for, indeed, I cannot but think it the distinguishing part of a gentleman to make his superiority of fortune as easy to his inferiors as he can.—Now, once more to try him. [*Aside.*]——I was saying just now, I believe you would never let me dispute with you, and I dare say it will always be so: however, I must have your opinion upon a subject which created a debate between my aunt and me just before you came hither; she would needs have it, that no man ever does any extraordinary kindness or service to a woman but for his own sake.

Bev. Well, madam! indeed I can't but be of her mind.

Ind. What, though he should maintain and support her, without demanding any thing of her on her part!

Bev. Why, madam, is making an expence in the service of a valuable woman, (for such I must suppose her) though she should never do him any favour, nay, though she should never know who did her such service, such a mighty heroic business?

Ind. Certainly! I should think he must be a man of an uncommon mould.

Bev. Dear madam! why so? 'tis but at best a better taste in expence. To bestow upon one, whom he may think one of the ornaments of the whole creation; to be conscious that, from his superfluity, an innocent, a virtuous spirit is supported above the temptations, the sorrows of life; that he sees satisfaction, health, and gladness in her countenance, while he enjoys the happiness of seeing her: (as that I will suppose, too, or he must be too abstracted, too insensible) I say, if he is allowed to delight in that prospect, alas! what mighty matter is there in all this?

Ind. No mighty matter in so disinterested a friendship!

Bev. Disinterested! I can't think him so. Your hero, madam, is no more than what every gentleman ought to be, and, I believe, very many are—— he is only one who takes more delight in reflections, than in sensations; he is more pleased with thinking than eating; that's the utmost you can say of him.—Why, madam, a greater expence than all this, men lay out upon an unnecessary stable of horses.

Ind. Can you be sincere in what you say?

Bev. You may depend upon it. If you know any such man, he does not love dogs inordinately?

Ind. No, that he does not.

Bev. Nor cards, nor dice?

Ind. No.

Bev. Nor bottle companions?

Ind. No.

Bev. Nor loose women?

Ind. No; I am sure he does not.

Bev. Take my word, then, if your admired hero is not liable to any of these kind of demands, there's no such pre-eminence in this as you imagine: nay, this way of expence you speak of, is what exalts and raises him that has a taste for it; and, at the same time, his delight is incapable of satiety, disgust, or penitence.

Ind. But still I insist, his having no private interest in the action makes it prodigious, almost incredible.

Bev. Dear madam! I never knew you more mistaken. Why, who can be more an usurer than he, who lays out his money in such valuable purchases? If pleasure be worth purchasing, how great a pleasure is it to him who has a true taste of life, to ease an aching heart; to see the human countenance lighted up into smiles of joy, on the receipt of a bit of ore, which is superfluous, and otherwise useless, in a man's own pocket! What could a man do better with his cash? This is the effect of a humane disposition, where there is only a general tie of nature and common necessity; what, then, must it be, when we serve an object of merit, of admiration!

Ind. Well, the more you argue against it, the more I shall admire the generosity.

Bev. Nay—then, madam, 'tis time to fly, after a declaration that my opinion strengthens my adversary's argument—I had best hasten to my appointment with Mr Myrtle, and be gone while we are friends, and—before things are brought to an extremity.— [*Exit carelessly.*

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. Well, madam, what think you of him now, pray?

Ind. I protest I begin to fear he is wholly disinterested in what he does for me. On my heart, he has no other view but the mere pleasure of doing it, and has neither good or bad designs upon me!

Isa. Ah, dear niece, don't be in fear of both: I'll warrant you, you will know time enough that he is not indifferent.

Ind. You please me when you tell me so; for if he has any wishes towards me, I know he will not pursue them but with honour.

Isa. I wish I were as confident of one as the other.—I saw the respectful downcast of his eye when you catched him gazing at you during the music. He, I warrant, was surprised, as if he had been taken stealing your watch. Oh! the undissembled guilty look!

Ind. But did you observe any thing really? I thought he looked most charmingly graceful. How engaging is modesty in a man, when one knows there is a great mind within! So tender a confusion, and yet, in other respects, so much himself! so collected, so dauntless, so determined!

Isa. Ah, niece! there is a sort of bashfulness which is the best engine to carry on a shameless purpose. Some men's modesty serves their wickedness, as hypocrisy gains the respect due to piety. But I will own to you, there is one hopeful symptom, if there could be such a thing as a disinterested lover; but till—till—till—

Ind. Till what?

Isa. Till I know whether Mr Myrtle and Mr Bevil are really friends or foes—and that I will be convinced of before I sleep; for you shall not be deceived. [*Exit* ISABELLA.

Ind. I'm sure I never shall, if your fears can guard me. In the mean time, I'll wrap myself up in the integrity of my own heart, nor dare to doubt of his.

As conscious honour all his actions steers,
So conscious innocence dispels my fears.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—SEALAND'S *house.*

Enter TOM, *meeting* PHILLIS.

Tom. Well, Phillis!——What! with a face as if you had never seen me before?——What a work have I to do now! She has seen some new visitant at their house, whose airs she has catched, and is resolved to practise them upon me. Numberless are the changes she'll dance through, before she'll answer this plain question, *videlicet*, Have you delivered my master's letter to your lady? Nay, I know her too well to ask an account of it in an ordinary way; I'll be in my airs as well as she. [*Aside.*]—Well, madam, as unhappy as you are at present pleased to make me, I would not in the general be any other than what I am; I would not be a bit wiser, a bit richer, a bit taller, a bit shorter, than I am at this instant. [*Looking stedfastly at her.*

Phil. Did ever any body doubt, master Thomas, but that you were extremely satisfied with your sweet self?

Tom. I am, indeed.—The thing I have least reason to be satisfied with, is my fortune; and I am glad of my poverty; perhaps, if I were rich, I should overlook the finest woman in the world, that wants nothing but riches to be thought so.

Phil. How prettily was that said! But I'll have a great deal more before I'll say one word. [*Aside.*

Tom. I should perhaps have been stupidly above her, had I not been her equal; and, by not being her equal, never had opportunity of being her slave. I am my master's servant for hire; I am my mistress's from choice, would she but approve my passion.

Phil. I think it is the first time I ever heard you speak of it with any sense of anguish—if you really do suffer any.

Tom. Ah, Phillis! can you doubt, after what you have seen?

Phil. I know not what I have seen, nor what I have heard; but, since I am at leisure, you may tell me when you fell in love with me, how you fell in love with me, and what you have suffered, or are ready to suffer, for me.

Tom. Oh, the unmerciful jade! when I'm in haste about my master's letter—but I must go through it. [*Aside.*]—Ah! too well I remember when, and how, and on what occasion, I was first surprised. It was on the first of April, one thousand seven hundred and fifteen, I came into Mr Sealand's service; I was then a hobble-dehoy, and you a pretty little tight girl, a favourite handmaid of the housekeeper.——At that time, we neither of us knew what was in us. I remember, I was ordered to get out of the window, one pair of stairs, to rub the sashes clean—the person employed on the inner side was your charming self, whom I had never seen before.

Phil. I think I remember the silly accident.—What made ye, you oaf, ready to fall down into the street?

Tom. You know not, I warrant you—you could not guess what surprised me—you took no delight when you immediately grew wanton in your compass, and put your lips close, and breathed upon the glass: and, when my lips approached, a dirty cloth you rubbed against my face, and hid your beauties from me; when I again drew near, you spit, and rubbed, and smiled, at my undoing.

Phil. What silly thoughts you men have!

Tom. We were Pyramus and Thisbe—but ten times harder was my fate: Pyramus could peep only through a wall; I saw her, saw my Thisbe, in all her beauty, but as much kept from her as if a hundred walls between: for there was more, there was her will against me.—Would she but relent!——Oh, Phillis! Phillis! shorten my torment, and declare you pity me.

Phil. I believe 'tis very sufferable; the pain is not so exquisite, but that you may bear it a little longer.

Tom. Oh, my charming Phillis! if all depended on my fair one's will, I could with glory suffer——but, dearest creature! consider our miserable state.

Phil. How! miserable!

Tom. We are miserable to be in love, and under the command of others than those we love—with that generous passion in the heart, to be sent to and fro on errands, called, checked, and rated for the meanest trifles——Oh, Phillis! you don't know how many china cups and glasses my passion for you has made me break: you have broke my fortune as well as my heart.

Phil. Well, Mr Thomas, I cannot but own to you that I believe your master writes, and you speak, the best of any men in the world. Never was a woman so well pleased with a letter, as my young lady was with his; and this is an answer to it. [*Gives him a letter.*

Tom. This was well done, my dearest! Consider, we must strike out some pretty livelihood for ourselves, by closing their affairs: it will be nothing for them to give us a little being of our own, some small tenement out of their large possessions: whatever they give us, it will be more than what they keep for themselves: one acre with Phillis, would be worth a whole country without her.

Phil. Oh, could I but believe you!

Tom. If not the utterance, believe the touch, of my lips. [*Kisses her.*

Phil. There's no contradicting you. How closely you argue, Tom!

Tom. And will closer, in due time; but I must hasten with this letter, to hasten towards the possession of you—then, Phillis, consider how I must be revenged (look to it!) of all your skittishness, shy looks, and, at best, but coy compliances.

Phil. Oh, Tom! you grow wanton and sensual, as my lady calls it: I must not endure it. Oh, foh! you are a man, an odious, filthy, male creature! you should behave, if you had a right sense, or were a man of sense, like Mr Cimberton, with distance and indifference; or, let me see, some other becoming hard word, with seeming in—in—advertency, and not rush on as if you were seizing a prey. But hush!—the ladies are coming.——Good Tom, don't kiss me above once, and be gone,—Lard! we have been fooling and toying, and not considered the main business of our masters and mistresses.

Tom. Why, their business is to be fooling and toying, as soon as the parchments are ready.

Phil. Well remembered—Parchments—my lady, to my knowledge, is preparing writings between her coxcomb cousin, Cimberton, and my mistress, though my master has an eye to the parchments already prepared between your master, Mr Bevil, and my mistress; and I believe my mistress herself has signed and sealed in her heart to Mr Myrtle.—Did I not bid you kiss me but once, and be gone? But I know you won't be satisfied.

Tom. No, you smooth creature! how should I? [*Kisses her hand.*

Phil. Well, since you are humble, or so cool, as to ravish my hand only, I'll take my leave of you like a great lady, and you a man of quality. [*They salute formally.*

Tom. Pox of all this state! [*Offers to kiss her more closely.*

Phil. No, pr'ythee, Tom, mind your business. We must follow that interest which will take, but endeavour at that which will be most for us, and we like most.——Oh, here is my young mistress! [*Pox, taps her neck behind, and kisses his fingers.*] Go, ye liquorish fool! [*Exit* TOM.

Enter LUCINDA.

Luc. Who was that you were hurrying away?

Phil. One that I had no mind to part with.

Luc. Why did you turn him away, then?

Phil. For your ladyship's service; to carry your ladyship's letter to his master. I could hardly get the rogue away.

Luc. Why, has he so little love for his master?

Phil. No; but he has so much love for his mistress.

Luc. But I thought I heard him kiss you: why do you suffer that?

Phil. Why, madam, we vulgar take it to be a sign of love. We servants, we poor people, that have nothing but our persons to bestow or treat for, are forced to deal and bargain by way of sample; and therefore, as we have no parchments or wax necessary in our agreements, we squeeze with our hands, and seal with our lips, to ratify vows and promises.

Luc. But can't you trust one another, without such earnest down?

Phil. We don't think it safe, any more than you gentry, to come together without deeds executed.

Luc. Thou art a pert, merry hussy.

Phil. I wish, madam, your lover and you were as happy as Tom and your servant are.

Luc. You grow impertinent.

Phil. I have done, madam; and I won't ask you what you intend to do with Mr Myrtle, what your father will do with Mr Bevil, nor what you all, especially my lady, mean by admitting Mr Cimberton as particularly here as if he were married to you already; nay, you are married actually, as far as people of quality are.

Luc. How's that?

Phil. You have different beds in the same house.

Luc. Pshaw!——I have a very great value for Mr Bevil, but have absolutely put an end to his pretensions, in the letter I gave you for him; but my father, in his heart, still has a mind to him, were it not for this woman they talk of; and I am apt to imagine he is married to her, or never designs to marry at all.

Phil. Then, Mr Myrtle———

Luc. He had my parents' leave to apply to me, and, by that, he has won me and my affections: who is to have this body of mine, without them, it seems, is nothing to me: my mother says, 'tis indecent for me to let my thoughts stray about the person of my husband; nay, she says a maid rightly virtuous, though she may have been where her lover was a thousand times, should not have made observations enough to know him from another man, when she sees him in a third place.

Phil. That's more than the severity of a nun; for, not to see when one may, is hardly possible; not to see when one can't, is very easy: at this rate, madam, there are a great many whom you have not seen, who——

Luc. Mamma says, the first time you see your husband, should be at that instant he is made so. When your father, with the help of the minister, gives you to him, then you are to see him, then you are to observe and take notice of him, because, then, you are to obey him.

Phil. But does not my lady remember you are to love, as well as to obey?

Luc. To love is a passion; 'tis a desire; and we must have no desires. Oh! I cannot endure the reflection! With what insensibility on my part, with what more than patience, have I been exposed and offered to some awkward booby or other in every county of Great Britain!

Phil. Indeed, madam, I wonder I never heard you speak of it before with this indignation.

Luc. Every corner of the land has presented me with a wealthy coxcomb: as fast as one treaty has gone off, another has come on, till my name and person have been the tittle-tattle of the whole town.——What is this world come to! no shame left! to be bartered for like the beasts of the field; and that in such an instance as coming together, to an entire familiarity, and union of soul and body; and this without being so much as well-wishers to each other, but for increase of fortune!

Phil. But, madam, all these vexations will end very soon in one for all: Mr Cimberton is your mother's kinsman, and three hundred years an older gentleman than any lover you ever had; for which reason, with that of his prodigious large estate, she is resolved on him, and has sent to consult the lawyers accordingly; nay, has, whether you know it or no, been in treaty with sir Geoffrey, who, to join in the settlement, has accepted of a sum to do it, and is every moment expected in town for that purpose.

Luc. How do you get all this intelligence?

Phil. By an art I have, I thank my stars, beyond all the waiting maids in Great Britain; the art of listening, madam, for your ladyship's service.

Luc. I shall soon know as much as you do. Leave me, leave me, Phillis; begone! Here, here, I'll turn you out. My mother says I must not converse with my servants, though I must converse with no one else. [*Exit* PHILLIS.] How unhappy are we who are born to great fortunes! No one looks at us with indifference, or acts towards us on the foot of plain-dealing; yet, by all I have been heretofore offered to, or treated for, I have been used with the most agreeable of all abuses, flattery; but now, by this phlegmatic fool, I am used as nothing, or a mere thing: he, forsooth, is too wise, too learned, to have any regard to desires, and I know not what the learned oaf calls sentiments of love and passion!—Here he comes with my mother—'tis much if he looks at me; or, if he does, takes no more notice of me than of any other moveable in the room.

Enter MRS SEALAND *and* MR CIMBERTON.

Mrs Sea. How do I admire this noble, this learned taste of yours, and the worthy regard you have to our own ancient and honourable house, in consulting a means to keep the blood as pure and regularly descended as may be!

Cim. Why, really, madam, the young women of this age are treated with discourses of such a tendency, and their imaginations so bewildered in flesh and blood, that a man of reason can't talk to be understood: they have no ideas of happiness but what are more gross than the gratification of hunger and thirst.

Luc. With how much reflection he is a coxcomb! [*Aside.*

Cim. And in truth, madam, I have considered it as a most brutal custom, that persons of the first character in the world should go as ordinarily, and with as little shame, to bed, as to dinner with one another. They proceed to the propa-

gation of the species as openly as to the preservation of the individual.

Luc. she that wilfingly goes to bed to thee must have no shame, I'm sure. [*Aside.*

Mrs Sea. Oh, cousin Cimberton! cousin Cimberton! how abstracted, how refined is your sense of things! but, indeed, it is too true, there is nothing so ordinary as to say in the best governed families, my master and lady are gone to bed—one does not know but it might have been said of one's self.

[*Hiding her face with her fan.*

Cim. Lycurgus, madam, instituted otherwise: among the Lacedemonians, the whole female world was pregnant, but none but the mothers themselves knew by whom; their meetings were secret, and the amorous congress always by stealth; and no such professed doings between the sexes as are tolerated among us under the audacious word—marriage.

Mrs Sea. Oh! had I lived in those days, and been a matron of Sparta, one might with less indecency have had ten children according to that modest institution, than one under the confusion of our modern barefaced manner.

Luc. And yet, poor woman! she has gone through the whole ceremony; and here I stand a melancholy proof of it. [*Aside.*

Mrs Sea. We will talk then of business.—— That girl, walking about the room there, is to be your wife: she has, I confess, no ideas, no sentiments, that speak her born of a thinking mother.

Cim. I have observed her; her lively look, free air, and disengaged countenance, speak her very——

Luc. Very what?

Cim. If you please, madam—to set her a little that way.

Mrs Sea. Lucinda, say nothing to him; you are not a match for him: when you are married, you may speak to such a husband when you are spoken to; but I am disposing of you above yourself every way.

Cim. Madam, you can't but observe the inconveniencies I expose myself to, in hopes that your ladyship will be the consort of my better part. As for the young woman, she is rather an impediment than a help to a man of letters and speculation. Madam, there is no reflection, no philosophy, can at all times subdue the sensitive life, but the animal shall sometimes carry away the man——Ha! aye, the vermilion of her lips!

Luc. Pray don't talk of me thus.

Cim. The pretty enough——pant of her bosom!

Luc. Sir! madam, don't you hear him?

Cim. Her forward chest!

Luc. Intolerable!

Cim. High health!

Luc. The grave, easy, impudence of him!

Cim. Proud heart!

Luc. Stupid coxcomb!

Cim. I say, madam, her impatience, while we are looking at her, throws out all attractions—— her arms——her neck——what a spring in her step!

Luc. Don't you run me over thus, you strange, unaccountable——

Cim. What an elasticity in her veins and arteries!

Luc. I have no veins, no arteries!

Mrs Sea. Oh, child! hear him; he talks finely; he's a scholar; he knows what you have.

Cim. The speaking invitation of her shape, the gathering of herself up, and the indignation you see in the pretty little thing! Now, I am considering her on this occasion but as one that is to be pregnant——

Luc. The familiar, learned, unseasonable puppy! [*Aside.*

Cim. And pregnant undoubtedly she will be yearly: I fear I shan't for many years have discretion enough to give her one fallow season.

Luc. Monster! there's no bearing it. The hideous sot! There's no enduring it, to be thus surveyed like a steed at sale!

Cim. At sale! she's very illiterate; but she's very well limbed, too. Turn her in; I see what she is.

Mrs Sea. Go, you creature! I am ashamed of you.

[*Exit* LUCINDA *in a rage.*

Cim. No harm done. You know, madam, the better sort of people, as I observed to you, treat by their lawyers of weddings, [*Adjusting himself at the glass.*] and the woman in the bargain, like the mansion-house in the sale of the estate, is thrown in, and what that is, whether good or bad, is not at all considered.

Mrs Sea. I grant it, and therefore make no demand for her youth and beauty, and every other accomplishment, as the common world think them, because she is not polite.

Cim. I know your exalted understanding, abstracted as it is from vulgar prejudice, will not be offended when I declare to you, madam, I marry to have an heir to my estate, and not to beget a colony or a plantation. This young woman's beauty and constitution will demand provision for a tenth child at least.

Mrs Sea. With all that wit and learning, how considerate! what an economist! [*Aside.*] Sir, I cannot make her any other than what she is, or say she is much better than the other young women of this age, or fit for much besides being a mother; but I have given directions for the marriage settlements, and sir Geoffry Cimberton's counsel is to meet ours here at this hour concerning his joining in the deed, which, when executed, makes you capable of settling what is due to Lucinda's fortune. Herself, as I told you, I say nothing of.

Cim. No, no, no; indeed, madam, it is not

usual, and I must depend upon my reflection and philosophy not to overstock my family.

Mrs Sea. I cannot help her, cousin Cimberton; but she is, for aught I see, as well as the daughter of any body else.

Cim. That is very true, madam.

Enter a Servant, who whispers MRS SEALAND.

Mrs Sea. The lawyers are come, and now we are to hear what they have resolved as to the point, whether it is necessary that sir Geoffry should join in the settlement, as being what they call in the remainder. But, good cousin, you must have patience with them. These lawyers, I am told, are of a different kind; one is what they call a chamber-counsel, the other a pleader: the conveyancer is slow from an imperfection in his speech, and therefore shunned the bar, but extremely passionate, and impatient of contradiction: the other is as warm as he, but has a tongue so voluble, and a head so conceited, he will suffer nobody to speak but himself.

Cim. You mean old serjeant Target and counsellor Bramble: I have heard of them.

Mrs Sea. The same: shew in the gentlemen.

[*Exit Servant.*

Re-enter Servant, introducing MYRTLE *and* TOM, *disguised as* BRAMBLE *and* TARGET.

Gentlemen, this is the party concerned, Mr Cimberton; and I hope you have considered of the matter.

Tar. Yes, makam, we have agreed that it must be by indent—dent—dent—dent——

Bram. Yes, madam, Mr Serjeant and myself have agreed, as he is pleased to inform you, that it must be an indenture tripartite; and tripartite let it be, for sir Geoffry must needs be a party. Old Cimberton, in the year 1619, says, in that ancient roll in Mr Serjeant's hands, as recourse thereto being had will more at large appear——

Tar. Yes, and, by the deeds in your hands, it appears, that——

Bram. Mr Serjeant, I beg of you to make no inferences upon what is in our custody, but speak to the titles in your own deeds. I shall not shew that deed, till my client is in town.

Cim. You know best your own methods.

Mrs Sea. The single question is, Whether the entail is such, that my cousin, sir Geoffry, is necessary in this affair?

Bram. Yes, as to the lordship of Tretriplet, but not as to the messuage of Grimgribber.

Tar. I say, that Gr—gr—, that Gr—gr—, Grimgribber, Grimgribber is in us; that is to say, the remainder thereof, as well as that of Tr—Tr— Triplet.

Bram. You go upon the deed of sir Ralph, made in the middle of the last century, precedent to that in which old Cimberton made over the remainder, and made it pass to the heirs general, by which your client comes in; and I question whether the remainder even of Tretriplet is in him——but we are willing to wave that, and give him a valuable consideration. But we shall not purchase what is in us for ever, as Grimgribber is, at the rate as we guard against the contingent of Mr Cimberton having no son. Then we know sir Geoffrey is the first of the collateral male line in this family——yet——

Tar. Sir, Gr——gr——ber is—

Bram. I apprehend you very well, and your argument might be of force, and we would be inclined to hear that in all its parts—but, sir, I see very plainly what you are going into—I tell you it is as probable a contingent, that sir Geoffry may die before Mr Cimberton, as that he may outlive him.

Tar. Sir, we are not ripe for that yet, but I must say—

Bram. Sir, I allow you the whole extent of that argument, but that will go no farther than as to the claimants under old Cimberton. I am of opinion, that, according to the instructions of sir Ralph, he could not dock the entail, and then create a new estate for the heirs in general.

Tar. Sir, I have no patience to be told, that when Gr—gr—ber——

Bram. I will allow it you, Mr Serjeant; but there must be the words, heirs for ever, to make such an estate as you pretend.

Cim. I must be impartial, though you are counsel for my side of the question. Were it not that you are so good as to allow him what he has not said, I should think it very hard you should answer him without hearing him. But, gentlemen, I believe you have both considered this matter, and are firm in your different opinions; 'twere better, therefore, you proceeded according to the particular sense of each of you, and give your thoughts distinctly in writing——And, do you see, sirs, pray let me have a copy of what you say in English.

Bram. Why, what is all we have been saying? In English! Oh! but I forgot myself; you're a wit. But, however, to please you, sir, you shall have it in as plain terms as the law will admit of.

Cim. But I will have it, sir, without delay.

Bram. That, sir, the law will not admit of; the courts are sitting at Westminster, and I am this moment obliged to be at every one of them; and 'twould be wrong if I should not be in the hall to attend one of them at least; the rest would take it ill else:—therefore, I must leave what I have said to Mr Serjeant's consideration, and I will digest his arguments on my part, and you shall hear from me again, sir.

[*Exit* BRAMBLE.

Tar. Agreed, agreed.

Cim. Mr Bramble is very quick—he parted a little abruptly.

Tar. He could not bear my argument; I pinched him to the quick about that Gr—gr—ber.

Mrs Sea. I saw that, for he durst not so much as hear you. I shall send to you, Mr Serjeant, as soon as sir Geoffry comes to town; and then, I hope, all may be adjusted.

Tar. I shall be at my chambers at my usual hours. [*Exit* TAR.

Cim. Madam, if you please, I'll now attend you to the tea-table, where I shall hear from your ladyship reason and good sense, after all this law and gibberish.

Mrs Sea. 'Tis a wonderful thing, sir, that men of their profession do not study to talk the substance of what they have to say in the language of the rest of the world; sure they'd find their account in it.

Cim. They might perhaps, madam, with people of your good sense; but, with the generality, 'twould never do: the vulgar would have no respect for truth and knowledge, if they were exposed to naked view.

Truth is too simple, of all arts bereaved;
Since the world will—why let it be deceived.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—BEVIL *junior's lodgings.*

BEVIL *jun. with a letter in his hand, followed by* TOM.

Tom. UPON my life, sir, I know nothing of the matter: I never opened my lips to Mr Myrtle about any thing of your letter to madam Lucinda.

Bev. What's the fool in such a fright for? I don't suppose you did: what I would know is, whether Mr Myrtle shewed any suspicion, or asked you any questions, to lead you to say casually that you had carried any such letter for me this morning?

Tom. Why, sir, if he did ask me any questions, how could I help it?

Bev. I don't say you could, oaf! I am not questioning you about him. What did he say to you?

Tom. Why, sir, when I came to his chambers to be dressed for the lawyer's part your honour was pleased to put me upon, he asked me if I had been to Mr Sealand's this morning?——So I told him, sir, I often went thither——because, sir, if I had not said that, he might have thought there was something more in my going now, than at another time.

Bev. Very well. The fellow's caution, I find, has given him this jealousy. [*Aside.*] Did he ask you no other questions?

Tom. Yes, sir—now I remember, as we came away in the hackney-coach from Mr Sealand's, Tom, says he, as I came in to your master this morning, he bade you go for an answer to a letter he had sent; pray, did you bring him any? says he—Ah! says I, sir, your honour is pleased to joke with me; you have a mind to know whether I can keep a secret or no.

Bev. And so, by shewing him you could, you told him you had one.

Tom. Sir—— [*Confusedly.*

Bev. What mean actions does jealousy make a man stoop to! how poorly has he used art with a servant to make him betray his master! Well, and when did he give you this letter for me?

Tom. Sir, he writ it before he pulled off his lawyer's gown at his own chambers.

Bev. Very well; and what did he say when you brought him my answer to it?

Tom. He looked a little out of humour, sir, and said it was very well.

Bev. I knew he would be grave upon't—— Wait without.

Tom. Hum! 'gad I don't like this: I am afraid we are in the wrong box here—— [*Exit* TOM.

Bev. I put on a serenity while my fellow was present, but I have never been more thoroughly disturbed. This hot man, to write me a challenge on supposed antecedent dealing, when I professed myself his friend!—I can live contented without glory, but I cannot suffer shame. What's to be done? But first, let me consider Lucinda's letter again. [*Reads.*

'Sir, I hope it is consistent with the laws a 'woman ought to impose upon herself, to ac- 'knowledge, that your manner of declining a 'treaty of marriage in our family, and desiring 'the refusal may come from me, has something 'more engaging in it than the courtship of him, 'who, I fear, will fall to my lot, except your 'friend exerts himself for our common safety 'and happiness. I have reasons for desiring Mr 'Myrtle may not know of this letter till hereaf- 'ter, and am your most obliged humble servant,

LUCINDA SEALAND.'

Well, but the postscript. [*Reads.*

'I won't, upon second thoughts, hide any thing 'from you: but my reason for concealing this is, 'that Mr Myrtle has a jealousy in his temper 'which gives me some terrors; but my esteem 'for him inclines me to hope that only an ill ef- 'fect which sometimes accompanies a tender 'love, and what may be cured by a careful and 'unblameable conduct.'

Thus has this lady made me her friend and confidant, and put herself in a kind under my protection. I cannot tell him immediately the purport of this letter, except I could cure him of the violent and untractable passion of jealousy, and so serve him and her, by disobeying her in the article of secrecy, more than I should by

complying with her directions. But then, this duelling, which custom has imposed upon every man who would live with reputation and honour in the world—how must I preserve myself from imputations there? he'll, forsooth, call it or think it fear, if I explain without fighting—But his letter—I'll read it again——

'Sir, You have used me basely, in correspond-
'ing and carrying on a treaty where you told me
'you were indifferent. I have changed my sword
'since I saw you, which advertisement I thought
'proper to send you against the next meeting be-
'tween you and the injured

'CHARLES MYRTLE.'

Enter TOM.

Tom. Mr Myrtle, sir: would your honour please to see him?

Bev. Why, you stupid creature, let Mr Myrtle wait at my lodgings! Shew him up. [*Exit* TOM.] Well, I am resolved upon my carriage to him—he is in love, and, in every circumstance of life, a little distrustful, which I must allow for. But here he is.

Enter TOM, *introducing* MYRTLE.

Sir, I am extremely obliged to you for this honour———But, sir, you, with your very discerning face, leave the room. [*Exit* TOM.] Well, Mr Myrtle, your commands with me?

Myr. The time, the place, our long acquaintance, and many other circumstances which affect me on this occasion, oblige me, without farther ceremony or conference, to desire you would not only, as you already have, acknowledge the receipt of my letter, but also comply with the request in it. I must have farther notice taken of my message than these half lines—I have yours—I shall be at home——

Bev. Sir, I own I have received a letter from you in a very unusual style; but, as I design every thing in this matter shall be your own action, your own seeking, I shall understand nothing but what you are pleased to confirm face to face; and I have already forgot the contents of your epistle.

Myr. This cool manner is very agreeable to the abuse you have already made of my simplicity and frankness; and I see your moderation tends to your own advantage, and not mine; to your own safety, not consideration of your friend.

Bev. My own safety, Mr Myrtle!

Myr. Your own safety, Mr Bevil.

Bev. Look you, Mr Myrtle, there's no disguising that; I understand what you would be at: but, sir, you know I have often dared to disapprove of the decisions a tyrant custom has introduced, to the breach of all laws, both divine and human.

Myr. Mr Bevil, Mr Bevil! it would be a good first principle, in those who have so tender a conscience that way, to have as much abhorrence of doing injuries as———.

Bev. As what?

Myr. As fear of answering for them.

Bev. As fear of answering for them! but that apprehension is just or blameable, according to the object of that fear.—I have often told you, in confidence of heart, I abhorred the daring to offend the Author of life, and rushing into his presence. I say, by the very same act, to commit the crime against him, and immediately to urge on to his tribunal.

Myr. Mr Bevil, I must tell you, this coolness, this gravity, this shew of conscience, shall never cheat me of my mistress. You have, indeed, the best excuse for life, the hopes of possessing Lucinda; but consider, sir, I have as much reason to be weary of it, if I am to lose her; and my first attempt to recover her, shall be to let her see the dauntless man who is to be her guardian and protector.

Bev. Sir, shew me but the least glimpse of argument, that I am authorised, by my own hand, to vindicate any lawless insult of this nature, and I will shew thee, to chastise thee hardly deserves the name of courage. Slight, inconsiderate man! There is, Mr Myrtle, no such terror in quick anger, and you shall, you know not why, be cool, as you have, you know not why, been warm.

Myr. Is the woman one loves so little an occasion of anger? You, perhaps, who know not what it is to love, who have your ready, your commodious, your foreign trinket, for your loose hours, and, from your fortune, your specious outward carriage, and other lucky circumstances, as easy a way to the possession of a woman of honour; you know nothing of what it is to be alarmed, to be distracted, with anxiety and terror of losing more than life. Your marriage, happy man! goes on like common business; and, in the interim, you have your rambling captive, your Indian princess, for your soft moments of dalliance; your convenient, your ready, Indiana.

Bev. You have touched me beyond the patience of a man, and I'm excusable, in the guard of innocence, or from the infirmity of human nature, which can bear no more, to accept your invitation, and observe your letter.—Sir, I'll attend you.

Enter TOM.

Tom. Did you call, sir? I thought you did; I heard you speak loud.

Bev. Yes; go call a coach.

Tom. Sir—Master—Mr Myrtle—Friends——Gentlemen—what d'ye mean? I'm but a servant, or———

Bev. Call a coach. [*Exit* TOM.

[*A long pause, walking sullenly by each other.*

[*Aside.*] Shall I; though provoked to the uttermost, recover myself at the entrance of a third

person, and that my servant, too, and not have respect enough to all I have ever been receiving from infancy, the obligation to the best of fathers, to an unhappy virgin, too, whose life depends on mine? [*Shutting the door.*

[*To* MYRTLE.] I have, thank Heaven, time to recollect myself, and shall not, for fear of what such a rash man as you think of me, keep longer unexplained the false appearances under which your infirmity of temper makes you suffer, when, perhaps, too much regard to a false point of honour makes me prolong that suffering.

Myr. I am sure Mr Bevil cannot doubt but I had rather have satisfaction from his innocence than his sword.

Bev. Why, then, would you ask it first that way?

Myr. Consider; you kept your temper yourself no longer than till I spoke to the disadvantage of her you loved.

Bev. True. But let me tell you, I have saved you from the most exquisite distress, even though you had succeeded in the dispute. I know you so well, that, I am sure, to have found this letter about a man you had killed, would have been worse than death to yourself. Read it.—When he is thoroughly mortified, and shame has got the better of jealousy, he will deserve to be assisted towards obtaining Lucinda. [*Aside.*

Myr. With what a superiority has he turned the injury upon me as the aggressor! I begin to fear I have been too far transported—'A treachery in our family!' is not that saying too much? I shall relapse—— But I find (on the postscript) 'something like jealousy'—With what face can I see my benefactor, my advocate, whom I have treated like a betrayer?—Oh, Bevil! with what words shall I———

Bev. There needs none; to convince is much more than to conquer.

Myr. But can you———

Bev. You have overpaid the inquietude you gave me in the change I see in you towards me. Alas! what machines are we! thy face is altered to that of another man, to that of my companion, my friend.

Myr. That I could be such a precipitate wretch!

Bev. Pray, no more.

Myr. Let me reflect, how many friends have died by the hands of friends for want of temper; and you must give me leave to say, again and again, how much I am beholden to that superior spirit you have subdued me with.—What had become of one of us, or perhaps both, had you been as weak as I was, and as incapable of reason?

Bev. I congratulate to us both the escape from ourselves, and hope the memory of it will make us dearer friends than ever.

Myr. Dear Bevil! your friendly conduct has convinced me, that there is nothing manly but what is conducted by reason, and agreeable to the practice of virtue and justice; and yet, how many have been sacrificed to that idol, the unreasonable opinion of men! Nay, they are so ridiculous in it, that they often use their swords against each other with dissembled anger and real fear:

Betrayed by honour, and compelled by shame,
They hazard being to preserve a name,
Nor dare inquire into the dread mistake,
Till, plunged in sad eternity, they wake!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*St James's Park.*

Enter SIR JOHN BEVIL, *and* MR SEALAND.

Sir J. Bev. Give me leave, however, Mr Scaland, as we are upon a treaty for uniting our families, to mention only the business of an ancient house.—Genealogy and descent are to be of some consideration in an affair of this sort———

Mr Sea. Genealogy and descent! Sir, there has been in our family a very large one. There was Gulfrid the father of Edward, the father of Ptolemy, the father of Crassus, the father of earl Richard, the father of Henry the marquis, the father of duke John———

Sir J. Bev. What! do you rave, Mr Scaland? all these great names in your family?

Mr Sea. These! yes, sir—I have heard my father name them all, and more.

Sir J. Bev. Ay, sir!—and did he say they were all in your family?

Mr Sea. Yes, sir: he kept them all—he was the greatest cocker in England——He said duke John won many battles, but never lost him one.

Sir J. Bev. Oh, sir, your servant! you are laughing at my laying any stress upon descent. But I must tell you, sir, I never knew any one, but he that wanted that advantage, turn it into ridicule.

Mr Sea. And I never knew any, who had many better advantages, put that into his account. But, Sir John, value yourself as you please upon your ancient house, I am to talk freely of every thing you are pleased to put into your bill of rates on this occasion.—Yet, sir, I have made no objections to your son's family—it is his morals that I doubt.

Sir J. Bev. Sir, I can't help saying, that what might injure a citizen's credit, may be no stain to a gentleman's honour.

Mr Sea. Sir John, the honour of a gentleman is liable to be tainted by as small a matter as the credit of a trader: We are talking of a marriage; and, in such a case, the father of a young woman will not think it an addition to the honour or credit of her lover, that he is a keeper——

Sir J. Bev. Mr Scaland, don't take upon you to spoil my son's marriage with any woman else.

Mr Sea. Sir John, let him apply to any woman else, and have as many mistresses as he pleases.———

Sir J. Bev. My son, sir, is a discreet and sober gentleman.

Mr Sea. Sir, I never saw a man that wenched soberly and discreetly that ever left it off—the decency observed in the practice hides, from the sinner even, the iniquity of it: they pursue it, not that their appetites hurry them away, but, I warrant you, because 'tis their opinion they may do it.

Sir J. Bev. Were what you suspect a truth—do you design to keep your daughter a virgin, till you find a man unblemished that way?

Mr Sea. Sir, as much a cit as you take me for—I know the town and the world—and give me leave to say, that we merchants are a species of gentry that have grown into the world this last century, and are as honourable, and almost as useful, as you landed folks, that have always thought yourselves so much above us; for your trading, forsooth! is extended no farther than a load of hay, or a fat ox—You are pleasant people, indeed! because you are generally bred up to be lazy, therefore, I warrant you, industry is dishonourable!

Sir J. Bev. Be not offended, sir; let us go back to our point.

Mr Sea. Oh! not at all offended—but I don't love to leave any part of the account unclosed—Look you, sir John, comparisons are odious, and more particularly so on occasions of this kind, when we are projecting races that are to be made out of both sides of the comparisons.

Sir J. Bev. But my son, sir, is, in the eye of the world, a gentleman of merit.

Mr Sea. I own to you I think him so—But, sir John, I am a man exercised and experienced in chances and disasters; I lost in my earlier years a very fine wife, and, with her, a poor little infant: this makes me perhaps over cautious to preserve the second bounty of Providence to me, and be as careful as I can of this child.—You'll pardon me; my poor girl, sir, is as valuable to me as your boasted son to you.

Sir J. Bev. Why, that's one very good reason, Mr Sealand, why I wish my son had her.

Mr Sea. There is nothing but this strange lady here, this incognita, that can be objected to him. Here and there a man falls in love with an artful creature, and gives up all the motives of life to that one passion.

Sir J. Bev. A man of my son's understanding cannot be supposed to be one of them.

Mr Sea. Very wise men have been so enslaved; and when a man marries with one of them upon his hands, whether moved from the demand of the world, or slighter reasons, such a husband soils with his wife for a month perhaps—then good b'w'ye, madam——the show's over——Ah! John Dryden points out such a husband to a hair, where he says,

And while abroad so prodigal the dolt is,
Poor spouse at home as ragged as a colt is.

Now, in plain terms, sir, I shall not care to have my poor girl turned a grazing, and that must be the case when—

Sir J. Bev. But pray consider, sir, my son—

Mr Sea. Look you, sir, I'll make the matter short. This unknown lady, as I told you, is all the objection I have to him: but one way or other he is or has been certainly engaged to her—I am therefore resolved this very afternoon to visit her: now, from her behaviour or appearance, I shall soon be let into what I may fear or hope for.

Sir J. Bev. Sir, I am very confident there can be nothing inquired into, relating to my son, that will not, upon being understood, turn to his advantage.

Mr Sea. I hope that as sincerely as you believe it—Sir John Bevil, when I am satisfied in this great point, if your son's conduct answers the character you give him, I shall wish your alliance more than that of any gentleman in Great Britain; and so your servant. [*Exit* SEALAND.

Sir J. Bev. He is gone in a way but barely civil; but his great wealth, and the merit of his only child, the heiress of it, are not to be lost for a little peevishness—

Enter HUMPHREY.

Oh, Humphrey, you are come in a seasonable minute! I want to talk to thee, and to tell thee, that my head and heart are on the rack about my son.

Humph. Sir, you may trust his discretion; I am sure you may.

Sir J. Bev. Why, I do believe I may, and yet I'm in a thousand fears when I lay this vast wealth before me. When I consider his prepossessions, either generous to a folly in an honourable love, or abandoned past redemption in a vicious one, and from the one or the other his insensibility to the fairest prospect towards doubling our estate—a father, who knows how useful wealth is, and how necessary even to those who despise it, I say a father, Humphrey, a father cannot bear it.

Humph. Be not transported, sir; you will grow incapable of taking any resolution in your perplexity.

Sir J. Bev. Yes, as angry as I am with him, I would not have him surprized in any thing.—This mercantile rough man may go grossly into the examination of this matter, and talk to the gentlewoman so as to————

Humph. No, I hope not in an abrupt manner.

Sir J. Bev. No, I hope not! Why, dost thou know any thing of her, or of him, or of any thing of it, or all of it?

Humph. My dear master! I know so much, that I told him this very day, you had reason to be secretly out of humour about her.

Sir J. Bev. Did you go so far? Well, what said he to that?

Humph. His words were, looking upon me steadfastly, Humphrey, says he, that woman is a woman of honour.

Sir J. Bev. How! do you think he is married to her, or intends to marry her?

Humph. I can say nothing to the latter—but he says he can marry no one without your consent, while you are living.

Sir J. Bev. If he said so much, I know he scorns to break his word with me.

Humph. I am sure of that.

Sir J. Bev. You are sure of that?—Well, that's some comfort—then I have nothing to do but to see the bottom of this matter during this present ruffle.—Oh, Humphrey———

Humph. You are not ill, I hope, sir?

Sir J. Bev. Yes, a man is very ill that is in a very ill humour. To be a father, is to be in care for one, whom you oftener disoblige than please by that very care.—Oh! that sons could know the duty to a father before themselves are fathers! —But perhaps you'll say, now, that I am one of the happiest fathers in the world; but I assure you, that of the very happiest is not a condition to be envied.

Humph. Sir, your pain arises not from the thing itself, but your particular sense of it.—— You are over fond; nay, give me leave to say, you are unjustly apprehensive from your fondness. My master Bevil never disobliged you, and he will, I know he will, do every thing you ought to expect.

Sir J. Bev. He won't take all this money with this girl—For aught I know, he will, forsooth, have so much moderation, as to think he ought not to force his liking for any consideration.

Humph. He is to marry her, not you; he is to live with her, not you, sir.

Sir J. Bev. I know not what to think; but I know nothing can be more miserable than to be in this doubt—Follow me; I must come to some resolution. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. BEVIL *junior's lodgings.*

Enter TOM *and* PHILLIS.

Tom. Well, madam, if you must speak with Mr Myrtle, you shall; he is now with my master in the library.

Phil. But you must leave me alone with him, for he can't make me a present, nor I so handsomely take any thing from him, before you; it would not be decent.

Tom. It will be very decent indeed for me to retire, and leave my mistress with another man!

Phil. He is a gentleman, and will treat one properly.

Tom. I believe so—but, however, I won't be far off, and therefore will venture to trust you. I'll call him to you. [*Exit* TOM.

Phil. What a deal of pother and spatter here is between my mistress and Mr Myrtle, from mere punctilio! I could, any hour of the day, get her to her lover, and would do it—but she, forsooth, will allow no plot to get him; but if he can come to her, I know she would be glad of it; I must therefore do her an acceptable violence, and surprise her into his arms. I am sure I go by the best rule imaginable: if she were my maid, I should think her the best servant in the world for doing so by me.

Enter MYRTLE *and* TOM.

Oh, sir! you and Mr Bevil are fine gentlemen, to let a lady remain under such difficulties as my poor mistress, and not attempt to set her at liberty, or release her from the danger of being instantly married to Cimberton.

Myr. Tom has been telling—But, what is to be done?

Phil. What is to be done, when a man can't come at his mistress!—why, can't you fire our house, or the next house to us, to make us run out, and you take us?

Myr. How, Mrs Phillis———

Phil. Ay—let me see that rogue deny to fire a house, make a riot, or any other little thing, when there were no other way to come at me.

Tom. I am obliged to you, madam.

Phil. Why, don't we hear every day of people's hanging themselves for love, and won't they venture the hazard of being hanged for love?—Oh! were I a man—

Myr. What manly thing would you have me undertake, according to your ladyship's notion of a man?

Phil. Only be, at once, what one time or other you may be, and wish to be, and must be.

Myr. Dear girl! talk plainly to me, and consider I, in my condition, can't be in very good humour—You say, to be at once what I must be?

Phil. Ay, ay———I mean no more than to be an old man; I saw you do it very well at the masquerade. In a word, old sir Geoffry Cimberton is every hour expected in town, to join in the deeds and settlements for marrying Mr Cimberton———He is half blind, half lame, half deaf, half dumb; though, as to his passions and desires, he is as warm and ridiculous as when in the heat of youth.

Tom. Come, to the business, and don't keep the gentleman in suspense for the pleasure of being courted, as you serve me.

Phil. I saw you, at the masquerade, act such a one to perfection: go, and put on that very habit, and come to our house as sir Geoffry: there is not one there but myself knows his person; I was born in the parish where he is lord of the manor; I have seen him often and often at church in the country. Do not hesitate, but come thither; they will think you bring a certain security against Mr Myrtle, and you bring Mr Myrtle. Leave the rest to me; I leave this with

you, and expect———They don't, I told you, know you; they think you out of town, which you had as good be for ever, if you lose this opportunity.——I must be gone; I know I am wanted at home

Myr. My dear Phillis!

[*Catches and kisses her, and gives her money.*

Phil. Oh fy! my kisses are not my own; you have committed violence: but I'll carry them to the right owner. [Tom *kisses her.*] Come, see me down stairs, [*To* Tom.] and leave the lover to think of his last game for the prize.

[*Exeunt* Tom *and* Phillis.

Myr. I think I will instantly attempt this wild expedient——the extravagance of it will make me less suspected, and it will give me opportunity to assert my own right to Lucinda, without whom I cannot live. But I am so mortified at this conduct of mine towards poor Bevil! he must think meanly of me.———I know not how to reassume myself, and be in spirits enough for such an adventure as this———yet I must attempt it, if it be only to be near Lucinda, under her present perplexities; and sure——

The next delight to transport with the fair,
Is to relieve her in her hours of care. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—Sealand's *house.*

Enter Phillis, *with lights before* Myrtle, *disguised like old* Sir Geoffry, *supported by* Mrs Sealand, Lucinda, *and* Cimberton.

Mrs Sea. Now I have seen you thus far, sir Geoffry, will you excuse me a moment, while I give my necessary orders for your accommodation? [*Exit* Mrs Sealand.

Myr. I have not seen you, cousin Cimberton, since you were ten years old; and as it is incumbent on you to keep up your name and family, I shall, upon very reasonable terms, join with you in a settlement to that purpose, though I must tell you, cousin, this is the first merchant that has married into our house.

Luc. Deuce on them! am I a merchant because my father is? [*Aside.*

Myr. But is he directly a trader at this time?

Cim. There's no hiding the disgrace, sir; he trades to all parts of the world.

Myr. We never had one of our family before, who descended from persons that did any thing.

Cim. Sir, since it is a girl that they have, I am, for the honour of my family, willing to take it in again, and to sink it into our name, and no harm done.

Myr. 'Tis prudently and generously resolved—Is this the young thing?

Cim. Yes, sir.

Phil. Good madam! Don't be out of humour, but let them run to the utmost of their extravagance——Hear them out.

Myr. Cannot I see her nearer? My eyes are but weak.

Phil. Beside, I am sure the uncle has something worth your notice. I'll take care to get off the young one, and leave you to observe what may be wrought out of the old one, for your good. [*Exit.*

Cim. Madam, this old gentleman, your great uncle, desires to be introduced to you, and to see you nearer——Approach, sir.

Myr. By your leave, young lady—[*Puts on spectacles.*]—Cousin Cimberton, she has exactly that sort of neck and bosom, for which my sister Gertrude was so much admired in the year sixty-one, before the French dresses first discovered any thing in women below the chin.

Luc. What a very odd situation am I in! Though I cannot but be diverted at the extravagance of their humours, equally unsuitable to their age. Chin, quotha! I don't believe my passionate lover there, knows whether I have one or not. Ha, ha!

Cim. Madam, I would not willingly offend, but I have a better glass——

[*Pulls out a large one.*

Enter Phillis *to* Cimberton.

Phil. Sir, my lady desires to shew the apartment to you, that she intends for sir Geoffrey.

Cim. Well, sir, by that time you have sufficiently gazed and sunned yourself in the beauties of my spouse, there, I will wait on you again.

[*Exeunt* Cim. *and* Phil.

Myr. Were it not, madam, that I might be troublesome, there is something of importance, though we are alone, which I would say more safe from being heard.

Luc. There is something in this old fellow, methinks, that raises my curiosity.

Myr. To be free, madam, I as heartily contemn this kinsman of mine as you do, and am sorry to see so much beauty and merit devoted by your parents to so insensible a possessor.

Luc. Surprising! I hope, then, sir, you will not contribute to the wrong you are so generous to pity, whatever may be the interest of your family.

Myr. This hand of mine shall never be employed to sign any thing against your good and happiness.

Luc. I am sorry, sir, it is not in my power to make you proper acknowledgments; but there is a gentleman in the world, whose gratitude will, I'm sure, be worthy of the favour.

Myr. All the thanks I desire, madam, are in your power to give.

Luc. Name them, and command them.

Myr. Only, madam, that the first time you are alone with your lover, you will with open arms receive him.

Luc. As willingly as heart could wish it.

Myr. Thus, then, he claims your promise.—Oh, Lucinda!

Luc. Oh, a cheat, a cheat, a cheat!

Myr. Hush! 'tis I, 'tis I, your lover! Myrtle himself, madam!

Luc. Oh, bless me! what rashness and folly to surprize me so! But hush—my mother——

Enter MRS SEALAND, CIMBERTON, *and* PHILLIS.

Mrs Sea. How now! What's the matter?

Luc. Oh, madam! As soon as you left the room, my uncle fell into a sudden fit, and—and—so I cried out for help to support him, and conduct him to his chamber.

Mrs Sea. That was kindly done. Alas, sir! how do you find yourself?

Myr. Never was taken in so odd a way in my life——Pray lead me——Oh, I was talking here—Pray carry me—to my cousin Cimberton's young lady——

Mrs Sea. [*Aside.*]—My cousin Cimberton's young lady! How zealous he is, even in his extremity, for the match! A right Cimberton!

[CIMBERTON *and* LUCINDA *lead him, as one in pain.*

Cim. Pox, uncle, you will pull my ear off!

Luc. Pray, uncle, you will squeeze me to death!

Mrs Sea. No matter, no matter——he knows not what he does. Come, sir, shall I help you out?

Myr. By no means: I'll trouble nobody but my young cousins here.

[CIM. *and* LUC. *lead him off.*

Phil. But pray, madam, does your ladyship intend that Mr Cimberton shall really marry my young mistress at last? I don't think he likes her.

Mrs Sea. That's not material; men of his speculation are above desires. But, be it as it may, now I have given old sir Geoffrey the trouble of coming up to sign and seal, with what countenance can I be off?

Phil. As well as with twenty others, madam. It is the glory and honour of a great fortune to live in continual treaties, and still to break off; it looks great, madam.

Mrs Sea. True, Phillis——Yet to return our blood again into the Cimbertons, is an honour not to be rejected. But, were not you saying that sir John Bevil's creature, Humphrey, has been with Mr Sealand?

Phil. Yes, madam, I overheard them agree, that Mr Sealand should go himself, and visit this unknown lady, that Mr Bevil is so great with; and, if he found nothing there to fright him, that Mr Bevil should still marry my young mistress.

Mrs Sea. How! Nay, then, he shall find she is my daughter as well as his——I'll follow him this instant, and take the whole family along with me. The disputed power of disposing of my own daughter, shall be at an end this very night. I'll live no longer in anxiety, for a little hussy, that hurts my appearance, wherever I carry her, and for whose sake I seem to be not at all regarded, and that in the best of my days.

Phil. Indeed, madam, if she were married, your ladyship might very well be taken for Mr Sealand's daughter.

Mrs Sea. Nay, when the chit has not been with me, I've heard the men say as much—I'll no longer cut off the greatest pleasure of a woman's life (the shining in assemblies) by her forward anticipation of the respect that's due to her superior—She shall down to Cimberton-hall——she shall—she shall.

Phil. I hope, madam, I shall stay with your ladyship?

Mrs Sea. Thou shalt, Phillis, and I'll place thee then more about me—But order chairs immediately——I'll be gone this minute. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Charing-Cross.*

Enter MR SEALAND *and* HUMPHREY.

Mr Sea. I am very glad, Mr Humphrey, that you agree with me, that it is for our common good I should look thoroughly into this matter.

Humph. I am, indeed, of that opinion; for there is no artifice, nothing concealed in our family, which ought in justice to be known. I need not desire you, sir, to treat the lady with care and respect.

Mr Sea. Mr Humphrey—I shall not be rude, though I design to be a little abrupt, and come into the matter at once, to see how she will bear up on a surprize——

Humph. That's the door, sir; I wish you success.—[*While* HUMPHREY *speaks,* SEALAND *consults his table-book.*]—I am less concerned what happens there, because I hear Mr Myrtle is as well lodged as old sir Geoffrey; so, I am willing to let this gentleman employ himself here, to give them time at home; for I am sure it is necessary for the quiet of our family, that Lucinda were disposed of out of it, since Mr Bevil's inclination is so much otherwise engaged. [*Exit* HUMPHREY.

Mr Sea. I think this is the door.—[*Knocks.*]—I'll carry this matter with an air of authority, to inquire, though I make an errand to begin discourse. [*Knocks again.*

Enter a Footboy.

So, young man, is your lady within?

Boy. Alack, sir! I am but a country boy——I don't know whether she is or noa; but an you'll stay a bit, I'll goa and ask the gentlewoman that's with her.

Mr Sea. Why, sirrah, though you are a country boy, you can see, cannot you? You know whether she is at home when you see her, don't you?

Boy. Nay, nay; I'm not such a country lad, neither, master, to think she is at home because I see her; I have been in town but a month, and I lost one place already for believing my own eyes.

Mr Sea. Why, sirrah, have you learnt to lie already?

Boy. Ah, master! things that are lies in the country, are not lies at London—I begin to know my business a little better than so—but, an you please to walk in, I'll call a gentlewoman to you that can tell you for certain—She can make bold to ask my lady herself.

Mr Sea. Oh, then she is within, I find, though you dare not say so.

Boy. Nay, nay, that's neither here nor there; what's matter whether she is within or no, if she has not a mind to see any body?

Mr Sea. I cannot tell, sirrah, whether you are arch or simple; but, however, get me a direct answer, and here's a shilling for you.

Boy. Will you please to walk in; I'll see what I can do for you.

Mr Sea. I see you will be fit for your business in time, child; but I expect to meet with nothing but extraordinaries in such a house.

Boy. Such a house, sir! You han't seen it yet. Pray walk in.

Mr Sea. Sir, I'll wait upon you.

SCENE II.—INDIANA'S *house.*

Enter ISABELLA *and Boy.*

Isa. What anxiety do I feel for this poor creature! What will be the end of her? Such a languishing, unreserved passion for a man, that, at last, must certainly leave or ruin her, and, perhaps, both! then, the aggravation of the distress is, that she dare not believe he will—not but I must own, if they are both what they would seem, they are made for one another, as much as Adam and Eve were; for there is no other of their kind, but themselves. So, Daniel, what news with you?

Boy. Madam, there's a gentleman below would speak with my lady.

Isa. Sirrah, don't you know Mr Bevil yet?

Boy. Madam, 'tis not the gentleman who comes every day and asks for you, and won't go in till he knows whether you are with her or no.

Isa. Ha! that's a particular I did not know before. Well, be it who it will, let him come up to me.

[*Exit Boy, and re-enters with* MR SEALAND. ISABELLA *looks amazed.*

Mr Sea. Madam, I cannot blame your being a little surprised to see a perfect stranger make you a visit, and——

Isa. I am indeed surprized——I see he does not know me. [*Aside.*

Mr Sea. You are very prettily lodged here, madam; in troth, you seem to have every thing in plenty——a thousand a-year, I warrant you, upon this pretty nest of rooms, and the dainty one within them.

[*Aside, and looking about.*

Isa. [*Apart.*] Twenty years, it seems, have less effect in the alteration of a man of thirty, than of a girl of fourteen—he's almost still the same: but, alas! I find by other men as well as himself I am not what I was. As soon as he spoke, I was convinced 'twas he. How shall I contain my surprise and satisfaction! He must not know me yet.

Mr Sea. Madam, I hope I don't give you any disturbance? but there is a young lady here, with whom I have a particular business to discourse, and I hope she will admit me to that favour.

Isa. Why, sir, have you had any notice concerning her? I wonder who could give it you.

Mr Sea. That, madam, is fit only to be communicated to herself.

Isa. Well, sir, you shall see her—I find he knows nothing yet, nor shall, for me: I am resolved I will observe this interlude, this sport of nature and fortune. You shall see her presently, sir; for now I am as a mother, and will trust her with you. [*Exit.*

Mr Sea. As a mother! right; that's the old phrase for one of these commode ladies, who lend out beauty for hire to young gentlemen that have pressing occasions. But here comes the precious lady herself: in troth, a very sightly woman!

Enter INDIANA.

Ind. I am told, sir, you have some affair that requires your speaking with me?

Mr Sea. Yes, madam. There came to my hands a bill, drawn by Mr Bevil, which is payable to-morrow, and he, in the intercourse of business, sent it to me, who have cash of his, and desired me to send a servant with it; but I have made bold to bring you the money myself.

Ind. Sir, was that necessary?

Mr Sea. No, madam; but, to be free with you, the fame of your beauty, and the regard which Mr Bevil is a little too well known to have for you, excited my curiosity.

Ind. Too well known to have for me! Your sober appearance, sir, which my friend described, made me to expect no rudeness or absurdity at least. Who's there? Sir, if you pay the money to a servant, 'twill be as well.

Mr Sea. Pray, madam, be not offended; I came hither on an innocent, nay, a virtuous design; and if you will have patience to hear me, it may be as useful to you, as you are in friend-

ship with Mr Bevil, as to my only daughter, whom I was this day disposing of.

Ind. You make me hope, sir, I have mistaken you: I am composed again: be free, say on—what I am afraid to hear. [*Aside.*

Mr Sea. I feared, indeed, an unwarranted passion here, but I did not think it was an abuse of so worthy an object, so accomplished a lady, as your sense and mien bespeak—but the youth of our age care not what merit and virtue they bring to shame, so they gratify——

Ind. Sir, you are going into very great errors—but as you are pleased to say you see something in me that has changed at least the colour of your suspicions, so has your appearance altered mine, and made me earnestly attentive to what has any way concerned you, to inquire into my affairs and character.

Mr Sea. How sensibly—with what an air she talks!

Ind. Good sir, be seated—and tell me tenderly—keep all your suspicions concerning me alive, that you may in a proper and prepared way—acquaint me why the care of your daughter obliges a person of your seeming worth and fortune to be thus inquisitive about a wretched, helpless, friendless—[*Weeping.*] But I beg your pardon——though I am an orphan, your child is not, and your concern for her, it seems, has brought you hither——I'll be composed—pray, go on, sir.

Mr Sea. How could Mr Bevil be such a monster to injure such a woman?

Ind. No, sir, you wrong him; he has not injured me—my support is from his bounty.

Mr Sea. Bounty! when gluttons give high prices for delicacies, they are prodigious bountiful!

Ind. Still, still you will persist in that error—but my own fears tell me all. You are the gentleman, I suppose, for whose happy daughter he is designed a husband by his good father, and he has, perhaps, consented to the overture, and is to be, perhaps, this night a bridegroom.

Mr Sea. I own he was intended such; but, madam, on your account, I am determined to defer my daughter's marriage till I am satisfied, from your own mouth, of what nature are the obligations you are under to him.

Ind. His actions, sir, his eyes, have only made me think he designed to make me the partner of his heart. The goodness and gentleness of his demeanour made me misinterpret all; 'twas my own hope, my own passion, that deluded me;—he never made one amorous advance to me; his large heart and bestowing hand have only helped the miserable: nor know I why, but from his mere delight in virtue, that I have been his care, the object on which to indulge and please himself with pouring favours.

Mr Sea. Madam, I know not why it is, but I, as well as you, am, methinks, afraid of entering into the matter I came about; but 'tis the same thing as if we had talked ever so distinctly—he never shall have a daughter of mine.

Ind. If you say this from what you think of me, you wrong yourself and him. Let not me, miserable though I may be, do injury to my benefactor: no, sir, my treatment ought rather to reconcile you to his virtues. If to bestow without a prospect of return—if to delight in supporting what might, perhaps, be thought an object of desire, with no other view than to be her guard against those who would not be so disinterested—if these actions, sir, can in a parent's eye commend him to a daughter, give yours, sir; give her to my honest, generous Bevil! What have I to do but sigh and weep, to rave, run wild, a lunatic in chains, or, hid in darkness, mutter in distracted starts, and broken accents, my strange, strange story!

Mr Sea. Take comfort, madam.

Ind. All my comfort must be to expostulate in madness, to relieve with frenzy my despair, and, shrieking, to demand of Fate why, why was I born to such variety of sorrows?

Mr Sea. If I have been the least occasion—

Ind. No; 'twas Heaven's high will I should be such; to be plundered in my cradle, tossed on the seas, and even there, an infant captive, to lose my mother, hear but of my father—to be adopted, lose my adopter, then plunged again in worse calamities!

Mr Sea. An infant captive!

Ind. Yet, then, to find the most charming of mankind once more to set me free from what I thought the last distress, to load me with his services, his bounties, and his favours, to support my very life in a way that stole, at the same time, my very soul itself from me.

Mr Sea. And has young Bevil been this worthy man?

Ind. Yet then, again, this very man to take another, without leaving me the right, the pretence, of easing my fond heart with tears? for oh! I can't reproach him, though the same hand, that raised me to this height, now throws me down the precipice.

Mr Sea. Dear lady! oh, yet one moment's patience; my heart grows full with your affliction! but yet there's something in your story that promises relief when you least hope it.

Ind. My portion here is bitterness and sorrow.

Mr Sea. Do not think so. Pray, answer me; does Bevil know your name and family?

Ind. Alas, too well! Oh! could I be any other thing than what I am——I'll tear away all traces of my former self, my little ornaments, the remains of my first state, the hints of what I ought to have been——

[*In her disorder, she throws away her bracelet, which* SEALAND *takes up, and looks earnestly at.*]

Mr Sea. Ha! what's this? my eyes are not deceived! it is, it is the same! the very bracelet which I bequeathed my wife at our last mournful parting!

Ind. What said you, sir? your wife! Whither does my fancy carry me? what means this new felt motion at my heart? And yet again my fortune but deludes me; for if I err not, sir, your name is Sealand; but my lost father's name was——

Mr Sea. Danvers, was it not?

Ind. What new amazement! that is, indeed, my family.

Mr Sea. Know, then, when my misfortunes drove me to the Indies, for reasons too tedious now to mention, I changed my name of Danvers into Sealand.

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. If yet there wants an explanation of your wonder, examine well this face—yours, sir, I well remember—Gaze on, and read in me your sister Isabella.

Mr Sea. My sister!

Isa. But here's a claim more tender yet—your Indiana, sir, your long-lost daughter.

Mr Sea. Oh, my child, my child!

Ind. All-gracious Heaven! is it possible! do I embrace my father!

Mr Sea. And do I hold thee!—These passions are too strong for utterance.—Rise, rise, my child, and give my tears their way—Oh, my sister! [*Embracing her.*

Isa. Now, dearest niece! my groundless fears, my painful cares, no more shall vex thee: if I have wronged thy noble lover with too hard suspicions, my just concern for thee, I hope, will plead my pardon.

Mr Sea. Oh! make him then the full amends, and be yourself the messenger of joy: fly this instant—tell him all these wondrous turns of Providence in his favour; tell him I have now a daughter to bestow, which he no longer will decline; that this day he still shall be a bridegroom; nor shall a fortune, the merit which his father seeks, be wanting. Tell him the reward of all his virtues waits on his acceptance. [*Exit* ISABELLA.] My dearest Indiana!

[*Turns and embraces her.*

Ind. Have I then at last a father's sanction on my love? his bounteous hand to give, and make my heart a present worthy of Bevil's generosity?

Mr Sea. Oh, my child! how are our sorrows past o'erpaid by such a meeting! Though I have lost so many years of soft paternal dalliance with thee, yet, in one day to find thee thus, and thus bestow thee, in such perfect happiness, is ample, ample reparation! and yet, again, the merit of thy lover——

Ind. Oh, had I spirits left to tell you of his actions! how strongly filial duty has suppressed his love, and how concealment still has doubled all his obligations, the pride, the joy of his alliance, sir, would warm your heart, as he has conquered mine.

Mr Sea. How laudable is love when born of virtue! I burn to embrace him.

Ind. See, sir, my aunt already has succeeded, and brought him to your wishes.

Enter ISABELLA *with* SIR JOHN BEVIL, BEVIL *jun.* MRS SEALAND, CIMBERTON, MYRTLE, *and* LUCINDA.

Sir J. Bev. [*Entering.*] Where, where's this scene of wonder!—Mr Sealand, I congratulate, on this occasion, our mutual happiness——Your good sister, sir, has, with the story of your daughter's fortune, filled us with surprise and joy. Now all exceptions are removed; my son has now avowed his love, and turned all former jealousies and doubts to approbation, and I am told your goodness has consented to reward him.

Mr Sea. If, sir, a fortune, equal to his father's hopes, can make this object worthy his acceptance.

Bev. I hear your mention, sir, of fortune, with pleasure only, as it may prove the means to reconcile the best of fathers to my love; let him be provident, but let me be happy.—My ever destined, my acknowledged wife!

[*Embracing* INDIANA.

Ind. Wife!—oh! my ever-loved, my lord, my master!

Sir J. Bev. I congratulate myself, as well as you, that I have a son who could, under such disadvantages, discover your great merit.

Mr Sea. Oh, sir John, how vain, how weak is human prudence! what care, what foresight, what imagination could contrive such blest events to make our children happy, as Providence, in one short hour, has laid before us?

Cim. [*To* MRS SEALAND.] I am afraid, madam, Mr Sealand is a little too busy for our affair; if you please we'll take another opportunity.

Mrs Sea. Let us have patience, sir.

Cim. But we make sir Geoffry wait, madam.

Myr. Oh, sir, I'm not in haste.

[*During this,* BEV. *jun. presents* LUCINDA *to* INDIANA.]

Mr Sea. But here, here's our general benefactor. Excellent young man! that could be at once a lover to her beauty, and a parent to her virtue!

Bev. jun. If you think that an obligation, sir, give me leave to overpay myself in the only instance that can now add to my felicity, by begging you to bestow this lady on Mr Myrtle.

Mr Sea. She is his without reserve; I beg he may be sent for. Mr Cimberton, notwithstanding you never had my consent, yet there is, since I saw you, another objection to your marriage with my daughter.

Cim. I hope, sir, your lady has concealed nothing from me?

Mr Sea. Troth, sir, nothing but what was concealed from myself; another daughter, who has an undoubted title to half my estate.

Cim. How, Mr Sealand! why then, if half Mrs Lucinda's fortune is gone, you can't say that any of my estate is settled upon her; I was in treaty for the whole: but if that's not to be come at, to be sure there can be no bargain. Sir—I have nothing to do but to take my leave of your good lady my cousin, and beg pardon for the trouble I have given this old gentleman.

Myr. That you have, Mr Cimberton, with all my heart. [*Discovers himself.*

Omnes. Mr Myrtle!

Myr. And I beg pardon of the whole company, that I assumed the person of sir Geoffry only to be present at the danger of this lady's being disposed of, and, in her utmost exigence, to assert my right to her, which, if her parents will ratify, as they once favoured my pretensions, no abatement of fortune shall lessen her value to me.

Luc. Generous man!

Mr Sea. If, sir, you can overlook the injury of being in treaty with one who has as meanly left her, as you have generously asserted your right in her, she is yours.

Luc. Mr Myrtle, though you have ever had my heart, yet now I find I love you more, because I deserve you less.

Mrs Sea. Well, however, I'm glad the girl's disposed of any way. [*Aside.*

Bev. jun. Myrtle! no longer rivals now, but brothers.

Myr. Dear Bevil! you are born to triumph over me; but now our competition ceases: I rejoice in the pre-eminence of your virtue, and your alliance adds charms to Lucinda.

Sir J. Bev. Now, ladies and gentlemen, you have set the world a fair example; your happiness is owing to your constancy and merit, and the several difficulties you have struggled with evidently shew—

Whate'er the generous mind itself denies,
The secret care of Providence supplies.

[*Exeunt.*

THE

PROVOKED HUSBAND;

OR,

A JOURNEY TO LONDON.

BY

VANBRUGH & CIBBER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
LORD TOWNLY, *of a regular life.*	LADY TOWNLY, *immoderate in her pursuit of pleasures.*
MR MANLY, *an admirer of* LADY GRACE.	LADY GRACE, *sister to* LORD TOWNLY, *of exemplary virtue.*
SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD, *a country gentleman.*	LADY WRONGHEAD, *wife to* SIR FRANCIS, *inclined to be a fine lady.*
SQUIRE RICHARD, *his son, a mere whelp.*	MISS JENNY, *her daughter, pert and forward.*
COUNT BASSET, *a gamester.*	MRS MOTHERLY, *one that lets lodgings.*
JOHN MOODY, *servant to* SIR FRANCIS, *an honest clown.*	MYRTILLA, *her niece, seduced by the count.*
	MRS TRUSTY, LADY TOWNLY'S *woman.*

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—LORD TOWNLY'S *apartment.*

LORD TOWNLY, *solus.*

WHY did I marry?——Was it not evident, my plain, rational scheme of life was impracticable, with a woman of so different a way of thinking?—Is there one article of it that she has not broke in upon?——Yes—let me do her justice—her reputation———That I have no reason to believe is in question—But, then, how long her profligate course of pleasures may make her able to keep it—is a shocking question! and her presumption while she keeps it—insupportable! for, on the pride of that single virtue, she seems to lay it down as a fundamental point, that the free indulgence of every other vice this fertile town affords, is the birth-right prerogative of a woman of quality———Amazing! that a creature, so warm in the pursuit of her pleasures, should never cast one thought towards her happiness——Thus, while she admits of no lover, she thinks it a greater merit still, in her chastity, not to care for her husband; and, while she herself is solacing in one continual round of cards and good company, he, poor wretch! is left at large, to take care of his own contentment——'Tis time,

indeed, some care were taken; and speedily there shall be——Yet, let me not be rash——Perhaps this disappointment of my heart may make me too impatient; and some tempers, when reproached, grow more untractable——Here she comes——Let me be calm awhile.

Enter LADY TOWNLY.

Going out so soon after dinner, madam?

Lady Town. Lard, my lord! what can I possibly do at home?

Lord Town. What does my sister, Lady Grace, do at home?

Lady Town. Why, that is to me amazing! Have you ever any pleasure at home?

Lord Town. It might be in your power, madam, I confess, to make it a little more comfortable to me.

Lady Town. Comfortable! And so, my good lord, you would really have a woman of my rank and spirit stay at home to comfort her husband! Lord! what notions of life some men have!

Lord Town. Don't you think, madam, some ladies' notions are full as extravagant?

Lady Town. Yes, my lord; when the tame doves live cooped within the pen of your precepts, I do think them prodigious indeed.

Lord Town. And when they fly wild about this town, madam, pray, what must the world think of them, then?

Lady Town. Oh! this world is not so ill-bred as to quarrel with any woman for liking it!

Lord Town. Nor am I, madam, a husband so well-bred, as to bear my wife's being so fond of it: in short, the life you lead, madam——

Lady Town. Is to me the pleasantest life in the world.

Lord Town. I should not dispute your taste, madam, if a woman had a right to please nobody but herself.

Lady Town. Why! whom would you have her please?

Lord Town. Sometimes her husband.

Lady Town. And don't you think a husband under the same obligation?

Lord Town. Certainly.

Lady Town. Why, then, we are agreed, my lord——For, if I never go abroad till I am weary of being at home—which you know is the case—is it not equally reasonable, not to come home till one is weary of being abroad?

Lord. Town. If this be your rule of life, madam, 'tis time to ask you one serious question.

Lady Town. Don't let it be long a coming, then——for I am in haste.

Lord Town. Madam, when I am serious, I expect a serious answer.

Lady Town. Before I know the question?

Lord Town. Psha!—Have I power, madam, to make you serious by entreaty?

Lady Town. You have.

Lord Town. And you promise to answer me sincerely?

Lady Town. Sincerely.

Lord Town. Now, then, recollect your thoughts, and tell me seriously why you married me?

Lady Town. You insist upon truth, you say?

Lord Town. I think I have a right to it.

Lady Town. Why then, my lord, to give you, at once, a proof of my obedience and sincerity—I think—I married—to take off that restraint that lay upon my pleasures while I was a single woman.

Lord Town. How, madam! is any woman under less restraint after marriage than before it?

Lady Town. Oh, my lord, my lord! they are different creatures! Wives have infinite liberties in life, that would be terrible in an unmarried woman to take.

Lord Town. Name one.

Lady Town. Fifty, if you please—To begin, then—in the morning—A married woman may have men at her toilet; invite them to dinner; appoint them a party in the stage-box at the play; engross the conversation there; call them by their christian names; talk louder than the players; from thence jaunt into the city; take a frolicsome supper at an India-House; perhaps, in her *gaieté de cœur*, toast a pretty fellow; then clatter again to this end of the town; break, with the morning, into an assembly; crowd to the hazard-table; throw a familiar *levant* upon some sharp, lurching man of quality, and, if he demands his money, turn it off with a loud laugh, and cry——you'll owe it him, to vex him, ha, ha!

Lord Town. Prodigious! [*Aside.*

Lady Town. These, now, my lord, are some few of the many modish amusements that distinguish the privilege of a wife, from that of a single woman.

Lord Town. Death, madam! what law has made these liberties less scandalous in a wife, than in an unmarried woman?

Lady Town. Why the strongest law in the world, custom—custom, time out of mind, my lord.

Lord Town. Custom, madam, is the law of fools; but it shall never govern me.

Lady Town. Nay, then, my lord, 'tis time for me to observe the laws of prudence.

Lord Town. I wish I could see an instance of it.

Lady Town. You shall have one this moment, my lord; for I think, when a man begins to lose his temper at home, if a woman has any prudence, why—she'll go abroad 'till he comes to himself again. [*Going.*

Lord Town. Hold, madam——I am amazed you are not more uneasy at the life you lead. You don't want sense, and yet seem void of all

humanity; for, with a blush I say it, I think I have not wanted love.

Lady Town. Oh, don't say that, my lord, if you suppose I have my senses!

Lord Town. What is it I have done to you? What can you complain of?

Lady Town. Oh, nothing in the least! 'Tis true, you have heard me say, I have owed my lord Lurcher an hundred pounds these three weeks———but what then——a husband is not liable to his wife's debts of honour, you know—and if a silly woman will be uneasy about money she can't be sued for, what's that to him? As long as he loves her, to be sure, she can have nothing to complain of.

Lord Town. By Heaven, if my whole fortune, thrown into your lap, could make you delight in the cheerful duties of a wife, I should think myself a gainer by the purchase.

Lady Town. That is, my lord, I might receive your whole estate, provided you were sure I would not spend a shilling of it.

Lord Town. No, madam; were I master of your heart, your pleasures would be mine; but, different as they are, I'll feed even your follies, to deserve it——Perhaps you may have some other trifling debts of honour abroad, that keep you out of humour at home——at least, it shall not be my fault, if I have not more of your company—There, there's a bill of five hundred———and now, madam———

Lady Town. And now, my lord, down to the ground I thank you———Now I am convinced, were I weak enough to love this man, I should never get a single guinea from him. [*Aside.*

Lord Town. If it be no offence, madam———

Lady Town. Say what you please, my lord; I am in that harmony of spirits, it is impossible to put me out of humour.

Lord Town. How long, in reason then, do you think that sum ought to last you?

Lady Town. Oh, my dear, dear lord! now you have spoiled all again: how is it possible I should answer for an event that so utterly depends upon fortune? But, to shew you that I am more inclined to get money than to throw it away———I have a strong prepossession, that with this five hundred, I shall win five thousand.

Lord. Town. Madam, if you were to win ten thousand, it would be no satisfaction to me.

Lady Town. Oh, the churl! ten thousand! what! not so much as wish I might win ten thousand!———Ten thousand! Oh, the charming sum! what infinite pretty things might a woman of spirit do with ten thousand guineas! O' my conscience, if she were a woman of true spirit, she—she might lose them all again.

Lord Town. And I had rather it should be so, madam, provided I could be sure that were the last you would lose.

Lady Town. Well, my lord, to let you see I design to play all the good house-wife I can; I am now going to a party at quadrille, only to piddle with a little of it, at poor two guineas a fish, with the dutchess of Quiteright. [*Exit.*

Lord Town. Insensible creature! neither reproaches or indulgence, kindness or severity, can wake her to the least reflection! Continual licence has lulled her into such a lethargy of care, that she speaks of her excesses with the same easy confidence, as if they were so many virtues. What a turn has her head taken!———But how to cure it———I am afraid the physic must be strong that reaches her———Lenitives, I see, are to no purpose———take my friend's opinion———Manly will speak freely———my sister with tenderness to both sides. They know my case—I'll talk with them.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Mr Manly, my lord, has sent to know if your lordship was at home.

Lord Town. They did not deny me?

Ser. No, my lord.

Lord Town. Very well; step up to my sister, and say, I desire to speak with her.

Ser. Lady Grace is here, my lord.

[*Exit Servant.*

Enter LADY GRACE.

Lord Town. So, lady fair; what pretty weapon have you been killing your time with?

Lady Grace. A huge folio, that has almost killed me———I think I have read half my eyes out.

Lord Town. Oh! you should not pore so much just after dinner, child.

Lady Grace. That's true; but any body's thoughts are better always than one's own, you know.

Lord Town. Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Leave word at the door, I am at home to nobody but Mr Manly. [*Exit Ser.*

Lady Grace. And why is he excepted, pray, my lord?

Lord Town. I hope, madam, you have no objection to his company?

Lady Grace. Your particular orders, upon my being here, look, indeed, as if you thought I had not.

Lord Town. And your ladyship's inquiry into the reason of those orders, shews, at least, it was not a matter indifferent to you.

Lady Grace. Lord, you make the oddest constructions, brother!

Lord Town. Look you, my grave lady Grace—in one serious word—I wish you had him.

Lady Grace. I can't help that.

Lord Town. Ha! you can't help it; ha, ha! The flat simplicity of that reply was admirable!

Lady Grace. Pooh, you teaze one, brother!

Lord Town. Come, I beg pardon, child—— this is not a point, I grant you, to trifle upon; therefore, I hope you'll give me leave to be serious.

Lady Grace. If you desire it, brother; though, upon my word, as to Mr Manly's having any serious thoughts of me—I know nothing of it.

Lord Town. Well—— there's nothing wrong in your making a doubt of it——But, in short, I find, by his conversation of late, that he has been looking round the world for a wife; and if you were to look round the world for a husband, he is the first man I would give to you.

Lady Grace. Then, whenever he makes me any offer, brother, I will certainly tell you of it.

Lord Town. Oh! that's the last thing he'll do: he'll never make you an offer, till he's pretty sure it won't be refused.

Lady Grace. Now you make me curious. Pray, did he ever make any offer of that kind to you?

Lord Town. Not directly; but that imports nothing: he is a man too well acquainted with the female world to be brought into a high opinion of any one woman, without some well-examined proof of her merit; yet I have reason to believe, that your good sense, your turn of mind, and your way of life, have brought him to so favourable a one of you, that a few days will reduce him to talk plainly to me; which, as yet, (notwithstanding our friendship) I have neither declined nor encouraged him to.

Lady Grace. I am mighty glad we are so near in our way of thinking; for, to tell you the truth, he is much upon the same terms with me: you know he has a satirical turn; but never lashes any folly, without giving due encomiums to its opposite virtue: and, upon such occasions, he is sometimes particular, in turning his compliments upon me, which I don't receive with any reserve, lest he should imagine I take them to myself.

Lord Town. You are right, child: when a man of merit makes his addresses, good sense may give him an answer, without scorn or coquetry.

Lady Grace. Hush! he's here——

Enter MR MANLY.

Man. My lord, your most obedient.

Lord Town. Dear Manly, yours—I was thinking to send to you.

Man. Then, I am glad I am here, my lord—Lady Grace, I kiss your hands—What, only you two! How many visits may a man make, before he falls into such unfashionable company? A brother and sister soberly sitting at home, when the whole town is a gadding! I question if there is so particular a *tête à tête* again, in the whole parish of St James's.

Lady Grace. Fy, fy, Mr Manly! how censorious you are!

Man. I had not made the reflection, madam, but that I saw you an exception to it—Where's my lady?

Lord Town. That, I believe, is impossible to guess.

Man. Then I won't try, my lord—

Lord Town. But, 'tis probable, I may hear of her, by the time I have been four or five hours in bed.

Man. Now, if that were my case—I believe I—But, I beg pardon, my lord.

Lord Town. Indeed, sir, you shall not: you will oblige me if you speak out; for it was upon this head I wanted to see you.

Man. Why then, my lord, since you oblige me to proceed—if that were my case—I believe I should certainly sleep in another house.

Lady Grace. How do you mean?

Man. Only a compliment, madam:

Lady Grace. A compliment!

Man. Yes, madam, in rather turning myself out of doors than her.

Lady Grace. Don't you think that would be going too far?

Man. I don't know but it might, madam; for, in strict justice, I think she ought rather to go than I.

Lady Grace. This is new doctrine, Mr Manly.

Man. As old, madam, as love, honour, and obey. When a woman will stop at nothing that's wrong, why should a man balance any thing that's right?

Lady Grace. Bless me! but this is fomenting things—

Man. Fomentations, madam, are sometimes necessary to dispel tumours: though I do not directly advise my lord to this——This is only what, upon the same provocation, I would do myself.

Lady Grace. Ay, ay, you would do! Bachelors wives, indeed, are finely governed.

Man. If the married men's were as well—I am apt to think we should not see so many mutual plagues taking the air in separate coaches.

Lady Grace. Well, but suppose it your own case; would you part with your wife, because she now and then stays out in the best company?

Lord Town. Well said, lady Grace! Come, stand up for the privilege of your sex. This is like to be a warm debate. I shall edify.

Man. Madam, I think a wife, after midnight, has no occasion to be in better company than her husband's; and that frequent unreasonable hours make the best company—the worst she can fall into.

Lady Grace. But if people of condition are to keep company with one another, how is it possible to be done, unless one conforms to their hours?

Man. I can't find that any woman's good breeding obliges her to conform to other people's vices.

Lord Town. I doubt, child, here we are got a little on the wrong side of the question.

Lady Grace. Why so, my lord? I can't think the case so bad as Mr Manly states it—People

of quality are not tied down to the rules of those who have their fortunes to make.

Man. No people, madam, are above being tied down to some rules, that have fortunes to lose.

Lady Grace. Pooh! I'm sure, if you were to take my side of the argument, you would be able to say something more for it.

Lord Town. Well, what say you to that, Manly?

Man. Why, troth, my lord, I have something to say.

Lady Grace. Ay! that I should be glad to hear, now.

Lord Town. Out with it.

Man. Then, in one word, this, my lord, I have often thought, that the misconduct of my lady has, in a great measure, been owing to your lordship's treatment of her.

Lady Grace. Bless me!

Lord Town. My treatment!

Man. Ay, my lord; you so idolized her before marriage, that you even indulged her like a mistress after it: in short, you continued the lover, when you should have taken up the husband.

Lady Grace. Oh, frightful! this is worse than t'other; can a husband love a wife too well?

Man. As easy, madam, as a wife may love her husband too little.

Lord Town. So; you two are never like to agree, I find.

Lady Grace. Don't be positive, brother——I am afraid we are both of a mind already. [*Aside.*] And do you, at this rate, ever hope to be married, Mr Manly?

Man. Never, madam, till I can meet with a woman that likes my doctrine.

Lady Grace. 'Tis pity but your mistress should hear it.

Man. Pity me, madam, when I marry the woman that won't hear it.

Lady Grace. I think, at least, he can't say that's me. [*Aside.*

Man. And so, my lord, by giving her more power than was needful, she has none where she wants it; having such entire possession of you, she is not mistress of herself. And, mercy on us! how many fine women's heads have been turned upon the same occasion!

Lord Town. Oh, Manly, 'tis too true! there's the source of my disquiet; she knows, and has abused her power; nay, I am still so weak, (with shame I speak it) 'tis not an hour ago, that, in the midst of my impatience—I gave her another bill for five hundred to throw away.

Man. Well, my lord, to let you see I am sometimes upon the side of good nature, I won't absolutely blame you; for the greater your indulgence, the more you have to reproach her with.

Lady Grace. Ay, Mr Manly, here now, I begin to come in with you. Who knows, my lord, but you may have a good account of your kindness?

Man. That, I am afraid, we had best not depend upon. But, since you have had so much patience, my lord, even go on with it a day or two more; and, upon her ladyship's next sally, be a little rounder in your expostulations; if that don't work——drop her some cool hints of a determined reformation, and leave her—to breakfast upon them.

Lord Town. You are perfectly right. How valuable is a friend, in our anxiety!

Man. Therefore, to divert that, my lord, I beg, for the present, we may call another cause.

Lady Grace. Ay, for goodness' sake, let us have done with this.

Lord Town. With all my heart.

Lady Grace. Have you no news abroad, Mr Manly?

Man. A propos—I have some, madam; and I believe, my lord, as extraordinary in its kind—

Lord Town. Pray, let us have it.

Man Do you know that your country-neighbour, and my wise kinsman, sir Francis Wronghead, is coming to town with his whole family?

Lord Town. The fool! What can be his business here?

Man. Oh! of the last importance, I'll assure you——No less than the business of the nation.

Lord Town. Explain.

Man. He has carried his election—against sir John Worthland.

Lord Town. The deuce! What! for—for—

Man. The famous borough of Guzzledown.

Lord Town. A proper representative, indeed!

Lady Grace. Pray, Mr Manly, don't I know him?

Man. You have dined with him, madam, when I was last down with my lord, at Bellmont.

Lady Grace. Was not that he that got a little merry before dinner, and overset the tea-table in making his compliments to my lady?

Man. The same.

Lady Grace. Pray, what are his circumstances? I know but very little of him.

Man. Then he is worth your knowing, I can tell you, madam. His estate, if clear, I believe, might be a good two thousand pounds a-year; though as it was left him, saddled with two jointures, and two weighty mortgages upon it, there is no saying what it is—But that he might be sure never to mend it, he married a profuse young hussy, for love, without a penny of money. Thus, having, like his brave ancestors, provided heirs for the family (for his dove breeds like a tame pigeon), he now finds children and interest-money making such a bawling about his ears, that, at last, he has taken the friendly advice of his kinsman, the good lord Danglecourt, to run his estate two thousand pounds more in debt, to put the whole management of what is left into Paul Pillage's hands, that he may be at leisure himself to retrieve his affairs, by being a parliament man.

Lord Town. A most admirable scheme, indeed!

Man. And, with this prolific prospect, he is now upon his journey to London——

Lord Town. What can it end in?

Man. Pooh! A journey into the country again.

Lord Town. Do you think he'll stir, till his money is gone; or, at least, till the session is over?

Man. If my intelligence is right, my lord, he won't sit long enough to give his vote for a turnpike.

Lord Town. How so?

Man. Oh, a bitter business; he had scarce a vote in the whole town, beside the returning officer. Sir John will certainly have it at the bar of the house, and send him about his business again.

Lord Town. Then he has made a fine business of it, indeed.

Man. Which, as far as my little interest will go, shall be done in as few days as possible.

Lady Grace. But why would you ruin the poor gentleman's fortune, Mr Manly?

Man. No, madam; I would only spoil his project, to save his fortune.

Lady Grace. How are you concerned enough to do either?

Man. Why, I have some obligations to the family, madam: I enjoy, at this time, a pretty estate, which sir Francis was heir-at-law to: but, by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it to me.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. [*To* MANLY.]—Sir, here is one of your servants from your house, desires to speak with you.

Man. Will you give him leave to come in, my lord?

Lord Town. Sir, the ceremony's of your own making.

Enter MANLY'S *Servant.*

Man. Well, James, what's the matter?

James. Sir, here is John Moody just come to town: he says sir Francis, and all the family, will be here to-night, and is in a great hurry to speak with you.

Man. Where is he?

James. At our house, sir; he has been gaping and stumping about the streets in his dirty boots, and asking every one he meets, if they can tell him where he may have a good lodging for a parliament man, till he can hire a handsome house, fit for all his family, for the winter.

Man. I am afraid, my lord, I must wait upon Mr Moody.

Lord Town. Prithee, let us have him here; he will divert us.

Man. Oh, my lord, he's such a cub! Not but he's so near common sense, that he passes for a wit in the family.

Lady Grace. I beg, of all things, we may have him: I am in love with nature, let her dress be never so homely.

Man. Then desire him to come hither, James.

[*Exit* JAMES.

Lady Grace. Pray, what may be Mr Moody's post?

Man. Oh! his maitre d'hotel, his butler, his bailiff, his hind, his huntsman, and sometimes—his companion.

Lord Town. It runs in my head, that the moment this knight has set him down in the house, he will get up, to give them the earliest proof of what importance he is to the public, in his own country.

Man. Yes; and, when they have heard him, he will find, that his utmost importance stands valued at——sometimes being invited to dinner.

Lady Grace. And her ladyship, I suppose, will make as considerable a figure in her sphere, too?

Man. That you may depend upon: for (if I don't mistake) she has ten times more of the jade in her, than she yet knows of; and she will so improve in this rich soil in a month, that she will visit all the ladies that will let her into their houses; and run in debt to all the shop-keepers that will let her into their books: in short, before her important spouse has made five pounds by his eloquence at Westminster, she will have lost five hundred at dice and quadrille, in the parish of St James's.

Lord Town. So that, by that time he is declared unduly elected, a swarm of duns will be ready for their money; and his worship—will be ready for a gaol.

Man. Yes, yes; that, I reckon, will close the account of this hopeful journey to London—— But see, here comes the fore-horse of the team.

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Oh, honest John!

J. Moody. Ad's waunds and heart, Measter Manly! I'm glad I ha' fun ye. Lawd, lawd, give me a buss! Why, that's friendly, naw.—— Flesh! I thought we would never ha' got hither. Well, and how do you do, Measter?—Good lack! I beg pardon for my bawldness—I did not see 'at his honour was here.

Lord Town. Mr Moody, your servant: I am glad to see you in London: I hope all the good family is well.

J. Moody. Thanks be praised, your honour, they are all in pretty good heart; tho'f we have had a power of crosses upo' the road.

Lady Grace. I hope my lady has had no hurt, Mr Moody?

J. Moody. Noa, and please your ladyship, she was never in better humour: there's money enough stirring now.

Man. What has been the matter, John?

J. Moody. Why, we came up in such a hurry, you mun think, that our tackle was not so tight as it should be.

Man. Come, tell us all——Pray, how do they travel?

J. Moody. Why, i' the awld coach, measter; and, 'cause my lady loves to do things handsome, to be sure, she would have a couple of cart-horses clapt to the four old geldings, that neighbours might see she went up to London in her coach and six; and so Giles Joulter, the ploughman, rides postillion.

Man. Very well! the journey sets out as it should do.—[*Aside.*]—What, do they bring all the children with them, too?

J. Moody. Noa, noa; only the younk 'squoire and Miss Jenny. The other foive are all out at board, at half-a-crown a-head a-week, with John Growse, at Smoke-dunghill farm.

Man. Good again! a right English academy for young children!

J. Moody. Anan, sir?

[*Not understanding him.*

Lady Grace. Poor souls! What will become of them?

J. Moody. Nay, nay; for that matter, madam, they are in very good hands: Joan loves 'um as tho'f they were all her own: for she was wet-nurse to every mother's babe of 'um—Ay, ay; they'll ne'er want for a belly-full there!

Lady Grace. What simplicity!

Man. The Lud 'a mercy upon all good folks! What work will these people make!

[*Holding up his hands.*

Lord Town. And when do you expect them here, John?

J. Moody. Why, we were in hopes to ha' come yesterday, an' it had no' been that th' awld Weazlebelly horse tired: and then we were so cruelly loaden, that the two fore-wheels came crash down at once, in Waggon-rut-lane, and there we lost four horses 'fore we could set things to right again.

Man. So, they bring all the baggage with the coach, then?

J. Moody. Ay, ay; and good store on it there is——Why, my lady's geer alone were as much as filled four portmantel trunks, beside the great deal box that heavy Ralph and the monkey sit upon behind.

Lord Town.
Lady Grace. } Ha, ha, ha!
Man.

Lady Grace. Well, Mr Moody, and pray how many are they within the coach?

J. Moody. Why, there's my lady, and his worship; and the younk 'squoire, and Miss Jenny, and the fat lap-dog, and my lady's maid, Mrs Handy, and Doll Tripe, the cook, that's all——Only Doll puked a little with riding backward; so, they hoisted her into the coach-box, and then her stomach was easy.

Lady Grace. Oh, I see them! I see them go by me. Ha, ha! [*Laughing.*

J. Moody. Then you mun think, measter, there was some stowage for the belly, as well as the back, too; children are apt to be famished upon the road; so we had such cargoes of plum-cake, and baskets of tongues, and biscuits, and cheese, and cold boiled beef——And, then, in case of sickness, bottles of cherry-brandy, plague water, sack, tent, and strong beer so plenty, as made the awld coach crack again. Mercy upon them! and send them all well to town, I say!

Man. Aye, and well out of it again, John.

J. Moody. Ods bud, measter! you're a wise man; and for that matter, so am I—Whoam's whoam, I say: I am sure we ha' got but little good e'er sin' we turned our backs on't. Nothing but mischief! Some devil's trick or other plagued us all aw the day lang. Crack, goes one thing! bawnce, goes another! Woa! says Roger—Then, sowse! we are all set fast in a slough. Whaw, cries miss! Scream, go the maids! and bawl, just as thof' they were stuck. And so, mercy on us! this was the trade from morning to night. But my lady was in such a murrain haste to be here, that set out she would, thof' I told her it was Childermas day.

Man. These ladies, these ladies, John——

J. Moody. Ay, measter! I ha' seen a little of them: and I find, that the best——when she's mended, won't ha' much goodness to spare.

Lord Town. Well said, John! Ha, ha!

Man. I hope, at least, you and your good woman agree still?

J. Moody. Ay, ay; much of a muchness.——Bridget sticks to me: though, as for her goodness——why, she was coming to London, too—But hauld a bit! Noa, noa, says I; there may be mischief enough done without you.

Man. Why that was bravely spoken, John, and like a man.

J. Moody. Ah, weast heart! were measter but hawf the mon that I am——Ods wookers! thof' he'll speak stautly, too, sometimes—But then he canno' hawld it———no, he canno' hawld it.

Lord Town.
Lady Grace. } Ha, ha, ha!
Man.

J. Moody. Ods flesh! but I mun hie me whoam; the coach will be coming every hour naw—but measter charged me to find your worship out; for he has hugey business with you: and will certainly wait upon you by that time he can put on a clean neck-cloth.

Man. Oh, John! I'll wait upon him.

J. Moody. Why you wonno' be so kind, wull ye?

Man. If you'll tell me where you lodge.

J. Moody. Just i' the street next to where

your worship dwells, at the sign of the golden ball—It's gold all over; where they sell ribbons and flappits, and other sort of geer for gentlewomen.

Man. A milliner's!

J. Moody. Ay, ay, one Mrs Motherly.——Waunds, she has a couple of clever girls there, stitching i' the fore-room.

Man. Yes, yes, she's a woman of good business, no doubt on't——Who recommended that house to you, John?

J. Moody. The greatest good fortune in the world, sure; for, as I was gaping about the streets, who should look out of the window there, but the fine gentleman that was always riding by our coach side at York races——Count——Basset; ay, that's he.

Man. Basset! Oh, I remember! I know him by sight.

J. Moody. Well, to be sure, as civil a gentleman to see to——

Man. As any sharper in town. [*Aside.*

J. Moody. At York, he used to breakfast with my lady every morning.

Man. Yes, yes; and I suppose her ladyship will return his compliment here in town.

[*Aside.*

J. Moody. Well, measter——

Lord Town. My service to sir Francis, and my lady, John.

Lady Grace. And mine, pray, Mr Moody.

J. Moody. Aye, your honours;——they'll be proud on't, I dare say.

Man. I'll bring my compliments myself: so, honest John——

J. Moody. Dear Measter Manly! the goodness of goodness bless and preserve you!

[*Exit* J. MOODY.

Lord Town. What a natural creature 'tis!

Lady Grace. Well, I can't but think John, in a wet afternoon in the country, must be very good company.

Lord Town. Oh, the tramontane! If this were known at half the quadrille tables in town, they would lay down their cards to laugh at you.

Lady Grace. And the minute they took them up again, they would do the same at the losers—But to let you see, that I think good company may sometimes want cards to keep them together; what think you, if we three sat soberly down to kill an hour at ombre?

Man. I shall be too hard for you, madam.

Lady Grace. No matter; I shall have as much advantage of my lord, as you have of me.

Lord Town. Say you so, madam? have at you, then. Here! get the ombre table, and cards.

[*Exit* LORD TOWNLY.

Lady Grace. Come, Mr Manly——I know you don't forgive me now.

Man. I don't know whether I ought to forgive your thinking so, madam. Where do you imagine I could pass my time so agreeably?

Lady Grace. I'm sorry my lord is not here, to take his share of the compliment—But he'll wonder what's become of us.

Man. I'll follow in a moment, madam—

[*Exit* LADY GRACE.

It must be so—She sees I love her—yet with what unoffending decency she avoids an explanation? How amiable is every hour of her conduct! What a vile opinion have I had of the whole sex, for these ten years past, which this sensible creature has recovered in less than one! Such a companion, sure, might compensate all the irksome disappointments that pride, folly, and falsehood, ever gave me!

Could women regulate, like her, their lives,
What halcyon days were in the gift of wives!
Vain rovers, then, might envy what they hate;
And only fools would mock the married state.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—MRS MOTHERLY'S *house.*

Enter COUNT BASSET *and* MRS MOTHERLY.

Count Bas. I TELL you there is not such a family in England for you. Do you think I would have gone out of your lodgings for any body that was not sure to make you easy for the winter?

Moth. Nay, I see nothing against it, sir,—but the gentleman's being a parliament-man; and when people may, as it were, think one impertinent, or be out of humour, you know, when a body comes to ask for one's own——

Count Bas. Pshaw! Prithee never trouble thy head: his pay is as good as the bank—Why, he has above two thousand a-year.

Moth. Alas-a-day, that's nothing! your people of ten thousand a-year have ten thousand things to do with it.

Count Bas. Nay, if you are afraid of being out of your money, what do you think of going a little with me, Mrs Motherly?

Moth. As how?

Count Bas. Why, I have a game in my hand, in which, if you'll croup me, that is, help me to play it, you shall go five hundred to nothing.

Moth. Say you so? Why, then, I go, sir—and now, pray let's see your game.

Count Bas. Look you, in one word, my cards lie thus——When I was down this summer at York, I happened to lodge in the same house with this knight's lady, that's now coming to lodge with you.

Moth. Did you so, sir?

Count Bas. And sometimes had the honour to breakfast, and pass an idle hour with her——

Moth. Very good: and here, I suppose, you would have the impudence to sup and be busy with her.

Count Bas. Pshaw! prithee, hear me.

Moth. Is this your game? I would not give sixpence for it. What! you have a passion for her pin-money——No, no; country ladies are not so flush of it!

Count Bas. Nay, if you won't have patience—

Moth. One had need to have a good deal, I am sure, to hear you talk at this rate. Is this your way of making my poor niece, Myrtilla, easy?

Count Bas. Death! I shall do it still, if the woman will but let me speak——

Moth. Had you not a letter from her this morning?

Count Bas. I have it here in my pocket—this is it. [*Shews it, and puts it up again.*

Moth. Ay; but I don't find you have made any answer to it.

Count Bas. How the devil can I, if you won't hear me?

Moth. What! hear you talk of another woman!

Count Bas. Oh, lud! Oh, lud! I tell you, I'll make her fortune———Ounds, I'll marry her!

Moth. A likely matter! If you would not do it when she was a maid, your stomach is not so sharp set now, I presume.

Count Bas. Hey-day! why, your head begins to turn, my dear! The devil! you did not think I proposed to marry her myself?

Moth. If you don't, who the devil do you think will marry her?

Count Bas. Why, a fool———

Moth. Humph! there may be sense in that—

Count Bas. Very good—one for t'other, then. If I can help her to a husband, why should you not come into my scheme of helping me to a wife?

Moth. Your pardon, sir. Ay, ay; in an honourable affair, you know you may command me. But, pray, where is this blessed wife and husband to be had?

Count Bas. Now, have a little patience—You must know then, that this country knight and his lady bring up in the coach with them their eldest son and a daughter, to teach them to wash their faces, and turn their toes out.

Moth. Good——

Count Bas. The son is an unlicked whelp, about sixteen, just taken from school; and begins to hanker after every wench in the family: the daughter, much of the same age, a pert forward hussy, who, having eight thousand pounds left her by an old doting grandmother, seems to have a devilish mind to be doing in her way, too.

Moth. And your design is to put her into business for life?

Count Bas. Look you—in short, Mrs Motherly, we gentlemen, whose occasional chariots roll only upon the four aces, are liable, sometimes, you know, to have a wheel out of order; which, I confess, is so much my case at present, that my dapple greys are reduced to a pair of ambling chairmen. Now, if, with your assistance, I can whip up this young jade into a hackney-coach, I may chance, in a day or two after, to carry her, in my own chariot, *en famille*, to an opera. Now, what do you say to me?

Moth. Why, I shall not sleep for thinking of it. But how will you prevent the family smoking your design?

Count Bas. By renewing my addresses to the mother.

Moth. And how will the daughter like that, think you?

Count Bas. Very well——whilst it covers her own affair.

Moth. That's true——it must do———but, as you say, one for t'other, sir; I stick to that—if you don't do my niece's business with the son, I'll blow you with the daughter, depend upon't.

Count Bas. 'Tis a bet—pay as we go, I tell you, and the five hundred shall be staked in a third hand.

Moth. That's honest——But here comes my niece. Shall we let her into the secret?

Count Bas. Time enough; may be I may touch upon it.

Enter MYRTILLA.

Moth. So, niece, are all the rooms done out, and the beds sheeted?

Myr. Yes, madam; but Mr Moody tells us, the lady always burns wax in her own chamber, and we have none in the house.

Moth. Odso! then I must beg your pardon, Count; this is a busy time, you know.

[*Exit* MRS MOTHERLY.

Count Bas. Myrtilla, how dost thou do, child?

Myr. As well as a losing gamester can.

Count Bas. Why, what have you lost?

Myr. What I shall never recover; and, what's worse, you, that have won it, don't seem to be much the better for it.

Count Bas. Why, child, dost thou ever see any body overjoyed for winning a deep stake six months after 'tis over?

Myr. Would I had never played for it!

Count Bas. Psha! hang these melancholy thoughts! We may be friends still.

Myr. Dull ones.

Count Bas. Useful ones, perhaps—suppose I should help thee to a good husband?

Myr. I suppose you'll think any one good enough, that will take me off your hands.

Count Bas. What do you think of the young country 'squire, the heir of the family that's coming to lodge here?

Myr. How should I know what to think of him?

Count Bas. Nay; I only give you the hint, child. It may be worth your while, at least, to

look about you——Hark! what bustle's that without?

Enter MRS MOTHERLY, *in haste.*

Moth. Sir, sir! the gentleman's coach is at the door; they are all come.

Count Bas. What! already?

Moth. They are just getting out!——Won't you step and lead in my lady? Do you be in the way, niece; I must run and receive them.

[*Exit* MRS MOTHERLY.

Count Bas. And think of what I told you.

[*Exit* COUNT.

Myr. Ay, ay; you have left me enough to think of as long as I live——A faithless fellow! I am sure I have been true to him; and for that only reason he wants to be rid of me. But, while women are weak, men will be rogues; and, for a bane to both their joys and ours, when our vanity indulges them in such innocent favours as make them adore us, we can never be well, till we grant them the very one that puts an end to their devotion—But here comes my aunt and the company.

MRS MOTHERLY *returns, shewing in* LADY WRONGHEAD, *led by* COUNT BASSET.

Moth. If your ladyship pleases to walk into this parlour, madam, only for the present, till your servants have got all your things in.

Lady Wrong. Well, dear sir, this is so infinitely obliging——I protest it gives me pain, though, to turn you out of your lodging thus.

Count Bas. No trouble in the least, madam; we single fellows are soon moved. Besides, Mrs Motherly's my old acquaintance, and I could not be her hindrance.

Moth. The Count is so well bred, madam, I dare say he would do a great deal more to accommodate your ladyship.

Lady Wrong. Oh, dear madam!—A good, well-bred sort of a woman.

[*Apart to the* COUNT.

Count Bas. Oh! madam, she is very much among people of quality: she is seldom without them in her house.

Lady Wrong. Are there a good many people of quality in this street, Mrs Motherly?

Moth. Now your ladyship is here, madam, I don't believe there is a house without them.

Lady Wrong. I am mighty glad of that; for, really, I think people of quality should always live among one another.

Count Bas. 'Tis what one would choose, indeed, madam.

Lady Wrong. Bless me! but where are the children all this while?

Moth. Sir Francis, madam, I believe, is taking care of them.

Sir Fran. [*Within.*] John Moody! stay you by the coach, and see all our things out—Come, children.

Moth. Here they are, madam.

Enter SIR FRANCIS, SQUIRE RICHARD, *and* MISS JENNY.

Sir Fran. Well, Count, I mun say it, this was koynd, indeed.

Count Bas. Sir Francis, give me leave to bid you welcome to London.

Sir Fran. Psha! how dost thou do, mon?—Waunds, I'm glad to see thee! A good sort of a house this.

Count Bas. Is not that Master Richard?

Sir Fran. Ey, ey, that's young Hopeful—Why dost not baw, Dick?

Squire Rich. So I do, feyther.

Count Bas. Sir, I'm glad to see you—I protest Mrs Jane is grown so, I should not have known her.

Sir Fran. Come forward, Jenny.

Jenny. Sure, papa! do you think I don't know how to behave myself?

Count Bas. If I have permission to approach her, Sir Francis.

Jenny. Lord, sir! I'm in such a frightful pickle— [*Salute.*

Count Bas. Every dress that's proper must become you, madam——you have been a long journey.

Jenny. I hope you will see me in a better tomorrow, sir.

[LADY WRONGHEAD *whispers* MRS MOTHERLY, *pointing to* MYRTILLA.

Moth. Only a niece of mine, madam, that lives with me: she will be proud to give your ladyship any assistance in her power.

Lady Wrong. A pretty sort of a young woman ——Jenny, you two must be acquainted.

Jenny. Oh, mamma, I am never strange in a strange place. [*Salutes* MYRTILLA.

Myr. You do me a great deal of honour, madam—Madam, your ladyship's welcome to London.

Jenny. Mamma, I like her prodigiously; she called me my ladyship.

Squire Rich. Pray, mother, mayn't I be acquainted with her, too?

Lady Wrong. You, you clown! stay till you learn a little more breeding first.

Sir Fran. Od's heart, my lady Wronghead! why do you baulk the lad? how should he ever learn breeding, if he does not put himself forward?

Squire Rich. Why, ay, feyther; does mother think 'at I'd be uncivil to her?

Myr. Master has so much good-humour, madam, he would soon gain upon any body.

[*He kisses* MYRTILLA.

Squire Rich. Lo' you there, mother; an you would but be quiet, she and I should do well enough.

Lady Wrong. Why, how now, sirrah! boys must not be so familiar.

Squire Rich. Why, an' I know nobody, how the murrain mun I pass my time here in a strange

place? Naw, you and I, and sister, forsooth, sometimes, in an afternoon, may play at one-and-thirty bone-ace purely.

Jenny. Speak for yourself, sir; d'ye think I play at such clownish games?

Squire Rich. Why, and you woant, yo' ma' let it aloane; then she and I, mayhap, will have a bawt at all-fours, without you.

Sir Fran. Noa, noa, Dick; that won't do, neither; you mun learn to make one at ombre, here, child.

Myr. If master pleases, I'll shew it him.

Squire Rich. What! the Humber! Hoy-day! why, does our river run to this tawn, feyther?

Sir Fran. Pooh! you silly tony! ombre is a geam at cards, that the better sort of people play three together at.

Squire Rich. Nay, the moare the merrier, I say; but sister is always so cross-grained——

Jenny. Lord! this boy is enough to deaf people—and one has really been stuffed up in a coach so long, that———Pray, madam, could not I get a little powder for my hair?

Myr. If you please to come along with me, madam. [*Exeunt* MYRTILLA *and* JENNY.

Squire Rich. What, has sister taken her away, naw! mess, I'll go and have a little game with them. [*Exit after them.*

Lady Wrong. Well, count, I hope you won't so far change your lodgings, but you will come, and be at home here sometimes?

Sir Fran. Ay! ay! pr'ythee come and take a bit of mutton with us, naw and tan, when thou'st naught to do.

Count Bas. Well, sir Francis, you shall find I'll make but very little ceremony.

Sir Fran. Why, ay now, that's hearty!

Moth. Will your ladyship please to refresh yourself with a dish of tea, after your fatigue? I think I have pretty good.

Lady Wrong. If you please, Mrs Motherly; but I believe we had best have it above stairs.

Moth. Very well, madam; it shall be ready immediately. [*Exit* MRS MOTHERLY.

Lady Wrong. Won't you walk up, sir?

Sir Fran. Moody!

Count Bas. Shan't we stay for Sir Francis, madam!

Lady Wrong. Lard! don't mind him: he will come, if he likes it.

Sir Fran. Ay! ay! ne'er heed me——I have things to look after.

[*Exeunt* LADY WRONGHEAD *and* COUNT BASSET.

Enter JOHN MOODY.

J. Moody. Did your worship want muh?

Sir Fran. Ay; is the coach cleared, and all our things in?

J. Moody. Aw but a few band-boxes, and the nook that's left o' the goose poy——But, a plague on him, th' monkey has gin us the slip, I think—I suppose he's goon to see his relations; for here looks to be a power of um in this tawn——but heavy Ralph is skawered after him.

Sir Fran. Why, let him go to the devil! no matter an the hawnds had had him a month agoe. ———but I wish the coach and horses were got safe to the inn! This is a sharp tawn; we mun look about us here, John; therefore, I would have you go along with Roger, and see that nobody runs away with them, before they get to the stable.

J. Moody. Alas-a-day, sir, I believe our awld cattle won't yeasly be run away with to-night—but howsomdever, we's take the best care we can of um, poor sawls.

Sir Fran. Well, well! make haste——

[MOODY *goes out, and returns.*

J. Moody. Ods flesh! here's measter Monly come to wait upo' your worship!

Sir Fran. Wheare is he?

J. Moody. Just coming in at threshould.

Sir Fran. Then goa about your business.

[*Exit* MOODY.

Enter MANLY.

Cousin Manly! Sir, I am your very humble servant.

Man. I heard you were come, sir Francis—and——

Sir Fran. Odsheart! this was kindly done of you, naw.

Man. I wish you may think it so, cousin! for I confess, I should have been better pleased to have seen you in any other place.

Sir Fran. How soa, sir?

Man. Nay, 'tis for your own sake; I am not concerned.

Sir Fran. Look you, cousin; thof I know you wish me well, yet I don't question I shall give you such weighty reasons for what I have done, that you will say, sir, this is the wisest journey that ever I made in my life.

Man. I think it ought to be, cousin; for I believe you will find it the most expensive one—— your election did not cost you a trifle, I suppose.

Sir Fran. Why, ay! it's true! That—that did lick a little; but if a man's wise, (and I han't fawnd yet that I'm a fool) there are ways, cousin, to lick one's self whole again.

Man. Nay, if you have that secret——

Sir Fran. Don't you be fearful, cousin—you'll find that I know something.

Man. If it be any thing for your good, I should be glad to know it, too.

Sir Fran. In short, then, I have a friend in a corner, that has let me a little into what's what, at Westminster——that's one thing.

Man. Very well! but what good is that to do you?

Sir Fran. Why not to me, as much as it does other folks?

Man. Other people, I doubt, have the advantage of different qualifications.

Sir Fran. Why, ay! there's it, naw! you'll

say that I have lived all my days i' the country ——what then?—I'm o' the quorum——I have been at sessions, and I have made speeches there! ay, and at vestry, too———and mayhap they may find here,———that I have brought my tongue up to town with me! D'ye take me naw?

Man. If I take your case right, cousin, I am afraid the first occasion you will have for your eloquence here, will be, to shew that you have any right to make use of it at all.

Sir Fran. How d'ye mean?

Man. That Sir John Worthland has lodged a petition against you.

Sir Fran. Petition! why, aye! there let it lie—we'll find a way to deal with that, I warrant you! ——Why, you forget, cousin, sir John's o' the wrung side, mon?

Man. I doubt, sir Francis, that will do you but little service; for, in cases very notorious, which I take yours to be, there is such a thing as a short day, and dispatching them immediately.

Sir Fran. With all my heart! the sooner I send him home again, the better.

Man. And this is the scheme you have laid down, to repair your fortune?

Sir Fran. In one word, cousin, I think it my duty. The Wrongheads have been a considerable family ever since England was England: and, since the world knows I have talents wherewithal, they shan't say it's my fault, if I don't make as good a figure as any that ever were at the head on't.

Man. Nay, this project, as you have laid it, will come up to any thing your ancestors have done these five hundred years.

Sir Fran. And let me alone to work it: mayhap, I havn't told you all, neither——

Man. You astonish me! What! And is it full as practicable as what you have told me?

Sir Fran. Ay, thof' I say it——every whit, cousin. You'll find that I have more irons i' the fire than one; I doan't come of a fool's errand!

Man. Very well.

Sir Fran. In a word, my wife has got a friend at court, as well as myself, and her dowghter Jenny is naw pretty well grown up——

Man. [*Aside.*]—And what, in the devil's name, would he do with the dowdy?

Sir Fran. Naw, if I doan't lay in for a husband for her, mayhap, i' this tawn, she may be looking out for herself——

Man. Not unlikely.

Sir Fran. Therefore, I have some thoughts of getting her to be maid of honour.

Man. [*Aside.*]—Oh! he has taken my breath away; but I must hear him out—Pray, sir Francis, do you think her education has yet qualified her for a court?

Sir Fran. Why, the girl is a little too mettlesome, it's true; but she has tongue enough: she woan't be dasht: then she shall learn to daunce forthwith, and that will soon teach her how to stond still, you know.

Man. Very well; but when she is thus accomplished, you must still wait for a vacancy.

Sir Fran. Why, I hope one has a good chance for that every day, cousin: for, if I take it right, that's a post, that folks are not more willing to get into, than they are to get out of——It's like an orange-tree, upon that accawnt—It will bear blossoms, and fruit that's ready to drop, at the same time.

Man. Well, sir, you best know how to make good your pretensions. But, pray, where is my lady, and my young cousin? I should be glad to see them, too.

Sir Fran. She is but just taking a dish of tea with the count, and my landlady—I'll call her dawn.

Man. No, no; if she's engaged, I shall call again.

Sir Fran. Odsheart! But you mun see her naw, cousin; what! The best friend I have in the world! Here, sweetheart!—[*To a servant without.*]—Prithee, desire my lady and the gentleman to come dawn a bit; tell her, here's cousin Manly come to wait upon her.

Man. Pray, sir, who may the gentleman be?

Sir Fran. You mun know him, to be sure; why, its Count Basset.

Man. Oh! Is it he? Your family will be infinitely happy in his acquaintance.

Sir Fran. Troth! I think so, too: he's the civilest man that ever I knew in my life——Why! here he would go out of his own lodgings, at an hour's warning, purely to oblige my family.—— Was'nt that kind, naw?

Man. Extremely civil—the family is in admirable hands already. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Then my lady likes him hugely—all the time of York races, she would never be without him.

Man. That was happy, indeed! And a prudent man, you know, should always take care that his wife may have innocent company.

Sir Fran. Why, aye! that's it! and I think there could not be such another!

Man. Why, truly, for her purpose, I think not.

Sir Fran. Only naw and tan, he—he stonds a leetle too much upon ceremony; that's his fault.

Man. Oh, never fear! he'll mend that every day—Mercy on us! What a head he has!

[*Aside.*

Sir Fran. So, here they come.

Enter LADY WRONGHEAD, COUNT BASSET, *and* MRS MOTHERLY.

Lady Wrong. Cousin Manly, this is infinitely obliging; I am extremely glad to see you.

Man. Your most obedient servant, madam; I am glad to see your ladyship look so well, after your journey.

Lady Wrong. Why, really, coming to London is apt to put a little more life in one's looks.

Man. Yet the way of living here, is very apt to deaden the complexion—and, give me leave

to tell you, as a friend, madam, you are come to the worst place in the world, for a good woman to grow better in.

Lady Wrong. Lord, cousin! How should people ever make any figure in life, that are always moped up in the country.

Count Bas. Your ladyship certainly takes the thing in quite a right light, madam. Mr Manly, your humble servant—a hem.

Man. Familiar puppy.—[*Aside.*]—Sir, your most obedient—I must be civil to the rascal, to cover my suspicion of him. [*Aside.*

Count Bas. Was you at White's this morning, sir?

Man. Yes, sir, I just called in.

Count Bas. Pray—what—was there any thing done there?

Man. Much as usual, sir; the same daily carcases, and the same crows about them.

Count Bas. The Demoivre-Baronet had a bloody tumble yesterday.

Man. I hope, sir, you had your share of him.

Count Bas. No, faith; I came in when it was all over—I think I just made a couple of bets with him, took up a cool hundred, and so went to the King's Arms.

Lady Wrong. What a genteel easy manner he has! [*Aside.*

Man. A very hopeful acquaintance I have made here. [*Aside.*

Enter SQUIRE RICHARD, *with a wet brown paper on his face.*

Sir Fran. How naw, Dick! what's the matter with thy forehead, lad?

Squire Rich. I ha' gotten a knock upon't.

Lady Wrong. And how did you come by it, you heedless creature?

Squire Rich. Why, I was but running after sister, and t'other young woman, into a little room, just naw: and so, with that, they slapped the door full in my face, and gave me such a whurr here—I thought they had beaten my brains out; so, I got a dab of wet brown paper here, to swage it a while.

Lady Wrong. They served you right enough; will you never have done with your horse-play?

Sir Fran. Pooh, never heed it, lad; it will be well by to-morrow—the boy has a strong head.

Man. Yes, truly; his skull seems to be of a comfortable thickness. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Come, Dick, here's cousin Manly—Sir, this is your god-son.

Squire Rich. Honoured godfeyther, I crave leave to ask your blessing.

Man. Thou hast it, child—and, if it will do thee any good, may it be, to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father!

Enter MISS JENNY.

Lady Wrong. Oh, here's my daughter, too.—Miss Jenny! Don't you see your cousin, child?

Man. And as for thee, my pretty dear—[*Salutes her.*]—May'st thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother!

Jenny. I wish I may ever be so handsome, sir.

Man. Ha, Miss Pert! Now that's a thought that seems to have been hatcht in the girl on this side Highgate. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Her tongue is a little nimble, sir.

Lady Wrong. That's only from her country education, sir Francis. You know she has been kept too long there—so I brought her to London, sir, to learn a little more reserve and modesty.

Man. Oh, the best place in the world for it—every woman she meets will teach her something of it——There's the good gentlewoman of the house looks like a knowing person; even she, perhaps, will be so good as to shew her a little London behaviour.

Moth. Alas, sir! miss won't stand long in need of my instruction.

Man. That I dare say. What thou canst teach her, she will soon be mistress of. [*Aside.*

Moth. If she does, sir, they shall always be at her service.

Lady Wrong. Very obliging indeed, Mrs Motherly!

Sir Fran. Very kind and civil, truly!—I think we are got into a mighty good hawse here.

Man. Oh, yes; and very friendly company.

Count Bas. Humph! 'Egad I don't like his looks—he seems a little smoky—I believe I had as good brush off—If I stay, I don't know but he may ask me some odd questions.

Man. Well, sir; I believe you and I do but hinder the family—

Count Bas. It is very true, sir—I was just thinking of going—He don't care to leave me, I see: but it's no matter, we have time enough.—[*Aside.*]—And so, ladies, without farther ceremony, your humble servant.

[*Exit* COUNT BASSET, *and drops a letter.*

Lady Wrong. Ha! What paper's this? Some billet-doux, I'll lay my life; but this is no place to examine it. [*Puts it in her pocket.*

Sir Fran. Why in such haste, cousin?

Man. Oh, my lady must have a great many affairs upon her hands, after such a journey.

Lady Wrong. I believe, sir, I shall not have much less every day, while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

Man. Why, truly, ladies seldom want employment here, madam.

Jenny. And mamma did not come to it to be idle, sir.

Man. Nor you, neither, I dare say, my young mistress.

Jenny. I hope not, sir.

Man. Ha, Miss Mettle! Where are you going, sir?

Sir Fran. Only to see you to the door, sir.

Man. Oh, sir Francis, I love to come and go without ceremony.

Sir Fran. Nay, sir; I must do as you will have me—Your humble servant.

[*Exit* MANLY.

Jenny. This cousin Manly, papa, seems to be but of an odd sort of a crusty humour—I don't like him half so well as the count.

Sir Fran. Pooh! that's another thing, child—Cousin is a little proud, indeed; but, however, you must always be civil to him, for he has a deal of money; and nobody knows who he may give it to.

Lady Wrong. Psha! a fig for his money! you have so many projects of late about money, since you are a parliament man. What! we must make ourselves slaves to his impertinent humours, eight or ten years, perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs, and then he will be just old enough to marry his maid.

Moth. Nay, for that matter, madam, the town says he is going to be married already.

Sir Fran. Who! cousin Manly?

Lady Wrong. To whom, pray?

Moth. Why, is it possible your ladyship should know nothing of it!—To my lord Townly's sister, lady Grace.

Lady Wrong. Lady Grace!

Moth. Dear madam, it has been in the newspapers!

Lady Wrong. I don't like that, neither

Sir Fran. Naw, I do; for then it's likely it mayn't be true.

Lady Wrong. [*Aside.*]—If it is not too far gone, at least it may be worth one's while to throw a rub in his way.

Squire Rich. Pray, feyther, haw lung will it be to supper?

Sir Fran. Odso! that's true; step to the cook, lad, and ask what she can get us.

Moth. If you please, sir, I'll order one of my maids to shew her where she may have any thing you have a mind to.

Sir Fran. Thank you kindly, Mrs Motherly.

Squire Rich. Ods-flesh! What, is not it i' the hawse yet—I shall be famished—But hawld! I'll go and ask Doll, an' there's none o' the goose poy left.

Sir Fran. Do so; and, do'st hear, Dick?—see if there's e'er a bottle o' the strong beer that came i' th' coach with us—if there be, clap a toast in it, and bring it up.

Squire Rich. With a little nutmeg and sugar, shawn'a I, feyther?

Sir Fran. Aye, aye; as thee and I always drink it for breakfast—Go thy ways! and I'll fill a pipe i' th' mean while.

[*Takes one from a pocket-case, and fills it.*—*Exit* SQUIRE RICHARD.

Lady Wrong. This boy is always thinking of his belly.

Sir Fran. Why, my dear, you may allow him to be a little hungry after his journey.

Lady Wrong. Nay, even breed him your own way—He has been cramming, in or out of the coach, all this day, I am sure—I wish my poor girl could eat a quarter as much.

Jenny. Oh, as for that, I could eat a great deal more, mamma; but, then, mayhap, I should grow coarse, like him, and spoil my shape.

Lady Wrong. Aye; so thou wouldst, my dear.

Enter SQUIRE RICHARD, *with a full tankard.*

Squire Rich. Here, feyther, I ha' browght it—it's well I went as I did; for our Doll had just baked a toast, and was going to drink it herself.

Sir Fran. Why, then, here's to thee, Dick!

[*Drinks.*

Squire Rich. Thonk you, feyther.

Lady Wrong. Lord, sir Francis, I wonder you can encourage the boy to swill so much of that lubberly liquor!—it's enough to make him quite stupid.

Squire Rich. Why, it never hurts me, mother; and I sleep like a hawnd after it. [*Drinks.*

Sir Fran. I am sure I ha' drunk it these thirty years, and, by your leave, madam, I don't know that I want wit: ha, ha!

Jenny. But you might have had a great deal more, papa, if you would have been governed by my mother.

Sir Fran. Daughter, he that is governed by his wife, has no wit at all.

Jenny. Then I hope I shall marry a fool, sir; for I love to govern, dearly.

Sir Fran. You are too pert, child; it don't do well in a young woman.

Lady Wrong. Pray, sir Francis, don't snub her; she has a fine growing spirit, and, if you check her so, you will make her as dull as her brother there.

Squire Rich. [*After a long draught.*]—Indeed, mother, I think my sister is too forward.

Jenny. You! You think I'm too forward! Sure, brother mud, your head's too heavy to think of any thing but your belly!

Lady Wrong. Well said, miss! he's none of your master, though he is your elder brother.

Squire Rich. No, nor she shawnt be my mistress, while she's younger sister.

Sir Fran. Well said, Dick! Shew 'em that stawt liquor makes a stawt heart, lad!

Squire Rich. So I will! and I'll drink ageen, for all her. [*Drinks.*

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Sir Fran. So, John, how are the horses?

J. Moody. Troth, sir, I ha' noa good opinion o' this tawn; it's made up o' mischief, I think.

Sir Fran. What's the matter naw?

J. Moody. Why, I'll tell your worship—before we were gotten to th' street end, with the coach, here, a great luggerheaded cart, with wheels as thick as a brick wall, laid hawld on't, and has poo'd it aw to bits; crack went the perch! down goes the coach! and whang says the glass

ses, all to shivers! Marcy upon us! an this be London, would we were aw weel in the country ageen!

Jenny. What have you to do, to wish us all in the country again, Mr Lubber? I hope we shall not go into the country again these seven years, mamma; let twenty coaches be pulled to pieces.

Sir Fran. Hold your tongue, Jenny! Was Roger in no fault in all this?

J. Moody. Noa, sir, nor I, noather. Are not yow ashamed, says Roger to the carter, to do such an unkind thing by strangers? Noa, says he, you bumkin. Sir, he did the thing on very purpose! and so the folks said that stood by—Very well, says Roger, yow shall see what our meyster will say to ye! Your meyster, says he; your meyster may kiss my——and so he clapped his hand just there, and like your worship. Flesh! I thought they had better breeding in this town.

Sir Fran. I'll teach this rascal some, I'll warrant him! Odsbud! If I take him in hand, I'll play the devil with him.

Squire Rich. Aye, do, feyther; have him before the parliament.

Sir Fran. Odsbud! and so I will—I will make him know who I am! Where does he live?

J. Moody. I believe in London, sir.

Sir Fran. What's the rascal's name?

J. Moody. I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

Squire Rich. What, my name!

Sir Fran. Where did he go?

J. Moody. Sir, he went home.

Sir Fran. Where's that?

J. Moody. By my troth, sir, I doan't know! I heard him say he would cross the same street again to-morrow; and if we had a mind to stand in his way, he would pooll us over and over again.

Sir Fran. Will he so? Odzooks! get me a constable.

Lady Wrong. Pooh! get you a good supper. Come, sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat for what can't be helped. Accidents will happen to people that travel abroad to see the world—For my part, I think it's a mercy it was not overturned before we were all out on't.

Sir Fran. Why ay, that's true again, my dear.

Lady Wrong. Therefore, see to-morrow if we can buy one at second-hand, for present use; so bespeak a new one, and then all's easy.

J. Moody. Why, troth, sir, I doan't think this could have held you above a day longer.

Sir Fran. D'ye think so, John?

J. Moody. Why, you ha' had it ever since your worship were high sheriff.

Sir Fran. Why, then, go and see what Doll has got us for supper—and come and get off my boots. [*Exit* SIR FRAN.

Lady Wrong. In the mean time, miss, do you step to Handy, and bid her get me some fresh night-clothes. [*Exit* LADY WRONG.

Jenny. Yes, mamma; and some for myself, too. [*Exit* JENNY.

Squire Rich. Ods-flesh! and what mun I do all alone?

I'll e'en seek out where t'other pratty miss is,
And she and I'll go play at cards for kisses.
[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—LORD TOWNLY'S *house.*

Enter LORD TOWNLY, *a Servant attending.*

Lord Town. WHO's there?

Ser. My lord?

Lord Town. Bid them get dinner—lady Grace, your servant.

Enter LADY GRACE.

Lady Grace. What, is the house up already? My lady is not drest yet.

Lord Town. No matter—it's three o'clock—she may break my rest, but she shall not alter my hours.

Lady Grace. Nay, you need not fear that now, for she dines abroad.

Lord Town. That, I suppose, is only an excuse for her not being ready yet.

Lady Grace. No, upon my word, she is engaged in company.

Lord Town. Where, pray?

Lady Grace. At my lady Revel's; and you know they never dine till supper-time.

Lord Town. No, truly——she is one of those orderly ladies, who never let the sun shine upon any of their vices!——But, prithee, sister, what humour is she in to-day?

Lady Grace. Oh, in tip-top spirits, I can assure you—she won a good deal last night.

Lord Town. I know no difference between her winning or losing, while she continues her course of life.

Lady Grace. However, she is better in good humour than bad.

Lord Town. Much alike: when she is in good humour, other people only are the better for it; when in a very ill humour, then, indeed, I seldom fail to have my share of her.

Lady Grace. Well, we won't talk of that now—Does any body dine here?

Lord Town. Manly promised me—By the way, madam, what do you think of his last conversation?

Lady Grace. I am a little at a stand about it.

Lord Town. How so?

Lady Grace. Why—I don't know how he can

ever have any thoughts of me, that could lay down such severe rules upon wives in my hearing.

Lord Town. Did you think his rules unreasonable?

Lady Grace. I can't say I did; but he might have had a little more complaisance before me, at least.

Lord Town. Complaisance is only a proof of good breeding, but his plainness was a certain proof of his honesty; nay, of his good opinion of you: for he would never have opened himself so freely, but in confidence that your good sense could not be disobliged at it.

Lady Grace. My good opinion of him, brother, has hitherto been guided by yours: but I have received a letter this morning, that shews him a very different man from what I thought him.

Lord Town. A letter! from whom?

Lady Grace. That I don't know; but there it is. [*Gives a letter.*

Lord Town. Pray, let's see. [*Reads.*] 'The inclosed, madam, fell accidentally into my hands; 'if it no way concerns you, you will only have 'the trouble of reading this, from your sincere 'friend, and humble servant, Unknown,' &c.

Lady Grace. And this was the inclosed. [*Gives another.*

Lord Town. [*Reads.*] 'To Charles Manly, 'Esq.—Your manner of living with me of late, 'convinces me that I now grow as painful to you 'as to myself: but, however, though you can 'love me no longer, I hope you will not let me 'live worse than I did, before I left an honest 'income for the vain hopes of being ever yours.

MYRTILLA DUPE.'

'P. S. 'Tis above four months since I received 'a shilling from you.'

Lady Grace. What think you now?

Lord Town. I am considering——

Lady Grace. You see it's directed to him—

Lord Town. That's true; but the postscript seems to be a reproach that I think he is not capable of deserving.

Lady Grace. But who could have concern enough to send it to me?

Lord Town. I have observed that these sort of letters, from unknown friends, generally come from secret enemies.

Lady Grace. What would you have me do in it?

Lord Town. What I think you ought to do—fairly shew it to him, and say I advised you to it.

Lady Grace. Will not that have a very odd look from me?

Lord Town. Not at all, if you use my name in it; if he is innocent, his impatience to appear so will discover his regard to you. If he is guilty, it will be the best way of preventing his addresses.

Lady Grace. But what pretence have I to put him out of countenance?

Lord Town. I can't think there's any fear of that.

Lady Grace. Pray, what is it you do think, then?

Lord Town. Why, certainly, that it's much more probable this letter may be all an artifice, than that he is in the least concerned in it——

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Mr Manly, my lord.

Lord Town. Do you receive him, while I step a minute in to my lady. [*Exit* LORD TOWNLY.

Enter MANLY.

Man. Madam, your most obedient; they told me my lord was here.

Lady Grace. He will be here presently; he is but just gone in to my sister.

Man. So, then, my lady dines with us?

Lady Grace. No; she is engaged.

Man. I hope you are not of her party, madam?

Lady Grace. Not till after dinner.

Man. And, pray, how may she have disposed of the rest of the day?

Lady Grace. Much as usual; she has visits till about eight; after that, till court-time, she is to be at quadrille, at Mrs Idle's; after the drawing-room, she takes a short supper with my lady Moonlight; and, from thence, they go together to my lord Noble's assembly.

Man. And are you to do all this with her, madam?

Lady Grace. Only a few of the visits: I would, indeed, have drawn her to the play; but I doubt we have so much upon our hands, that it will not be practicable.

Man. But how can you forbear all the rest of it?

Lady Grace. There's no great merit in forbearing what one is not charmed with.

Man. And, yet, I have found that very difficult in my time.

Lady Grace. How do you mean?

Man. Why, I have passed a great deal of my life in the hurry of the ladies, though I was generally better pleased when I was at quiet without them.

Lady Grace. What induced you, then, to be with them?

Man. Idleness, and the fashion.

Lady Grace. No mistresses in the case?

Man. To speak honestly—yes—Being often in the toy-shop, there was no forbearing the baubles.

Lady Grace. And of course, I suppose, sometimes you were tempted to pay for them twice as much as they were worth?

Man. Why, really, where fancy only makes the choice, madam, no wonder if we are generally bubbled in those sort of bargains; which, I confess, has been often my case: for I had constantly some coquette or other upon my hands,

whom I could love, perhaps, just enough to put it in her power to plague me.

Lady Grace. And that's a power, I doubt, commonly made use of.

Man. The amours of a coquette, madam, seldom have any other view; I look upon them and prudes to be nuisances just alike, though they seem very different: the first are always plaguing the men, and the others are always abusing the women.

Lady Grace. And yet both of them do it for the same vain ends; to establish a false character of being virtuous.

Man. Of being chaste, they mean; for they know no other virtue; and, upon the credit of that, they traffic in every thing else that's vicious. They (even against nature) keep their chastity, only because they find they have more power to do mischief with it, than they could possibly put in practice without it.

Lady Grace. Hold, Mr Manly! I am afraid this severe opinion of the sex is owing to the ill choice you have made of your mistresses.

Man. In a great measure it may be so; but, madam, if both these characters are so odious, how vastly valuable is that woman, who has attained all they aim at, without the aid of the folly or vice of either!

Lady Grace. I believe those sort of women to be as scarce, sir, as the men that believe there are any such; or that, allowing such, have virtue enough to deserve them.

Man. That could deserve them, then——had been a more favourable reflection.

Lady Grace. Nay, I speak only from my little experience; for (I'll be free with you, Mr Manly) I don't know a man in the world, that, in appearance, might better pretend to a woman of the first merit than yourself: and yet, I have a reason in my hand, here, to think you have your failings.

Man. I have infinite, madam; but I am sure the want of an implicit respect for you is not among the number——Pray, what is in your hand, madam?

Lady Grace. Nay, sir, I have no title to it, for the direction is to you.

[*Gives him a letter.*

Man. To me! I don't remember the hand.

[*Reads to himself.*

Lady Grace. I can't perceive any change of guilt in him; and his surprise seems natural.—[*Aside.*] Give me leave to tell you one thing by the way, Mr Manly, that I should never have shewn you this, but that my brother enjoined me to it.

Man. I take that to proceed from my lord's good opinion of me, madam.

Lady Grace. I hope, at least, it will stand as an excuse for my taking this liberty.

Man. I never yet saw you do any thing, madam, that wanted an excuse; and I hope you will not give me an instance to the contrary, by refusing the favour I am going to ask you.

Lady Grace. I don't believe I shall refuse any that you think proper to ask.

Man. Only this, madam, to indulge me so far as to let me know how this letter came into your hand.

Lady Grace. Inclosed to me in this, without a name.

Man. If there be no secret in the contents, madam———

Lady Grace. Why—there is an impertinent insinuation in it: but as I know your good sense will think it so, too, I will venture to trust you.

Man. You will oblige me, madam.

[*He takes the other letter, and reads.*

Lady Grace, [*Aside.*] Now am I in the oddest situation! methinks our conversation grows terribly critical. This must produce something—Oh, lud! would it were over.

Man. Now, madam, I begin to have some light into the poor project that is at the bottom of all this.

Lady Grace. I have no notion of what could be proposed by it.

Man. A little patience, madam——First, as to the insinuation you mention——

Lady Grace. O! what is he going to say now?

[*Aside.*

Man. Though my intimacy with my lord may have allowed my visits to have been very frequent here of late; yet, in such a talking town as this, you must not wonder if a great many of those visits are placed to your account; and this, taken for granted, I suppose, has been told to my Lady Wronghead, as a piece of news, since her arrival, not improbably with many more imaginary circumstances.

Lady Grace. My lady Wronghead!

Man. Ay, madam; for I am positive this is her hand.

Lady Grace. What view could she have in writing it?

Man. To interrupt any treaty of marriage she may have heard I am engaged in; because, if I die without heirs, her family expects that some part of my estate may return to them again.—But I hope she is so far mistaken, that if this letter has given you the least uneasiness—I shall think that the happiest moment of my life.

Lady Grace. That does not carry your usual complaisance, Mr Manly!

Man. Yes, madam, because I am sure I can convince you of my innocence.

Lady Grace. I am sure I have no right to inquire into it.

Man. Suppose you may not, madam: yet you may, very innocently, have so much curiosity.

Lady Grace. With what an artful gentleness he steals into my opinion! [*Aside.*] Well, sir, I won't pretend to have so little of the woman in me, as to want curiosity—But, pray, do you not

pose, then, this Myrtilla is a real, or a fictitious name?

Man. Now I recollect, madam, there is a young woman in the house where my lady Wronghead lodges, that I heard somebody call Myrtilla: this letter may be written by her—But how it came directed to me, I confess, is a mystery, that, before I ever presume to see your ladyship again, I think myself obliged in honour to find out. [*Going.*

Lady Grace. Mr Manly—you are not going?

Man. 'Tis but to the next street, madam; I shall be back in ten minutes.

Lady Grace. Nay, but dinner's just coming up.

Man. Madam, I can neither eat nor rest, till I see an end of this affair.

Lady Grace. But this is so odd! why should any silly curiosity of mine drive you away?

Man. Since you won't suffer it to be yours, madam, then it shall be only to satisfy my own curiosity—— [*Exit* MAN.

Lady Grace. Well—and now, what am I to think of all this? Or, suppose an indifferent person had heard every word we have said to one another, what would they have thought on't?—Would it have been very absurd to conclude, he is seriously inclined to pass the rest of his life with me? I hope not—for I am sure the case is terribly clear on my side; and why may not I, without vanity, suppose my——unaccountable somewhat—has done as much execution upon him? Why—because he never told me so—nay, he has not so much as mentioned the word love, or ever said one civil thing to my person—well—but he has said a thousand to my good opinion, and has certainly got it——had he spoke first to my person, he had paid a very ill compliment to my understanding——I should have thought him impertinent, and never have troubled my head about him; but, as he has managed the matter, at least I am sure of one thing, that let his thoughts be what they will, I shall never trouble my head about any other man as long as I live.

Enter MRS TRUSTY.

Well, Mrs Trusty, is my sister dressed yet?

Trusty. Yes, madam; but my lord has been courting her so, I think, till they are both out of humour.

Lady Grace. How so?

Trusty. Why, it began, madam, with his lordship's desiring her ladyship to dine at home today—upon which, my lady said she could not be ready; upon that, my lord ordered them to stay the dinner; and then my lady ordered the coach: then my lord took her short, and said he had ordered the coachman to set up; then my lady made him a great curtsey, and said she would wait till his lordship's horses had dined, and was mighty pleasant: but, for fear of the worst, madam, she whispered me—to get her chair ready.

[*Exit* TRUSTY.

Lady Grace. Oh, here they come! and, by their looks, seem a little unfit for company.

[*Exit* LADY GRACE.

Enter LADY TOWNLY, LORD TOWNLY *following.*

Lady Town. Well, look you, my lord, I can bear it no longer; nothing still but about my faults, my faults: an agreeable subject, truly!

Lord Town. Why, madam, if you won't hear of them, how can I ever hope to see you mend them?

Lady Town. Why, I don't intend to mend them—I can't mend them——you know I have tried to do it a hundred times—and—it hurts me so—I can't bear it.

Lord Town. And I, madam, can't bear this daily licentious abuse of your time and character.

Lady Town. Abuse! astonishing! when the universe knows I am never better company than when I am doing what I have a mind to! But to see this world! that men can never get over that silly spirit of contradiction—Why, but last Thursday, now,—there you wisely amended one of my faults, as you call them---you insisted upon my not going to the masquerade—and, pray, what was the consequence? Was not I as cross as the devil all the night after? Was not I forced to get company at home? And was it not almost three o'clock in the morning before I was able to come to myself again! And then the fault is not mended neither——for next time I shall only have twice the inclination to go: so that all this mending, and mending, you see, is but darning an old ruffle, to make it worse than it was before.

Lord Town. Well, the manner of women's living of late is insupportable; and one way or other——

Lady Town. It's to be mended, I suppose? why, so it may: but then, my dear lord, you must give one time——and when things are at worst, you know, they may mend themselves, ha, ha!

Lord Town. Madam, I am not in a humour now to trifle.

Lady Town. Why then, my lord, one word of fair argument—to talk with you in your own way, now—You complain of my late hours, and I of your early ones—so far we are even, you'll allow—But pray, which gives us the best figure in the eye of the polite world? my active, spirited three in the morning, or your dull, drowsy eleven at night? Now, I think, one has the air of a woman of quality, and t'other of a plodding mechanic, that goes to bed betimes, that he may rise early to open his shop---Faugh!

Lord Town. Fy, fy, madam! is this your way of reasoning? 'tis time to wake you, then---

'Tis not your ill hours alone that disturb me, but as often the ill company that occasion those ill hours.

Lady Town. Sure I don't understand you now, my lord; what ill company do I keep?

Lord Town. Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it; or, perhaps, men that are voluntary bubbles at one game, in hopes a lady will give them fair play at another. Then, that unavoidable mixture with known rakes, concealed thieves, and sharpers in embroidery—or, what, to me, is still more shocking, that herd of familiar, chattering, crop-eared coxcombs, who are so often like monkeys, there would be no knowing them asunder, but that their tails hang from their heads, and the monkey's grows where it should do.

Lady Town. And a husband must give eminent proof of his sense, that thinks these powder-puffs dangerous.

Lord Town. Their being fools, madam, is not always the husband's security; or, if it were, fortune sometimes gives them advantages that might make a thinking woman tremble.

Lady Town. What do you mean?

Lord Town. That women sometimes lose more than they are able to pay: and if a creditor be a little pressing, the lady may be reduced to try, if, instead of gold, the gentleman will accept of a trinket.

Lady Town. My lord, you grow scurrilous; you'll make me hate you. I'll have you to know, I keep company with the politest people in town; and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

Lord Town. So are the churches——now and then.

Lady Town. My friends frequent them, too, as well as the assemblies.

Lord Town. Yes, and would do it oftener, if a groom of the chambers were there allowed to furnish cards to the company.

Lady Town. I see what you drive at all this while: you would lay an imputation on my fame, to cover your own avarice. I might take any pleasures, I find, that were not expensive.

Lord Town. Have a care, madam; don't let me think you only value your chastity to make me reproachable for not indulging you in every thing else that's vicious—I, madam, have a reputation, too, to guard, that's dear to me as yours—The follies of an ungoverned wife may make the wisest man uneasy; but 'tis his own fault, if ever they make him contemptible,

Lady Town. My lord—you would make a woman mad!

Lord Town. You'd make a man a fool!

Lady Town. If Heaven has made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

Lord Town. Whatever may be in your inclination, madam, I'll prevent your making me a beggar, at least.

Lady Town. A beggar! Crœsus! I'm out of patience!—I won't come home till four to-morrow morning.

Lord Town. That may be, madam; but I'll order the doors to be locked at twelve.

Lady Town. Then I won't come home till to-morrow night.

Lord Town. Then, madam—you shall never come home again. [*Exit* LORD TOWNLY.

Lady Town. What does he mean? I never heard such a word from him in my life before! The man always used to have manners in his worst humours. There's something, that I don't see, at the bottom of all this—But his head's always upon some impracticable scheme or other; so I won't trouble mine any longer about him. Mr Manly, your servant.

Enter MANLY.

Man. I ask pardon for intrusion, madam; but I hope my business with my lord will excuse it.

Lady Town. I believe you'll find him in the next room, sir.

Man. Will you give me leave, madam?

Lady Town. Sir—you have my leave, though you were a lady.

Man. [*Aside.*] What a well-bred age do we live in! [*Exit* MANLY.

Enter LADY GRACE.

Lady Town. Oh, my dear lady Grace! how could you leave me so unmercifully alone all this while?

Lady Grace. I thought my lord had been with you.

Lady Town. Why, yes—and therefore I wanted your relief; for he has been in such a flutter here——

Lady Grace. Bless me! for what?

Lady Town. Only our usual breakfast; we have each of us had our dish of matrimonial comfort this morning——We have been charming company!

Lady Grace. I am mighty glad of it: sure it must be a vast happiness, when a man and a wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation!

Lady Town. Oh, the prettiest thing in the world!

Lady Grace. Now I should be afraid, that where two people are every day together so, they must often be in the want of something to talk upon.

Lady Town. Oh, my dear, you are the most mistaken in the world! married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others. Why, here's my lord and I, now, we have not been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that, whenever we want company, we can take up any one of them for two hours together, and the subject never the flatter; nay, if we have occassion for it,

it will be as fresh next day, too, as it was the first hour it entertained us.

Lady Grace. Certainly that must be vastly pretty!

Lady Town. Oh, there's no life like it! Why, t'other day, for example, when you dined abroad, my lord and I, after a pretty cheerful *tête à tête* meal, sat us down by the fire-side in an easy, indolent, pick-tooth way, for about a quarter of an hour, as if we had not thought of any other's being in the room——At last, stretching himself, and yawning—My dear—says he——aw——you came home very late last night——'Twas but just turned of two, says I—I was in bed—aw—by eleven, says he—So you are every night, says I—Well, says he, I am amazed you can sit up so late—How can you be amazed, says I, at a thing that happens so often?—Upon which we entered into a conversation—and though this is a point has entertained us above fifty times already, we always find so many pretty new things to say upon it, that I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.

Lady Grace. But pray, in such sort of family dialogues, (though extremely well for passing the time) don't there, now and then, enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

Lady Town. Oh, yes! which does not do amiss at all. A smart repartee, with a zest of recrimination at the head of it, makes the prettiest sherbet. Ay, ay, if we did not mix a little of the acid with it, a matrimonial society would be so luscious, that nothing but an old liquorish prude would be able to bear it.

Lady Grace. Well—certainly you have the most elegant taste———

Lady Town. Though, to tell you the truth, my dear, I rather think we squeezed a little too much lemon into it this bout! for it grew so sour at last, that—I think—I almost told him he was a fool—and he, again—talked something oddly of—turning me out of doors.

Lady Grace. Oh, have a care of that!

Lady Town. Nay, if he should, I may thank my own wise father for that———

Lady Grace. How so?

Lady Town. Why—when my good lord first opened his honourable trenches before me, my unaccountable papa, in whose hands I then was, gave me up at discretion.

Lady Grace. How do you mean?

Lady Town. He said, the wives of this age were come to that pass, that he would not desire even his own daughter should be trusted with pin-money; so that, my whole train of separate inclinations are left entirely at the mercy of a husband's odd humours.

Lady Grace. Why, that, indeed, is enough to make a woman of spirit look about her.

Lady Town. Nay, but to be serious, my dear; what would you really have a woman do, in my case?

Lady Grace. Why—if I had a sober husband, as you have, I would make myself the happiest wife in the world, by being as sober as he.

Lady Town. Oh, you wicked thing! how can you teaze one at this rate, when you know he is so very sober, that (except giving me money) there is not one thing in the world he can do to please me? And I, at the same time, partly by nature, and partly, perhaps, by keeping the best company, do, with my soul, love almost every thing he hates. I dote upon assemblies; my heart bounds at a ball; and at an opera—I expire. Then I love play to distraction; cards enchant me—and dice put me out of my little wits—Dear, dear hazard!—Oh, what a flow of spirits it gives one! —Do you never play at hazard, child?

Lady Grace. Oh, never! I don't think it sits well upon women; there's something so masculine, so much the air of a rake in it. You see how it makes the men swear and curse; and when a woman is thrown into the same passion—why—

Lady Town. That's very true; one is a little put to it, sometimes, not to make use of the same words to express it.

Lady Grace. Well—and, upon ill luck, pray what words are you really forced to make use of?

Lady Town. Why, upon a very hard case, indeed, when a sad wrong word is rising, just to one's tongue's end, I give a great gulp—and swallow it.

Lady Grace. Well; and is not that enough to make you forswear play as long as you live?

Lady Town. Oh, yes: I have forsworn it.

Lady Grace. Seriously?

Lady Town. Solemnly! a thousand times; but then one is constantly forsworn.

Lady Grace. And how can you answer that?

Lady Town. My dear, what we say, when we are losers, we look upon to be no more binding than a lover's oath, or a great man's promise. But I beg pardon, child; I should not lead you so far into the world; you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

Lady Grace. Why, I confess, my nature and my education do, in a good degree, incline me that way.

Lady Town. Well, how a woman of spirit (for you don't want that, child) can dream of living soberly, is to me inconceivable; for you will marry, I suppose?

Lady Grace. I can't tell but I may.

Lady Town. And won't you live in town?

Lady Grace. Half the year, I should like it very well.

Lady Town. My stars! and you would really live in London half the year, to be sober in it?

Lady Grace. Why not?

Lady Town. Why can't you as well go and be sober in the country?

Lady Grace. So I would—t'other half year.

Lady Town. And pray, what comfortable

scheme of life would you form, now, for your summer and winter sober entertainments?

Lady Grace. A scheme that, I think, might very well content us.

Lady Town. Oh, of all things, let's hear it!

Lady Grace. Why, in summer, I could pass my leisure hours in riding, in reading, walking by a canal, or sitting at the end of it under a great tree; in dressing, dining, chatting with an agreeable friend; perhaps, hearing a little music, taking a dish of tea, or a game of cards, soberly; managing my family, looking into its accounts, playing with with my children, if I had any, or in a thousand other innocent amusements—soberly; and possibly, by these means, I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself—

Lady Town. Well, my dear, thou art an astonishing creature! For sure such primitive antediluvian notions of life have not been in any head these thousand years——Under a great tree! O, my soul!—But I beg we may have the sober town-scheme too—for I am charmed with the country one!

Lady Grace. You shall, and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

Lady Town. Well, though I'm sure it will give me the vapours, I must hear it, however.

Lady Grace. Why, then, for fear of your fainting, madam, I will first so far come into the fashion, that I would never be dressed out of it—but still it should be soberly: for I can't think it any disgrace to a woman of my private fortune, not to wear her lace as fine as the wedding-suit of a first duchess. Though there is one extravagance I would venture to come up to.

Lady Town. Aye, now for it——

Lady Grace. I would every day be as clean as a bride.

Lady Town. Why, the men say, that's a great step to be made one—Well, now you are drest—Pray, let's see to what purpose?

Lady Grace. I would visit—that is, my real friends; but as little for form as possible. I would go to court; sometimes to an assembly, nay, play at quadrille——soberly: I would see all the good plays; and, because 'tis the fashion, now and then an opera———but I would not expire there, for fear I should never go again: and, lastly, I can't say, but for curiosity, if I liked my company, I might be drawn in once to a masquerade; and this, I think, is as far as any woman can go———soberly.

Lady Town. Well, if it had not been for that last piece of sobriety, I was just going to call for some surfeit-water.

Lady Grace. Why, don't you think, with the farther aid of breakfasting, dining, and taking the air, supping, sleeping, not to say a word of devotion, the four-and-twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner?

Lady Town. Tolerable! Deplorable! Why, child, all you propose is but to endure life; now, I want to enjoy it.

Enter MRS TRUSTY.

Trust. Madam, your ladyship's chair is ready.

Lady Town. Have the footmen their white flambeaux yet? For, last night, I was poisoned.

Trust. Yes, madam; there were some come in this morning. [*Exit* TRUSTY.

Lady Town. My dear, you will excuse me; but you know my time is so precious———

Lady Grace. That I beg I may not hinder your least enjoyment of it.

Lady Town. You will call on me at lady Revel's?

Lady Grace. Certainly.

Lady Town. But I am so afraid it will break into your scheme, my dear!

Lady Grace. When it does, I will——soberly break from you.

Lady Town. Why then, 'till we meet again, dear sister, I wish you all tolerable happiness.

[*Exit* LADY TOWNLY.

Lady Grace. There she goes—Dash! into her stream of pleasures! Poor woman! she is really a fine creature; and sometimes infinitely agreeable; nay, take her out of the madness of this town, rational in her notions, and easy to live with: but she is so borne down by this torrent of vanity in vogue, she thinks every hour of her life is lost that she does not lead at the head of it. What it will end in, I tremble to imagine!—Ha, my brother! and Manly with him? I guess what they have been talking of——I shall hear it in my turn, I suppose; but it won't become me to be inquisitive. [*Exit* LADY GRACE.

Enter LORD TOWNLY *and* MANLY.

Lord Town. I did not think my lady Wronghead had such a notable brain: though I can't say she was so very wise, in trusting this silly girl, you call Myrtilla, with the secret.

Man. No, my lord, you mistake me; had the girl been in the secret, perhaps I had never come at it myself.

Lord Town. Why, I thought you said this girl writ this letter to you, and that my lady Wronghead sent it inclosed to my sister?

Man. If you please to give me leave, my lord——the fact is thus—This inclosed letter to lady Grace was a real original one, written by this girl to the count we have been talking of: the count drops it, and my lady Wronghead finds it: then, only changing the cover, she seals it up as a letter of business, just written by herself, to me: and, pretending to be in a hurry, gets this innocent girl to write the direction for her.

Lord Town. Oh, then, the girl did not know she was superscribing a billet-doux of her own to you?

Man. No, my lord; for when I first question-

ed her about the direction, she owned it immediately; but, when I shewed her that her letter to the count was within it, and told her how it came into my hands, the poor creature was amazed, and thought herself betrayed both by the count and my lady—In short, upon this discovery, the girl and I grew so gracious, that she has let me into some transactions, in my lady Wronghead's family, which, with my having a careful eye over them, may prevent the ruin of it.

Lord Town. You are very generous, to be solicitous for a lady that has given you so much uneasiness.

Man. But I will be most unmercifully revenged of her; for I will do her the greatest friendship in the world——against her will.

Lord Town. What an uncommon philosophy art thou master of, to make even thy malice a virtue!

Man. Yet, my lord, I assure you, there is no one action of my life gives me more pleasure than your approbation of it.

Lord Town. Dear Charles! my heart's impatient 'till thou art nearer to me! and, as a proof that I have long wished thee so, while your daily conduct has chosen rather to deserve than ask my sister's favour, I have been as secretly industrious to make her sensible of your merit: and since, on this occasion, you have opened your whole heart to me, 'tis now, with equal pleasure, I assure you, we have both succeeded——she is as firmly yours———

Man. Impossible! you flatter me!

Lord Town. I'm glad you think it flattery: but she herself shall prove it none: she dines with us alone: when the servants are withdrawn, I'll open a conversation, that shall excuse my leaving you together—Oh, Charles! had I, like thee, been cautious in my choice, what melancholy hours had this heart avoided!

Man. No more of that, I beg, my lord——

Lord Town. But 'twill, at least, be some relief to my anxiety, however barren of content the state has been to me, to see so near a friend and sister happy in it. Your harmony of life will be an instance how much the choice of temper is preferable to beauty.

While your soft hours in mutual kindness move,
You'll reach, by virtue, what I lost by love.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—MRS MOTHERLY'S *house.*

Enter MRS MOTHERLY, *meeting* MYRTILLA.

Moth. So, niece! where is it possible you can have been these six hours?

Myr. Oh, madam! I have such a terrible story to tell you.

Moth. A story! Ods my life! What have you done with the count's note of five hundred pounds, I sent you about? Is it safe? Is it good? Is it security?

Myr. Yes, yes, it is safe: but for its goodness ——Mercy on us! I have been in a fair way to be hanged about it!

Moth. The dickens! has the rogue of a count played us another trick, then?

Myr. You shall hear, madam. When I came to Mr Cash, the banker's, and shewed him his note for five hundred pounds, payable to the count, or order, in two months——he looked earnestly upon it, and desired me to step into the inner room, while he examined his books—after I had stayed about ten minutes, he came in to me—claps to the door, and charges me with a constable for forgery.

Moth. Ah, poor soul! and how didst thou get off?

Myr. While I was ready to sink in this condition, I begged him to have a little patience, 'till I could send for Mr Manly, whom he knew to be a gentlemen of worth and honour, and who, I was sure, would convince him, whatever fraud might be in the note, that I was myself an innocent abused woman——and, as good luck would have it, in less than half an hour, Mr Manly came—so, without mincing the matter, I fairly told him upon what design the count had lodged that note in your hands, and, in short, laid open the whole scheme he had drawn us into, to make our fortune.

Moth. The devil you did!

Myr. Why, how do you think it was possible I could any otherwise make Mr Manly my friend, to help me out of the scrape I was in? To conclude, he soon made Mr Cash easy, and sent away the constable: nay, farther, he promised me, if I would trust the note in his hands, he would take care it should be fully paid before it was due, and, at the same time, would give me an ample revenge upon the count; so that, all you have to consider now, madam, is, whether you think yourself safer in the count's hands, or Mr Manly's.

Moth. Nay, nay, child; there is no choice in the matter! Mr Manly may be a friend, indeed, if any thing in our power can make him so.

Myr. Well, madam, and now, pray, how stand matters at home here? What has the count done with the ladies?

Moth. Why, every thing he has a mind to do, by this time, I suppose. He is in high favour with miss, as he is with my lady.

Myr. Pray, where are the ladies?

Moth. Rattling abroad in their own coach.

and the well-bred count along with them: they have been scouring all the shops in town over, buying fine things and new clothes from morning to night: they have made one voyage already, and have brought home such a cargo of bawbles and trumpery—Mercy on the poor man that's to pay for them!

Myr. Did not the young 'squire go with them?

Moth. No, no; miss said, truly he would but disgrace their party: so they even left him asleep by the kitchen fire.

Myr. Has not he asked after me all this while? for I had a sort of an assignation with him.

Moth. Oh, yes; he has been in a bitter taking about it. At last, his disappointment grew so uneasy, that he fairly fell a crying; so, to quiet him, I sent one of the maids and John Moody abroad with him, to shew him the lions, and the monument. Ods me! there he is just come home again—You may have business with him—so I'll even turn you together. [*Exit* MOTH.

Enter SQUIRE RICHARD.

Squire Rich. Soah, soah, Mrs Myrtilla, where han yaw been aw this day, forsooth?

Myr. Nay, if you go to that, 'squire, where have you been, pray?

Squire Rich. Why, when I fun' at yow were no loikly to come whoam, I were ready to hong my sel——so John Moody, and I, and one o' your lasses, have been——Lord knows where——a seeing o' the soights.

Myr. Well, and pray what have you seen, sir?

Squire Rich. Flesh! I cawnt tell, not I—seen every thing, I think. First, there we went o' top o' the what-d'ye-call-it? there, the great huge stone post, up the rawnd and rawnd stairs, that twine and twine about just an as thof it was a cork-screw.

Myr. Oh, the monument; well, and was it not a fine sight from the top of it?

Squire Rich. Sight, miss! I know no'—I saw nought but smoak and brick housen, and steeple tops———then there was such a mortal ting-tang of bells, and rumbling of carts and coaches; and then the folks under one looked so small, and made such a hum, and a buz, it put me in mind of my mother's great glass bee-hive in our garden in the country.

Myr. I think, master, you give a very good account of it.

Squire Rich. Ay; but I did not like it: for my head—my head—began to turn—so, I trundled me down stairs agen, like a round trencher.

Myr. Well, but this was not all you saw, I suppose?

Squire Rich. Noa, noa; we went, after that, and saw the lions, and I liked them better by hawlf; they are pure grim devils; hoh, hoh! I touke a stick, and gave one of them such a poke o' the noase—I believe he would ha' snapt my head off, an he could have got me. Hoh! hoh! hoh!

Myr. Well, master, when you and I go abroad, I'll shew you prettier sights than these—there's a masquerade to-morrow.

Squire Rich. Oh, laud, ay! they say that's a pure thing for Merry Andrews, and those sort of comical mummers—and the count tells me, that there lads and lasses may jig their tails, and eat, and drink, without grudging, all night lung.

Myr. What would you say now, if I should get you a ticket, and go along with you?

Squire Rich. Ah, dear!

Myr. But have a care, 'squire; the fine ladies there are terribly tempting; look well to your heart, or, ads me! they'll whip it up in the trip of a minute.

Squire Rich. Ay, but they cawnt thoa—soa let 'um look to themselves, an' ony of 'um falls in love with me—mayhap they had as good be quiet.

Myr. Why, sure you would not refuse a fine lady, would you?

Squire Rich. Ay, but I would though, unless it were—one as I know of.

Myr. Oh, oh! then you have left your heart in the country, I find!

Squire Rich. Noa, noa, my heart—eh—my heart e'nt awt o' this room.

Myr. I am glad you have it about you, however.

Squire Rich. Nay, mayhap not soa, noather; somebody else may have it, 'at you little think of.

Myr. I can't imagine what you mean!

Squire Rich. Noa! why doan't you know how many folks there is in this room, naw?

Myr. Very fine, master; I see you have learnt the town gallantry already.

Squire Rich. Why, doan't you believe 'at I have a kindness for you, then?

Myr. Fy, fy, master, how you talk! beside, you are too young to think of a wife.

Squire Rich. Ay! but I caunt help thinking o' you, for all that.

Myr. How! why sure, sir, you don't pretend to think of me in a dishonourable way?

Squire Rich. Nay, that's as you see good—I did no' think 'at you would ha' thowght of me for a husband, mayhap; unless I had means in my own hands; and feyther allows me but haulf a crown a-week, as yet awhile.

Myr. Oh, when I like any body, 'tis not want of money will make me refuse them.

Squire Rich. Well, that's just my mind now; for an I like a girl, miss, I would take her in her smock.

Myr. Ay, master, now you speak like a man of honour; this shews something of a true heart in you.

Squire Rich. Ay, and a true heart you'll find me, try when you will.

Myr. Hush, hush, here's your papa come home, and my aunt with him.

Squire Rich. A devil rive 'em! what do they come naw for?

Myr. When you and I get to the masquerade, you shall see what I'll say to you.

Squire Rich. Well, hands upon't, then—

Myr. There—

Squire Rich. One buss, and a bargain. [*Kisses her.*] Ads waunthkins! as soft and plump as a marrow-pudding. [*Exeunt severally.*

Enter SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD, *and* MRS MOTHERLY.

Sir Fran. What! my wife and daughter abroad, say you?

Moth. Oh, dear sir, they have been mighty busy all the day long; they just came home to snap up a short dinner, and so went out again.

Sir Fran. Well, well; I shan't stay supper for them, I can tell them that: for, ods-heart, I have nothing in me but a toast and tankard since morning.

Moth. I am afraid, sir, these late parliament hours won't agree with you.

Sir Fran. Why, truly, Mrs Motherly, they don't do right with us country gentlemen; to lose one meal out of three, is a hard tax upon a good stomach.

Moth. It is so, indeed, sir.

Sir Fran. But howsomever, Mrs Motherly, when we consider, that what we suffer is for the good of our country———

Moth. Why, truly, sir, that is something.

Sir Fran. Oh, there's a great deal to be said for't—the good of one's country is above all things—A true-hearted Englishman thinks nothing too much for it—I have heard of some honest gentlemen so very zealous, that, for the good of their country—they would sometimes go to dinner at midnight.

Moth. Oh, that goodness of them! sure their country must have a vast esteem for them!

Sir Fran. So they have, Mrs Motherly; they are so respected when they come home to their boroughs after a session, and so beloved—that their country will come and dine with them every day in the week.

Moth. Dear me! What a fine thing 'tis to be so populous!

Sir Fran. It is a great comfort, indeed! and, I can assure you, you are a good sensible woman, Mrs Motherly.

Moth. Oh, dear sir, your honour's pleased to compliment!

Sir Fran. No, no; I see you know how to value people of consequence.

Moth. Good lack! here's company, sir. Will you give me leave to get you a little something till the ladies come home, sir?

Sir Fran. Why, troth, I don't think it would be amiss.

Moth. It shall be done in a moment, sir.

[*Exit* MOTHERLY.

Enter MANLY.

Man. Sir Francis, your servant.

Sir Fran. Cousin Manly!

Man. I am come to see how the family goes on here.

Sir Fran. Troth! all as busy as bees. I have been upon the wing ever since eight o'clock this morning!

Man. By your early hour, then, I suppose you have been making your court to some of the great men.

Sir Fran. Why, faith! you have hit it, sir—— I was advised to lose no time: so I went e'en straight forward to one great man I had never seen in my life before.

Man. Right! that was doing business: but who had you got to introduce you?

Sir Fran. Why, nobody——I remember I had heard a wise man say—My son, be bold—so, troth, I introduced myself!

Man. As how, pray?

Sir Fran. Why, thus—Look ye———Please your lordship, says I, I am sir Francis Wrongheaded, of Bumper-hall, and member of parliament for the borough of Guzzledown———Sir, your humble servant, says my lord; thof I have not the honour to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am glad your borough has made choice of so worthy a representative: and so, says he, Sir Francis, have you any service to command me? Naw, cousin, those last words, you may be sure, gave me no small encouragement. And thof I know, sir, you have no extraordinary opinion of my parts, yet, I believe, you won't say I mist it naw!

Man. Well, I hope I shall have no cause.

Sir Fran. So, when I found him so courteous—My lord, says I, I did not think to ha' troubled your lordship with business upon my first visit; but, since your lordship is pleased not to stand upon ceremony,—why truly, says I, I think naw is as good as another time.

Man. Right! there you pushed him home.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay; I had a mind to let him see that I was none of your mealy-mouthed ones.

Man. Very good.

Sir Fran. So, in short, my lord, says I, I have a good estate——but—a—it's a little awt at elbows: and, as I desire to serve my king, as well as my country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

Man. So, this was making short work on't.

Sir Fran. I'cod! I shot him flying, cousin! some of your hawf-witted ones, naw, would ha' hummed and hawed, and dangled a month or two after him, before they durst open their mouths about a place, and, mayhap, not ha' got it at last neither.

Man. Oh, I'm glad you're so sure on't—

Sir Fran. You shall hear, cousin—Sir Francis, says my lord, pray what sort of a place may you ha' turned your thoughts upon? My lord, says I, beggars must not be chusers; but ony place, says I, about a thousand a-year, will be well enough to be doing with, till something better falls in—for I thowght it would not look well to stond haggling with him at first.

Man. No, no; your business was to get footing any way.

Sir Fran. Right! there's it! Ay, cousin, I see you know the world.

Man. Yes, yes; one sees more of it every day———Well, but what said my lord to all this?

Sir Fran. Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you any way that lies in my power; so he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, give yourself no trouble———I'll do your business. With that he turned him abawt to somebody with a coloured ribbon across here, that looked in my thoughts, as if he came for a place, too.

Man. Ha! ha! so, upon these hopes, you are to make your fortune!

Sir Fran. Why! do you think there's any doubt of it, sir?

Man. Oh, no; I have not the least doubt about it—for, just as you have done, I made my fortune ten years ago.

Sir Fran. Why, I never knew you had a place, cousin!

Man. Nor I, neither, upon my faith, cousin. But you, perhaps, may have better fortune: for I suppose my lord has heard of what importance you were in the debate to-day———You have been since down at the house, I presume?

Sir Fran. Oh, yes! I would not neglect the house for ever so much.

Man. Well, and pray what have they done there?

Sir Fran. Why, troth, I can't well tell you what they have done; but I can tell you what I did: and I think pretty well in the main; only I happened to make a little mistake at last, indeed.

Man. How was that?

Sir Fran. Why, they were all got there into a sort of a puzzling debate about the good of the nation—and I were always for that, you know—but, in short, the arguments were so long-winded on both sides, that, waunds! I did not well understand 'um: hawsomever, I was convinced, and so resolved to vote right, according to my conscience———so, when they came to put the question, as they call it,—I don't know haw 'twas—but I doubt I cried Ay! when I should ha' cried No!

Man. How came that about?

Sir Fran. Why, by a mistake, as I tell you—for there was a good-humoured sort of a gentleman, one Mr Totherside, I think they call him, that sat next me, as soon as I had cried Ay, gives me a hearty shake by the hand. Sir, says he, you are a man of honour, and a true Englishman! and I should be proud to be better acquainted with you—and so, with that, he takes me by the sleeve along with the crowd into the lobby—so, I knew nowght—but, ods flesh! I was got o' the wrung side the post, for I were told afterwards I should have staid where I was.

Man. And so, if you had not quite made your fortune before, you have clinched it now!—Ah thou head of the Wrongheads! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Odso! here's my lady come home at last—I hope, cousin, you will be so kind as to take a family supper with us?

Man. Another time, Sir Francis; but to-night I am engaged.

Enter LADY WRONGHEAD, MISS JENNY, *and* COUNT BASSET.

Lady Wrong. Cousin, your servant; I hope you will pardon my rudeness; but we have really been in such a continual hurry here, that we have not had a leisure moment to return your last visit.

Man. Oh, madam, I am a man of no ceremony; you see that has not hindered my coming again.

Lady Wrong. You are infinitely obliging; but I'll redeem my credit with you.

Man. At your own time, madam.

Count Bas. I must say that for Mr Manly, madam, if making people easy is the rule of good-breeding, he is certainly the best-bred man in the world.

Man. Soh! I am not to drop my acquaintance, I find—[*Aside.*] I am afraid, sir, I shall grow vain upon your good opinion.

Count Bas. I don't know that, sir; but I am sure what you are pleased to say makes me so.

Man. The most impudent modesty that ever I met with! [*Aside.*

Lady Wrong. Lard! how ready his wit is! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Don't you think, sir, the count's a very fine gentleman? [*Apart.*

Man. Oh, among the ladies, certainly. [*Apart.*

Sir Fran. And yet he's as stout as a lion. Waund, he'll storm any thing! [*Apart.*

Man. Will he so? why, then, sir, take care of your citadel. [*Apart.*

Sir Fran. Ah, you are a wag, cousin! [*Apart.*

Man. I hope, ladies, the town air continues to agree with you?

Jenny. Oh, perfectly well, sir! We have been abroad in our new coach all day long———and we have bought an ocean of fine things. And to-morrow we go to the masquerade; and on Friday to the play; and on Saturday to the opera; and on Sunday we are to be at the what-d'ye-call-it———assembly, and see the ladies play at quad-

rille, and piquet, and ombre, and hazard, and basset; and on Monday we are to see the king; and so on Tuesday——

Lady Wrong. Hold, hold, miss! You must not let your tongue run so fast, child—you forget; you know I brought you hither to learn modesty.

Man. Yes, yes! and she is improved with a vengeance—— [*Aside.*

Jenny. Lawrd! Mamma, I am sure I did not say any harm; and, if one must not speak in one's turn, one may be kept under as long as one lives, for aught I see.

Lady Wrong. O' my conscience, this girl grows so headstrong——

Sir Fran. Ay, ay; there's your fine growing spirit for you! Now, tack it down an' you can.

Jenny. All I said, papa, was only to entertain my cousin Manly.

Man. My pretty dear, I am mightily obliged to you!

Jenny. Look you there, now, madam.

Lady Wrong. Hold your tongue, I say.

Jenny. [*Turning away, and gloating.*]—I declare it, I can't bear it—she is always snubbing me before you, sir! I know why she does it, well enough—— [*Aside to the* COUNT.

Count Bas. Hush, hush, my dear! Don't be uneasy at that; she'll suspect us. [*Aside.*

Jenny. Let her suspect; what do I care——I don't know but I have as much reason to suspect as she——though, perhaps, I am not so afraid of her.

Count Bas. [*Aside.*]—'Egad, if I don't keep a tight hand on my tit, here, she'll run away with my project before I can bring it to bear.

Lady Wrong. [*Aside.*]—Perpetually hanging upon him! The young harlot is certainly in love with him; but I must not let them see I think so—and yet I cannot bear it. Upon my life, count, you'll spoil that forward girl—you should not encourage her so.

Count Bas. Pardon me, madam; I was only advising her to observe what your ladyship said to her.

Man. Yes, truly, her observations have been something particular. [*Aside.*

Count Bas. In one word, madam, she has a jealousy of your ladyship, and I am forced to encourage her, to blind it; 'twill be better to take no notice of her behaviour to me. [*Apart.*

Lady Wrong. You are right; I will be more cautious. [*Apart.*

Count Bas. To-morrow, at the masquerade, we may lose her. [*Apart.*

Lady Wrong. We shall be observed; I'll send you a note, and settle that affair—go on with the girl, and don't mind me. [*Apart.*

Count Bas. I have been taking your part, my little angel.

Lady Wrong. Jenny! Come hither, child—You must not be so hasty, my dear—I only advise you for your good.

Jenny. Yes, mamma; but when I am told of a thing before company, it always makes me worse, you know.

Man. If I have any skill in the fair sex, miss and her mamma have only quarrelled, because they are both of a mind. This facetious count seems to have made a very genteel step into the family. [*Aside.*

Enter MYRTILLA. MANLY *talks apart with her.*

Lady Wrong. Well, sir Francis, and what news have you brought us from Westminster to-day?

Sir Fran. News, madam, I'cod! I have some ——and such as does not come every day, I can tell you—a word in your ear—I have got a promise of a place at court of a thousand pawnd a-year already.

Lady Wrong. Have you so, sir? And pray who may you thank for't? Now! Who is in the right? Is not this better than throwing so much away after a stinking pack of fox-hounds in the country? Now your family may be the better for it.

Sir Fran. Nay, that's what persuaded me to come up, my dove!

Lady Wrong. Mighty well—come—let me have another hundred pound, then.

Sir Fran. Another! child? waunds! you have had one hundred this morning; pray what's become of that, my dear?

Lady Wrong. What's become of it? Why, I'll shew you, my love: Jenny, have you the bills about you?

Jenny. Yes, mamma.

Lady Wrong. What's become of it? Why, laid out, my dear, with fifty more to it, that I was forced to borrow of the count, here.

Jenny. Yes, indeed, papa; and that would hardly do, neither——There's the account.

Sir Fran. [*Turning over the bills.*]—Let's see! Let's see! What the devil have we got here?

Man. Then you have sounded your aunt, you say, and she readily comes into all I proposed to you? [*Apart.*

Myr. Sir, I'll answer, with my life, she is most thankfully yours, in every article. She mightily desires to see you, sir. [*Apart.*

Man. I am going home directly; bring her to my house in half an hour; and, if she makes good what you tell me, you shall both find your account in it. [*Apart.*

Myr. Sir, she shall not fail you. [*Apart.*

Sir Fran. Od's-life! Madam, here's nothing but toys, and trinkets, and fans, and clock stockings, by wholesale!

Lady Wrong. There's nothing but what's proper, and for your credit, sir Francis—Nay, you see I am so good a housewife, that, in necessaries for myself, I have scarce laid out a shilling.

Sir Fran. No, by my troth, so it seems! for the devil o' one thing's here, that I can see you have any occasion for.

Lady Wrong. My dear, do you think I came hither to live out of the fashion? Why, the greatest distinction of a fine lady, in this town, is in the variety of pretty things that she has no occasion for.

Jenny. Sure, papa, could you imagine that women of quality wanted nothing but stays and petticoats?

Lady Wrong. Now, that is so like him!

Man. So, the family comes on finely. [*Aside.*

Lady Wrong. Lard, if men were always to govern, what dowdies they would reduce their wives to!

Sir Fran. An hundred pound in the morning, and want another afore night! Waunds and fire! The lord mayor of London could not hold at this rate!

Man. Oh, do you feel it, sir! [*Aside.*

Lady Wrong. My dear, you seem uneasy; let me have the hundred pound, and compose yourself.

Sir Fran. Compose the devil, madam! Why, do you consider what a hundred pound a-day comes to in a year?

Lady Wrong. My life! if I account with you from one day to another, that's really all my head is able to bear at a time—But I'll tell you what, I consider—I consider that my advice has got you a thousand pound a-year this morning—— That, now, methinks, you might consider, sir.

Sir Fran. A thousand a-year! Waunds, madam, but I have not touched a penny of it yet.

Man. Nor ever will, I'll answer for him. [*Aside.*

Enter SQUIRE RICHARD.

Squire Rich. Feyther, an you doan't come quickly, the meat will be cooled: and I'd fain pick a bit with you.

Lady Wrong. Bless me, sir Francis! You are not going to sup by yourself?

Sir Fran. No, but I'm going to dine by myself, and that's pretty near the matter, madam.

Lady Wrong. Had not you as good stay a little, my dear? We shall all eat in half an hour; and I was thinking to ask my cousin Manly to take a family morsel with us.

Sir Fran. Nay, for my cousin's good company, I don't care if I ride a day's journey without baiting.

Man. By no means, sir Francis. I am going upon a little business.

Sir Fran. Well, sir; I know you don't love compliments.

Man. You'll excuse me, madam——

Lady Wrong. Since you have business, sir— [*Exit* MANLY.

Enter MRS MOTHERLY.

Oh, Mrs Motherly! You were saying this morning you had some very fine lace to shew me—— Cannot I see it now?

[SIR FRANCIS *stares.*

Moth. Why, really, madam, I had made a sort of a promise to let the countess of Nicely have the birth sight of it for the first day: but your ladyship——

Lady Wrong. Oh! I die if I don't see it before her!

Squire Rich. Woan't you go, feyther? [*Apart.*

Sir Fran. Waunds, lad! I shall ha' noa stomach at this rate. [*Apart.*

Moth. Well, madam, though I say it, 'tis the sweetest pattern that ever came over—and for fineness—no cobweb comes up to it!

Sir Fran. Ods guts and gizzard, madam! Lace as fine as a cobweb! Why, what the devil's that to cost, now?

Moth. Nay, if sir Francis does not like it, madam——

Lady Wrong. He like it! Dear Mrs Motherly, he is not to wear it.

Sir Fran. Flesh, madam! But I suppose I am to pay for it?

Lady Wrong. No doubt on't! Think of your thousand a-year, and who got it you; go! eat your dinner, and be thankful, go!—[*Driving him to the door.*]—Come, Mrs Motherly.

[*Exit* LADY WRONGHEAD *with* MRS MOTHERLY.

Sir Fran. Very fine! So, here I mun fast, till I am almost famished, for the good of my country, while madam is laying me out an hundred pound a-day in lace as fine as a cobweb, for the honour of my family! Ods flesh! Things had need go well at this rate!

Squire Rich. Nay, nay—Come, feyther.

[*Exeunt* SIR FRANCIS *and* SQUIRE RICHARD.

Enter MRS MOTHERLY.

Moth. Madam, my lady desires you and the count will please to come and assist her fancy in some of the new laces.

Count Bas. We'll wait upon her——

[*Exit* MRS MOTHERLY.

Jenny. So, I told you how it was! You see she cannot bear to leave us together.

Count Bas. No matter, my dear: you know she has asked me to stay supper: so, when your papa and she are a-bed, Mrs Myrtilla will let me into the house again; then you may steal into her chamber, and we'll have a pretty sneaker of punch together.

Myr. Ay, ay, madam; you may command me in any thing.

Jenny. Well, that will be pure!

Count Bas. But you had best go to her alone, my life: it will look better if I come after you.

Jenny. Ay, so it will: and to-morrow you know at the masquerade—and then!

SONG.

Oh, I'll have a husband! aye, marry;
For why should I longer tarry,
For why should I longer tarry,
Than other brisk girls have done?
For if I stay till I grow grey.
They'll call me old maid, and fusty old jade;
So I'll no longer tarry;
But I'll have a husband, aye, marry,
If money can buy me one.

My mother, she says, I'm too coming;
And still in my ears she is drumming,
And still in my ears she is drumming,
That I such vain thoughts should shun.
My sisters they cry, oh, fy! and, oh, fy!
But yet I can see, they're as coming as me;
So let me have husbands in plenty:
I'd rather have twenty times twenty,
Than die an old maid undone. [Exit.

Myr. So, sir, am not I very commode to you?

Count Bas. Well, child, and don't you find your account in it? Did I not tell you we might still be of use to one another?

Myr. Well, but how stands your affair with miss in the main?

Count Bas. Oh, she's mad for the masquerade! It drives like a nail; we want nothing now but a parson to clinch it. Did not your aunt say she could get one at a short warning?

Myr. Yes, yes; my lord Townly's chaplain is her cousin, you know; he'll do your business and mine, at the same time.

Count Bas. Oh, 'tis true! but where shall we appoint him?

Myr. Why, you know my lady Townly's house is always open to the masks upon a ball-night, before they go to the Hay-market.

Count Bas. Good.

Myr. Now, the doctor purposes we should all come thither in our habits, and, when the rooms are full, we may steal up into his chamber, he says, and there——crack———he'll give us all canonical commission to go to-bed together.

Count Bas. Admirable! Well, the devil fetch me, if I shall not be heartily glad to see thee well settled, child!

Myr. And may the black gentleman tuck me under his arm at the same time, if I shall not think myself obliged to you as long as I live!

Count Bas. One kiss for old acquaintance sake—Egad, I shall want to be busy again.

Myr. Oh, you'll have one shortly will find you employment: but I must run to my 'squire.

Count Bas. And I to the ladies—so your humble servant, sweet Mrs Wronghead!

Myr. Yours, as in duty bound, most noble count Basset. [*Exit* MYR.

Count Bas. Why, ay! count! That title has been of some use to me, indeed; not that I have any more pretence to it, than I have to a blue ribband. Yet, I have made a pretty considerable figure in life with it. I have lolled in my own chariot, dealt at assemblies, dined with ambassadors, and made one at quadrille with the first women of quality—But—*tempora mutantur;* since that damned squadron at White's have left me out of their last secret, I am reduced to trade upon my own stock of industry, and make my last push upon a wife. If my card comes up right (which, I think, cannot fail) I shall once more cut a figure, and cock my hat in the face of the best of them: for, since our modern men of fortune are grown wise enough to be sharpers, I think sharpers are fools that don't take up the airs of men of quality. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—LORD TOWNLY'S *house.*

Enter MANLY *and* LADY GRACE.

Man. THERE'S something, madam, hangs upon your mind to-day: is it unfit to trust me with it?

Lady Grace. Since you will know—my sister, then—unhappy woman!

Man. What of her?

Lady Grace. I fear is on the brink of ruin.

Man. I am sorry for it——What has happened?

Lady Grace. Nothing so very new; but the continual repetition of it at last has raised my brother to an intemperance that I tremble at.

Man. Have they had any words upon it?

Lady Grace. He has not seen her since yesterday.

Man. What! not at home all night?

Lady Grace. About five this morning, in she came; but, with such looks, and such an equipage of misfortune at her heels—What can become of her?

Man. Has not my lord seen her, say you?

Lady Grace. No; he changed his bed last night—I sat with him alone till twelve, in expectation of her: but when the clock struck, he started from his chair, and grew incensed to that degree, that, had I not, almost on my knees, dissuaded him, he had ordered the doors, that instant, to have been locked against her.

Man. How terrible is his situation, when the most justifiable severities he can use against her

are liable to the mirth of all the dissolute card-tables in town!

Lady Grace. 'Tis that, I know, has made him bear so long: but you that feel for him, Mr Manly, will assist him to support his honour, and, if possible, preserve his quiet; therefore, I beg you, don't leave the house, till one or both of them can be wrought to better temper.

Man. How amiable is this concern in you!

Lady Grace. For Heaven's sake, don't mind me; but think on something to preserve us all!

Man. I shall not take the merit of obeying your commands, madam, to serve my lord—But, pray, madam, let me into all that has past since yesternight.

Lady Grace. When my intreaties had prevailed upon my lord, not to make a story for the town, by so public a violence, as shutting her at once out of his doors, he ordered an apartment next to my lady's to be made ready for him——While that was doing, I tried, by all the little arts I was mistress of, to amuse him into temper; in short, a silent grief was all I could reduce him to. On this, we took our leaves, and parted to our repose: what his was, I imagine by my own; for I ne'er closed my eyes. About five, as I told you, I heard my lady at the door; so I slipped on a gown, and sat almost an hour with her in her own chamber.

Man. What said she, when she did not find my lord there?

Lady Grace. Oh! so far from being shocked, or alarmed at it, that she blessed the occasion; and said, that, in her condition, the chat of a female friend was far preferable to the best husband's company in the world.

Man. Where has she the spirits to support so much insensibility?

Lady Grace. Nay, 'tis incredible; for, though she had lost every thing she had in the world, and stretched her credit even to breaking, she rallied her own follies with such vivacity, and painted the penance she knows she must undergo for them in such ridiculous lights, that had not my concern for a brother been too strong for her wit, she had almost disarmed my anger.

Man. Her mind may have another cast by this time: the most flagrant dispositions have their hours of anguish, which their pride conceals from company. But pray, madam, how could she avoid coming down to dine?

Lady Grace. Oh! she took care of that before she went to bed, by ordering her woman, whenever she was asked for, to say she was not well.

Man. You have seen her since she was up, I presume?

Lady Grace. Up! I question whether she be awake yet.

Man. Terrible! what a figure does she make now! That nature should throw away so much beauty upon a creature, to make such a slatternly use of it!

Lady Grace. Oh, fy! there is not a more elegant beauty in town, when she is dressed.

Man. In my eye, madam, she that's early dressed has ten times her elegance.

Lady Grace. But she won't be long now, I believe; for, I think, I see her chocolate going up—Mrs Trusty—a-hem!

MRS TRUSTY *comes to the door.*

Man. [*Aside.*] Five o'clock in the afternoon for a lady of quality's breakfast, is an elegant hour, indeed! which, to shew her more polite way of living, too, I presume she eats in her bed.

Lady Grace. [*To* MRS TRUSTY.] And when she is up, I would be glad she would let me come to her toilet—That's all, Mrs Trusty.

Trusty. I will be sure to let her ladyship know, madam. [*Exit.*

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir Francis Wronghead, sir, desires to speak with you.

Man. He comes unseasonably—What shall I do with him?

Lady Grace. Oh, see him, by all means! we shall have time enough; in the mean while, I'll step in, and have an eye upon my brother. Nay, don't mind me——you have business——

Man. You must be obeyed——

[*Retreating, while* LADY GRACE *goes out.* Desire sir Francis to walk in—[*Exit Servant.*] I suppose, by this time, his wise worship begins to find, that the balance of his journey to London is on the wrong side.

Enter SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Francis, your servant. How came I by the favour of this extraordinary visit?

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin!

Man. Why that sorrowful face, man?

Sir Fran. I have no friend alive but you—

Man. I am sorry for that——But what's the matter?

Sir Fran. I have played the fool by this journey, I see now——for my bitter wife——

Man. What of her?

Sir Fran. Is playing the devil!

Man. Why, truly, that's a part that most of your fine ladies begin with, as soon as they get to London.

Sir Fran. If I'm a living man, cousin, she has made away with above two hundred and fifty pounds since yesterday morning!

Man. Ha! I see a good housewife will do a great deal of work in a little time.

Sir Fran. Work, do they call it? Fine work, indeed!

Man. Well, but how do you mean made away

with it? What, she has laid it out, may be—but I suppose you have an account of it?

Sir Fran. Yes, yes, I have had the account, indeed; but I mun needs say, it's a very sorry one.

Man. Pray, let's hear?

Sir Fran. Why, first, I let her have an hundred and fifty, to get things handsome about her, to let the world see that I was somebody; and I thought that sum was very genteel.

Man. Indeed, I think so; and, in the country, might have served her a twelvemonth.

Sir Fran. Why, so it might——but here, in this fine town, forsooth, it could not get through four-and-twenty hours—for, in half that time, it was all squandered away in bawbles, and new-fashioned trumpery.

Man. Oh! for ladies in London, sir Francis, all this might be necessary.

Sir Fran. Noa, there's the plague on't; the devil o' one useful thing do I see for it, but two pair of laced shoes, and those stond me in three pounds three shillings a pair, too.

Man. Dear sir, this is nothing! Why we have city wives here, that, while their good man is selling three pennyworth of sugar, will give you twenty pounds for a short apron.

Sir Fran. Mercy on us, what a mortal poor devil is a husband!

Man. Well, but I hope you have nothing else to complain of?

Sir Fran. Ah, would I could say so, too!——but there's another hundred behind yet, that goes more to my heart than all that went before it.

Man. And how might that be disposed of?

Sir Fran. Troth, I am almost ashamed to tell you.

Man. Out with it.

Sir Fran. Why, she has been at an assembly.

Man. What, since I saw you! I thought you had all supped at home last night.

Sir Fran. Why, so we did———and all as merry as grigs—I'cod, my heart was so open, that I tossed another hundred into her apron, to go out early this morning with———But the cloth was no sooner taken away, than in comes my lady Townly here, (who, between you and I —mum—has had the devil to pay yonder) with another rantipole dame of quality, and out they must have her, they said, to introduce her at my lady Noble's assembly, forsooth———A few words, you may be sure, made the bargain—so, bawnce! and away they drive, as if the devil had got into the coach-box—so, about four or five in the morning——home comes madam, with her eyes a foot deep in her head—and my poor hundred pounds left behind her at the hazard-table!

Man. All lost at dice!

Sir Fran. Every shilling—among a parcel of pigtail puppies, and pale-faced women of quality.

Man. But pray, sir Francis, how came you, after you found her so ill an housewife of one sum, so soon to trust her with another?

Sir Fran. Why, truly, I mun say that was partly my own fault; for, if I had not been a blab of my tongue, I believe that last hundred might have been saved.

Man. How so?

Sir Fran. Why, like an owl as I was, out of good-will, forsooth, partly to keep her in humour, I must needs tell her of the thousand pounds a-year I had just got the promise of—I'cod, she lays her claws upon it that moment—said it was all owing to her advice, and truly she would have her share on't.

Man. What, before you had it yourself?

Sir Fran. Why, ay; that's what I told her—My dear, said I, mayhap I may'nt receive the first quarter on't this half year.

Man. Sir Francis, I have heard you with a great deal of patience, and I really feel compassion for you.

Sir Fran. Truly, and well you may, cousin; for I don't see that my wife's goodness is a bit the better for bringing to London.

Man. If you remember, I gave you a hint of it.

Sir Fran. Why, ay, it's true, you did so: but the devil himself could not have believed she would have rid post to him.

Man. Sir, if you stay but a fortnight in this town, you will every day see hundreds as fast upon the gallop as she is.

Sir Fran. Ah, this London is a base place, indeed!—Waunds! if things should happen to go wrong with me at Westminster, at this rate, how the devil shall I keep out of a jail?

Man. Why, truly, there seems to me but one way to avoid it.

Sir Fran. Ah, would you could tell me that, cousin!

Man. The way lies plain before you, sir; the same road, that brought you hither, will carry you safe home again.

Sir Fran. Odsflesh, cousin! what! and leave a thousand pounds a-year behind me?

Man. Pooh, pooh! leave any thing behind you, but your family, and you are a saver by it.

Sir Fran. Ay, but consider, cousin, what a scurvy figure shall I make in the country, if I come dawn withawt it.

Man. You will make a much more lamentable figure in a jail without it.

Sir Fran. Mayhap 'at yow have no great opinion of it then, cousin?

Man. Sir Francis, to do you the service of a real friend, I must speak very plainly to you: you don't yet see half the ruin that's before you.

Sir Fran. Good-lack! how may you mean, cousin?

Man. In one word, your whole affairs stand thus---In a week, you'll lose your seat at Westminster: in a fortnight, my lady will run you into jail, by keeping the best company ———In four-and-twenty hours, your daughter will run away with a sharper, because she han't been used to better company: and your son will steal into marriage with a cast mistress, because he has not been used to any company at all.

Sir Fran. i' th' name o' goodness, why should you think all this?

Man. Because I have proof of it; in short, I know so much of their secrets, that if all this is not prevented to-night, it will be out of your power to do it to-morrow morning.

Sir Fran. Mercy upon us! you frighten me---Well, sir, I will be governed by you: but what am I to do in this case?

Man. I have not time here to give you proper instructions; but about eight this evening I'll call at your lodgings, and there you shall have full conviction how much I have it at heart to serve you.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, my lord desires to speak with you.

Man. I'll wait upon him.

Sir Fran. Well, then, I'll go strait home, naw.

Man. At eight depend upon me.

Sir Fran. Ah, dear cousin! I shall be bound to you as long as I live. Mercy deliver us, what a terrible journey have I made on't!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*Opens to a dressing-room.*

LADY TOWNLY, *as just up, walks to her toilet, leaning on* MRS TRUSTY.

Trusty. Dear madam, what should make your ladyship so out of order?

Lady Town. How is it possible to be well, where one is killed for want of sleep?

Trusty. Dear me! it was so long before you rung, madam, I was in hopes your ladyship had been finely composed.

Lady Town. Composed! why I have lain in an inn here; this house is worse than an inn with ten stage-coaches: what between my lord's impertinent people of business in a morning, and the intolerable thick shoes of footmen at noon, one has not a wink all night.

Trusty. Indeed, madam, it's a great pity my lord can't be persuaded into the hours of people of quality—though I must say that, madam, your ladyship is certainly the best matrimonial manager in town.

Lady Town. Oh, you are quite mistaken, Trusty! I manage very ill; for, notwithstanding all the power I have, by never being over-fond of my lord yet I want money infinitely oftener than he is willing to give it me.

Trusty. Ah! if his lordship could but be brought to play himself, madam, then he might feel what it is to want money.

Lady Town. Oh, don't talk of it! do you know that I am undone, Trusty?

Trusty. Mercy forbid, madam!

Lady Town. Broke, ruined, plundered!——stripped, even to a confiscation of my last guinea!

Trusty. You don't tell me so, madam?

Lady Town. And where to raise ten pound in the world—What is to be done, Trusty?

Trusty. Truly, I wish I were wise enough to tell you, madam: but may be your ladyship may have a run of better fortune upon some of the good company that comes here to-night.

Lady Town. But I have not a single guinea to try my fortune.

Trusty. Ha! that's a bad business indeed, madam—Adad, I have a thought in my head, madam, if it is not too late——

Lady Town. Out with it quickly, then, I beseech thee.

Trusty. Has not the steward something of fifty pounds, madam, that you left in his hands to pay somebody about this time?

Lady Town. Oh, ay; I had forgot—'twas to—a—what's his filthy name?

Trusty. Now I remember, madam, 'twas to Mr Lutestring, your old mercer, that your ladyship turned off about a year ago, because he would trust you no longer.

Lady Town. The very wretch! If he has not paid it, run quickly, dear Trusty, and bid him bring it hither immediately—[*Exit* TRUSTY.] Well, sure mortal woman never had such fortune! five, five and nine, against poor seven for ever——No, after that horrid bar of my chance, that lady Wronghead's fatal red fist upon the table, I saw it was impossible ever to win another stake——Sit up all night; lose all one's money; dream of winning thousands; wake without a shilling; and then——How like a hag I look! In short—the pleasures of life are not worth this disorder. If it were not for shame, now, I could almost think lady Grace's sober scheme not quite so ridiculous——If my wise lord could but hold his tongue for a week, 'tis odds but I should hate the town in a fortnight——But I will not be driven out of it, that's positive.

TRUSTY *returns.*

Trusty. Oh, madam, there's no bearing of it! Mr Lutestring was just let in at the door, as I came to the stair foot; and the steward is now actually paying him the money in the hall.

Lady Town. Run to the stair-case head again—and scream to him, that I must speak with him this instant. [TRUSTY *runs off, and speaks.*

Trusty. Mr Poundage——a-hem! Mr Poundage, a word with you quickly! [*Without.*

Pound. [*Within.*] I'll come to you presently. [*Within.*

Trusty. Presently won't do, man, you must come this minute. [*Without.*

Pound. I am but just paying a little money here. [*Without.*

Trusty. Cods my life, paying money! Is the man distracted? Come here, I tell you, to my lady this moment; quick! [*Without.*

TRUSTY *returns.*

Lady Town. Will the monster come or no?—

Trusty. Yes, I hear him now, madam; he is hobbling up as fast as he can.

Lady Town. Don't let him come in—for he will keep such a babbling about his accounts—my brain is not able to bear him.

POUNDAGE *comes to the door, with a money-bag in his hand.*

Trusty. Oh, it's well you are come, sir! where's the fifty pounds?

Pound. Why, here it is; if you had not been in such haste, I should have paid it by this time —the man's now writing a receipt, below, for it.

Trusty. No matter; my lady says you must not pay him with that money! there's not enough, it seems; there's a pistole, and a guinea, that is not good, in it——besides, there is a mistake in the account, too—[*Twitches the bag from him.*] But she is not at leisure to examine it now; so you must bid Mr What-d'ye-call-um call another time.

Lady Town. What is all that noise there?

Pound. Why, an it please your ladyship—

Lady Town. Prithee, don't plague me now; but do as you were ordered.

Pound. Nay, what your ladyship pleases, madam—— [*Exit* POUNDAGE.

Trusty. There they are, madam—[*Pours the money out of the bag.*]—The pretty things were so near falling into a nasty tradesman's hand, I protest it made me tremble for them—I fancy your ladyship had as good give me that bad guinea, for luck's sake—Thank you, madam.

[*Takes a guinea.*

Lady Town. Why, I did not bid you take it?

Trusty. No; but your ladyship looked as if you were just going to bid me; and so I was willing to save you the trouble of speaking, madam.

Lady Town. Well, thou hast deserved it; and so, for once—but hark! don't I hear the man making a noise yonder? Though, I think, now, we may compound for a little of his ill-humour—

Trusty. I'll listen.

Lady Town. Prithee, do.

[TRUSTY *goes to the door.*

Trusty. Ay, they are at it, madam—he's in a bitter passion with poor Poundage—Bless me! I believe he'll beat him—Mercy on us, how the wretch swears!

Lady Town. And a sober citizen, too! that's a shame.

Trusty. Ha! I think all's silent of a sudden—may be the porter has knocked him down——I'll step and see—— [*Exit* TRUSTY.

Lady Town. These trades-people are the troublesomest creatures! No words will satisfy them.

TRUSTY *returns.*

Trusty. Oh, madam! Undone, undone! My lord has just bolted out upon the man, and is hearing all his pitiful story over—If your ladyship pleases to come hither, you may hear him yourself.

Lady Town. No matter; it will come round presently: I shall have it from my lord, without losing a word by the way, I'll warrant you.

Trusty. Oh, lud, madam! here's my lord just coming in.

Lady Town. Do you get out of the way, then. —[*Exit* TRUSTY.]—I am afraid I want spirits; but he will soon give them me.

Enter LORD TOWNLY.

Lord Town. How comes it, madam, that a tradesman dares be clamorous in my house, for money due to him from you?

Lady Town. You don't expect, my lord, that I should answer for other people's impertinence?

Lord Town. I expect, madam, you should answer for your own extravagancies, that are the occasion of it——I thought I had given you money three months ago, to satisfy all these sort of people.

Lady Town. Yes; but you see they never are to be satisfied.

Lord Town. Nor am I, madam, longer to be abused thus; what's become of the last five hundred I gave you?

Lady Town. Gone.

Lord Town. Gone! What way, madam?

Lady Town. Half the town over, I believe, by this time.

Lord Town. 'Tis well; I see ruin will make no impression, till it falls upon you.

Lady Town. In short, my lord, if money is always the subject of our conversation, I shall make you no answer.

Lord Town. Madam, madam, I will be heard, and make you answer.

Lady Town. Make me! Then I must tell you, my lord, this is a language I have not been used to, and I won't bear it.

Lord Town. Come, come, madam, you shall bear a great deal more, before I part with you.

Lady Town. My lord, if you insult me, you will have as much to bear on your side, I can assure you.

Lord Town. Pooh! Your spirit grows ridiculous—You have neither honour, worth, or innocence to support it.

Lady Town. You'll find, at least, I have resentment; and do you look well to the provocation.

Lord Town. After those you have given me, madam, 'tis almost infamous to talk with you.

Lady Town. I scorn your imputation, and your menaces. The narrowness of your heart's your monitor; 'tis there, there, my lord, you are wounded: you have less to complain of than many husbands of an equal rank to you.

Lord Town. Death, madam! Do you presume upon your corporal merit, that your person's less tainted than your mind? Is it there, there alone, an honest husband can be injured? Have you not every other vice that can debase your birth, or stain the heart of woman? Is not your health, your beauty, husband, fortune, family disclaimed, for nights consumed in riot and extravagance? The wanton does no more; if she conceals her shame, does less: and sure the dissolute avowed, as sorely wrongs my honour and my quiet.

Lady Town. I see, my lord, what sort of wife might please you.

Lord Town. Ungrateful woman! Could you have seen yourself, you, in yourself, had seen her—I am amazed our legislature has left no precedent of a divorce for this more visible injury, this adultery of the mind, as well as that of the person! When a woman's whole heart is alienated to pleasures I have no share in, what is it to me, whether a black ace, or a powdered coxcomb, has possession of it?

Lady Town. If you have not found it yet, my lord, this is not the way to get possession of mine, depend upon't.

Lord Town. That, madam, I have long despaired of; and, since our happiness cannot be mutual, 'tis fit, that, with our hearts, our persons, too, should separate. This house you sleep no more in: though your content might grossly feed upon the dishonour of a husband, yet my desires would starve upon the features of a wife.

Lady Town. Your style, my lord, is much of the same delicacy with your sentiments of honour.

Lord Town. Madam, madam, this is no time for compliments—I have done with you.

Lady Town. If we had never met, my lord, I had not broke my heart for it: but have a care; I may not, perhaps, be so easily recalled as you may imagine.

Lord Town. Recalled! Whose there?

Enter a Servant.

Desire my sister and Mr Manly to walk up.

[*Exit.*

Lady Town. My lord, you may proceed as you please; but, pray, what indiscretions have I committed, that are not daily practised by a hundred other women of quality?

Lord Town. 'Tis not the number of ill wives, madam, that makes the patience of a husband less contemptible: and though a bad one may be the best man's lot, yet, he'll make a better figure in the world, that keeps his misfortunes out of doors, than he that tamely keeps them within.

Lady Town. I don't know what figure you may make, my lord; but I shall have no reason to be ashamed of mine, in whatever company I may meet you.

Lord Town. Be sparing of your spirit, madam; you'll need it to support you.

Enter LADY GRACE *and* MANLY.

Mr Manly, I have an act of friendship to beg of you, which wants more apologies than words can make for it.

Man. Then, pray, make none, my lord, that I may have the greater merit in obliging you.

Lord Town. Sister, I have the same excuse to intreat of you, too.

Lady Grace. To your request, I beg, my lord.

Lord Town. Thus, then———As you both were present at my ill-considered marriage, I now desire you each will be a witness of my determined separation—I know, sir, your good-nature, and my sister's, must be shocked at the office I impose on you; but as I don't ask your justification of my cause, so I hope you are conscious—that an ill woman can't reproach you, if you are silent, on her side.

Man. My lord, I never thought, till now, it could be difficult to oblige you.

Lady Grace. [*Aside.*] Heavens, how I tremble!

Lord Town. For you, my lady Townly, I need not here repeat the provocations of my parting with you——the world, I fear, is too well informed of them——For the good lord, your dead father's sake, I will still support you as his daughter——As Lord Townly's wife, you have had every thing a fond husband could bestow, and (to our mutual shame I speak it) more than happy wives desire—But those indulgences must end; state, equipage, and splendour, but ill become the vices that misuse them——The decent necessaries of life shall be supplied——but not one article to luxury; not even the coach, that waits to carry you from hence, shall you ever use again. Your tender aunt, my lady Lovemore, with tears, this morning, has consented to receive you; where, if time and your condition bring you to a due reflection, your allowance shall be increased—but if you are still lavish of your little, or pine for past licentious pleasures, that little shall be less: nor will I call that soul my friend, that names you in my hearing.

Lady Grace. My heart bleeds for her.

[*Aside.*

Lord Town. Oh, Manly, look there! turn back thy thoughts with me, and witness to my growing love. There was a time, when I believed that form incapable of vice, or of decay; there I proposed the partner of an easy home; there I, for ever, hoped to find a cheerful companion, an agreeable intimate, a faithful friend, a useful

help-mate, and a tender mother—but, oh! how bitter now the disappointment!

Man. The world is different in its sense of happiness; offended as you are, I know you will still be just.

Lord Town. Fear me not.

Man. This last reproach, I see, has struck her. [*Aside.*

Lord Town. No, let me not (though I this moment cast her from my heart for ever) let me not urge her punishment beyond her crimes—I know the world is fond of any tale that feeds its appetite of scandal: and, as I am conscious severities of this kind seldom fail of imputations too gross to mention, I here, before you both, acquit her of the least suspicion raised against the honour of my bed. Therefore, when abroad her conduct may be questioned, do her fame that justice.

Lady Town. Oh, sister!

[*Turns to* LADY GRACE, *weeping.*

Lord Town. When I am spoken of, where, without favour, this action may be canvassed, relate but half my provocations, and give me up to censure. [*Going.*

Lady Town. Support me! save me! hide me from the world!

[*Falling on* LADY GRACE'S *neck.*

Lord Town. [*Returning.*] I had forgot me—You have no share in my resentment; therefore, as you have lived in friendship with her, your parting may admit of gentler terms than suit the honour of an injured husband. [*Offers to go out.*

Man. [*Interposing.*] My lord, you must not, shall not leave her thus! One moment's stay can do your cause no wrong! If looks can speak the anguish of her heart, I'll answer with my life, there's something labouring in her mind, that, would you hear the hearing, might deserve it.

Lord Town. Consider! since we no more can meet, press not my staying to insult her.

Lady Town. Yet stay, my lord—the little I would say will not deserve an insult; and, undeserved, I know your nature gives it not. But as you've called in friends to witness your resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last reply.

Lord Town. I shan't refuse you that, madam—be it so.

Lady Town. My lord, you ever have complained I wanted love; but, as you truly have allowed I never gave it to another; so, when you hear the story of my heart, though you may still complain, you will not wonder at my coldness.

Lady Grace. This promises a reverse of temper. [*Apart.*

Man. This, my lord, you are concerned to hear.

Lord Town. Proceed; I am attentive.

Lady Town. Before I was your bride, my lord, the flattering world had talked me into beauty, which, at my glass, my youthful vanity confirmed. Wild with that fame, I thought mankind my slaves; I triumphed over hearts, while all my pleasure was their pain: yet was my own so equally insensible to all, that, when a father's firm commands enjoined me to make choice of one, I even then declined the liberty he gave, and to his own election yielded up my youth——his tender care, my lord, directed him to you——Our hands were joined; But still my heart was wedded to its folly. My only joy was power, command, society, profuseness, and to lead in pleasures: The husband's right to rule, I thought a vulgar law, which only the deformed or meanly-spirited obeyed. I knew no directors, but my passions! no master, but my will! Even you, my lord, some time o'ercome by love, was pleased with my delights, nor then foresaw this mad misuse of your indulgence———And, though I call myself ungrateful, while I own it, yet, as a truth, it cannot be denied——that kind indulgence has undone me; it added strength to my habitual failings; and, in a heart thus warm, in wild unthinking life, no wonder if the gentler sense of love was lost.

Lord Town. Oh, Manly! where has this creature's heart been buried? [*Apart.*

Man. If yet recoverable———How vast the treasure! [*Apart.*

Lady Town. What I have said, my lord, is not my excuse, but my confession; my errors (give them, if you please, a harder name) cannot be defended. No! What's in its nature wrong, no words can palliate, no plea can alter. What then remains in my condition, but resignation to your pleasure? Time only can convince you of my future conduct: therefore, till I have lived an object of forgiveness, I dare not hope for pardon——The penance of a lonely, contrite life, were little to the innocent; but, to have deserved this separation, will strow perpetual thorns upon my pillow.

Lady Grace. Oh, happy, heavenly hearing!

Lady Town. Sister, farewell! [*Kissing her.*] Your virtue needs no warning from the shame that falls on me: but when you think I have atoned my follies past—persuade your injured brother to forgive them.

Lord Town. No, madam! Your errors, thus renounced, this instant are forgiven! So deep, so due a sense of them, has made you what my utmost wishes formed, and all my heart has sighed for.

Lady Town. [*Turning to* LADY GRACE.] How odious does this goodness make me!

Lady Grace. How amiable your thinking so!

Lord Town. Long parted friends, that pass through easy voyages of life, receive but common gladness at their meeting: but from a shipwreck saved, we mingle tears with our embraces!

[*Embracing* LADY TOWNLY.

Lady Town. What words, what love, what duty, can repay such obligations!

Lord Town. Preserve but this desire to please, your power is endless.

Lady Town. Oh!—till this moment never did I know, my lord, I had a heart to give you.

Lord Town. By Heaven! this yielding hand, when first it gave you to my wishes, presented not a treasure more desirable! Oh, Manly! sister! as you have often shared in my disquiet, partake now of my felicity! my new-born joy! see, here, the bride of my desires! This may be called my wedding-day.

Lady Grace. Sister, (for now, methinks, that name is dearer to my heart than ever) let me congratulate the happiness that opens to you.

Man. Long, long, and mutual, may it flow——

Lord Town. To make our happiness complete, my dear, join here with me to give a hand, that amply will repay the obligation.

Lady Town. Sister, a day like this————

Lady Grace. Admits of no excuse against the general joy. [*Gives her hand to* MANLY.

Man. A joy like mine————despairs of words to speak it.

Lord Town. Oh, Manly, how the name of friend endears the brother! [*Embracing him.*

Man. Your words, my lord, will warm me to deserve them.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. My lord, the apartments are full of masqueraders—And some people of quality there desire to see your lordship and my lady.

Lady Town. I thought, my lord, your orders had forbid their revelling?

Lord Town. No, my dear, Manly has desired their admittance to-night, it seems, upon a particular occasion—Say we will wait upon them instantly. [*Exit Servant.*

Lady Town. I shall be but ill company to them.

Lord Town. No matter: not to see them, would on a sudden be too particular. Lady Grace will assist you to entertain them.

Lady Town. With her, my lord, I shall be always easy————Sister, to your unerring virtue I now commit the guidance of my future days—

Never the paths of pleasure more to tread,
But where your guided innocence shall lead;
For, in the marriage-state, the world must own
Divided happiness was never known.
To make it mutual, nature points the way:
Let husbands govern; gentle wives obey.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Opening to another apartment, discovers a great number of people in masquerade, talking all together, and playing upon one another.* LADY WRONGHEAD *as a shepherdess;* JENNY *as a man; the 'Squire as a running footman; and the Count in a domino.*

After some time, LORD *and* LADY TOWNLY, *with* LADY GRACE, *enter to them, unmasked.*

Lord Town. So! here's a great deal of company.

Lady Town. A great many people, my lord, but no company————as you'll find————for here's one now that seems to have a mind to entertain us.

[*A Mask, after some affected gesture, makes up to* LADY TOWNLY.

Mask. Well, dear lady Townly, sha'n't we see you by-and-by?

Lady Town. I don't know you, madam.

Mask. Don't you seriously? [*In a squeaking tone.*

Lady Town. Not I, indeed.

Mask. Well, that's charming; but can't you guess?

Lady Town. Yes, I could guess wrong, I believe.

Mask. That's what I'd have you do.

Lady Town. But, madam, if I don't know you at all, is not that as well?

Mask. Ay, but you do know me.

Lady Town. Dear sister, take her off my hands; there's no bearing this. [*Apart.*

Lady Grace. I fancy I know you, madam.

Mask. I fancy you don't; what makes you think you do?

Lady Grace. Because I have heard you talk.

Mask. Ay, but you don't know my voice, I'm sure.

Lady Grace. There is something in your wit and humour, madam, so very much your own, it is impossible you can be any body but my lady Trifle.

Mask. [*Unmasking.*] Dear lady Grace! thou art a charming creature.

Lady Grace. Is there nobody else we know here?

Mask. Oh dear, yes! I have found out fifty already.

Lady Grace. Pray who are they?

Mask. Oh, charming company! there's lady Ramble——lady Riot——lady Kill-care—lady Squander——lady Strip——lady Pawn——and the dutchess of Single Guinea.

Lord Town. Is it not hard, my dear, that people of sense and probity are sometimes forced to seem fond of such company? [*Apart.*

Lady Town. My lord, it will always give me pain to remember their acquaintance, but none to drop it immediately. [*Apart.*

Lady Grace. But you have given us no account of the men, madam. Are they good for any thing?

Mask. Oh, yes, you must know, I always find out them by their endeavours to find out me.

Lady Grace. Pray, who are they?

Mask. Why, for your men of top-top wit and

pleasure, about town, there's my lord—Bite—lord Archwag—Young Brazen-wit—lord Timberdown——lord Joint-life——and——lord Mortgage. Then for your pretty fellows only—there's sir Powder Peacock——lord Lapwing——Billy Magpie——Beau Frightful—sir Paul Plaistercrown, and the marquis of Monkey-man.

Lady Grace. Right! and these are the fine gentlemen that never want elbow-room at an assembly.

Mask. The rest, I suppose, by their tawdry hired habits, are tradesmen's wives, inns-of-court beaux, Jews, and kept mistresses.

Lord Town. An admirable collection!

Lady Grace. Well, of all our public diversions, I am amazed how this, that is so very expensive, and has so little to shew for it, can draw so much company together!

Lord Town. Oh, if it were not expensive, the better sort would not come into it: and because money can purchase a ticket, the common people scorn to be kept out of it.

Mask. Right, my lord. Poor lady Grace! I suppose you are under the same astonishment, that an opera should draw so much good company.

Lady Grace. Not at all, madam: 'tis an easier matter, sure, to gratify the ear, than the understanding. But have you no notion, madam, of receiving pleasure and profit at the same time?

Mask. Oh, quite none! unless it be sometimes winning a great stake; laying down a *vole, sans prendre*, may come up to the profitable pleasure you were speaking of.

Lord Town. You seem attentive, my dear?

[*Apart.*

Lady Town. I am, my lord; and amazed at my own follies, so strongly painted in another woman. [*Apart.*

Lady Grace. But see, my lord, we had best adjourn our debate, I believe; for here are some masks that seem to have a mind to divert other people as well as themselves.

Lord Town. The least we can do, is to give them a clear stage then.

[*A dance of masks here in various characters.* This was a favour extraordinary.

Enter MANLY.

Oh, Manly, I thought we had lost you.

Man. I ask pardon, my lord; but I have been obliged to look a little after my country family.

Lord Town. Well, pray, what have you done with them?

Man. They are all in the house here, among the masks, my lord; if your lordship has curiosity enough to step into a lower apartment, in three minutes I'll give you an ample account of them.

Lord Town. Oh, by all means: we'll wait upon you.

[*The scene shuts upon the masks to a smaller apartment.*

MANLY *re-enters with* SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Fran. Well, cousin, you have made my very hair stond on end! Waunds! if what you tell me be true, I'll stuff my whole family into a stage-coach, and trundle them into the country again on Monday morning.

Man. Stick to that, sir, and we may yet find a way to redeem all. In the mean time, place yourself behind this screen, and, for the truth of what I have told you, take the evidence of your own senses: but be sure you keep close till I give you the signal.

Sir Fran. Sir, I'll warrant you—Ah, my lady! my lady Wronghead! What a bitter business have you drawn me into!

Man. Hush! to your post; here comes one couple already.

[SIR FRANCIS *retires behind the screen.*
Exit MANLY.

Enter MYRTILLA *with* SQUIRE RICHARD.

Squire Rich. What, is this the doctor's chamber?

Myr. Yes, yes: speak softly.

Squire Rich. Well, but where is he?

Myr. He'll be ready for us presently; but he says, he can't do us the good turn without witnesses: so, when the count and your sister come, you know he and you may be fathers for one another.

Squire Rich. Well, well; tit for tat! ay, ay, that will be friendly.

Myr. And see, here they come.

Enter COUNT BASSET, *and* MISS JENNY.

Count Bas. So, so, here's your brother and his bride, before us, my dear.

Jenny. Well, I vow, my heart's at my mouth still! I thought I should never have got rid of mamma; but while she stood gaping upon the dance, I gave her the slip? Lawd, do but feel how it beats here!

Count Bas. Oh, the pretty flutterer! I protest, my dear, you have put mine into the same palpitation!

Jenny. Ay, say you so?——but let's see now—Oh, lud! I vow it thumps purely—well, well, I see it will do; and so, where's the parson?

Count Bas. Mrs Myrtilla, will you be so good as to see if the doctor's ready for us?

Myr. He only staid for you, sir: I'll fetch him immediately. [*Exit* MYR.

Jenny. Pray, sir, am not I to take place of mamma, when I'm a countess?

Count Bas. No doubt on't, my dear.

Jenny. Oh, lud! how her back will be up then.

when she meets me at an assembly; or you and I in our coach and six at Hyde Park together!

Count Bas. Ay, or when she hears the box-keepers at an opera, call out—The countess of Basset's servants!

Jenny. Well, I say it, that will be delicious! And then, mayhap, to have a fine gentleman, with a star and a what-d'ye-call-um ribbon, lead me to my chair, with his hat under his arm all the way! Hold up, says the chairman; and so, says I, my lord, your humble servant. I suppose, madam, says he, we shall see you at my lady Quadrille's? Ay, ay, to be sure, my lord, says I—So in swops me, with my hoop stuffed up to my forehead; and away they trot, swing! swang! with my tassels dangling, and my flambeaux blazing, and——Oh, it's a charming thing to be a woman of quality!

Count Bas. Well! I see that, plainly, my dear, there's ne'er a duchess of them all will become an equipage like you.

Jenny. Well, well, do you find equipage, and I'll find airs, I warrant you.

SONG.

What though they call me country lass,
I read it plainly in my glass,
That for a duchess I might pass;
Oh, could I see the day!
Would fortune but attend my call,
At park, at play, at ring, and ball,
I'd brave the proudest of them all,
With a stand by—clear the way!

Surrounded by a crowd of beaux,
With smart toupees, and powdered clothes,
At rivals I'd turn up my nose;
Oh, could I see the day!
I'd dart such glances from these eyes,
Should make some lord or duke my prize:
And then, oh, how I'd tyrannize,
With a stand by—clear the way!

Oh, then for every new delight,
For equipage and diamonds bright,
Quadrille, and plays, and balls all night;
Oh, could I see the day!
Of love and joy I'd take my fill,
The tedious hours of life to kill,
In every thing I'd have my will,
With a stand by—clear the way!

Squire Rich. Troth! I think this masquerading's the merriest game that ever I saw in my life! Thof' in my mind, an there were but a little wrestling, or cudgel-playing naw, it would help it hugely. But what a-rope makes the parson stay so?

Count Bas. Oh, here he comes, I believe.

Enter MYRTILLA, *with a Constable.*

Con. Well, madam, pray which is the party that wants a spice of my office here?

Myr. That's the gentleman. [*Pointing to the Count.*

Count Bas. Hey-day! what, in masquerade, doctor?

Con. Doctor! Sir, I believe you have mistaken your man: but, if you are called count Basset, I have a billet-doux in my hand for you, that will set you right presently.

Count Bas. What the devil's the meaning of all this?

Con. Only my lord chief justice's warrant against you for forgery, sir.

Count Bas. Blood and thunder!

Con. And so, sir, if you please to pull off your fool's frock there, I'll wait upon you to the next justice of peace immediately.

Jenny. Oh, dear me, what's the matter? [*Trembling.*

Count Bas. Oh, nothing, only a masquerading frolic, my dear.

Squire Rich. Oh, ho! is that all?

Sir Fran. No, sirrah! that is not all! [SIR FRANCIS, *coming softly behind the squire, knocks him down with his cane.*

Enter MANLY.

Squire Rich. Oh, lawd! Oh, lawd! he has beaten my brains out.

Man. Hold, hold, sir Francis! have a little mercy upon my poor godson, pray, sir.

Sir Fran. Wounds, cousin, I han't patience.

Count Bas. Manly! nay, then, I'm blown to the devil. [*Aside.*

Squire Rich. Oh, my head! my head!

Enter LADY WRONGHEAD.

Lady Wrong. What's the matter here, gentlemen? For Heaven's sake! What, are you murdering my children?

Con. No, no, madam! no murder! only a little suspicion of felony, that's all.

Sir Fran. [*To* JENNY.] And for you, Mrs Hotupon't, I could find in my heart to make you wear that habit as long as you live, you jade you. Do you know, hussy, that you were within two minutes of marrying a pickpocket?

Count Bas. So, so, all's out I find. [*Aside.*

Jenny. Oh, the mercy! why, pray, papa, is not the count a man of quality, then?

Sir Fran. Oh, yes, one of the unhanged ones, it seems.

Lady Wrong. [*Aside.*] Married! Oh, the confident thing! There was his urgent business, then—slighted for her! I han't patience!—and, for aught I know, I have been all this while making a friendship with a highwayman.

Man. Mr Constable, secure there.

Sir Fran. Ah, my lady! my lady! this comes of your journey to London: but now I'll have a frolic of my own, madam; therefore pack up your trumpery this very night; for, the moment my horses are able to crawl, you and your brats shall make a journey into the country again.

Lady Wrong. Indeed, you are mistaken, sir Francis—I shall not stir out of town, yet, I promise you.

Sir Fran. Not stir? Waunds, madam——

Man. Hold, sir! If you'll give me leave a little—I fancy I shall prevail with my lady to think better on't.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, you are a friend, indeed!

Man. [*Apart to my lady.*] Look you, madam, as to the favour you designed me, in sending this spurious letter inclosed to my lady Grace, all the revenge I have taken, is to have saved your son and daughter from ruin. Now, if you will take them fairly and quietly into the country again, I will save your ladyship from ruin.

Lady Wrong. What do you mean, sir?

Man. Why, sir Francis shall never know what is in this letter; look upon it. How it came into my hands, you shall know at leisure.

Lady Wrong. Ha!—my billet-doux to the count! and an appointment in it! I shall sink with confusion!

Man. What shall I say to sir Francis, madam?

Lady Wrong. Dear sir, I am in such a trembling! preserve my honour, and I am all obedience. [*Apart to* MANLY.

Man. Sir Francis——my lady is ready to receive your commands for her journey, whenever you please to appoint it.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, I doubt I am obliged to you for it.

Man. Come, come, sir Francis: take it as you find it. Obedience in a wife is a good thing, though it were never so wonderful! And now, sir, we have nothing to do but to dispose of this gentleman.

Count Bas. Mr Manly! sir! I hope you won't ruin me!

Man. Did you forge this note for five hundred pounds, sir?

Count Bas. Sir——I see you know the world, and, therefore, I shall not pretend to prevaricate—But it has hurt nobody yet, sir; I beg you will not stigmatise me; since you have spoiled my fortune in one family, I hope you won't be so cruel to a young fellow, as to put it out of my power, sir, to make it in another, sir

Man. Look you, sir, I have not much time to waste with you: but, if you expect mercy yourself, you must shew it to one you have been cruel to.

Count Bas. Cruel, sir!

Man. Have you not ruined this young woman?

Count Bas. I, sir!

Man. I know you have—therefore, you can't blame her, if, in the fact you are charged with, she is a principal witness against you. However, you have one, and only one chance to get off with. Marry her this instant—and you take off her evidence.

Count Bas. Dear sir!

Man. No words, sir; a wife, or a mittimus.

Count Bas. Lord, sir! this is the most unmerciful mercy!

Man. A private penance, or a public one—Constable.

Count Bas. Hold, sir; since you are pleased to give me my choice, I will not make so ill a compliment to the lady, as not to give her the preference.

Man. It must be done this minute, sir: the chaplain you expected is still within call.

Count Bas. Well, sir,———since it must be so———Come, spouse——I am not the first of the fraternity, that has run his head into one noose, to keep it out of another.

Myr. Come, sir, don't repine: marriage is, at worst, but playing upon the square.

Count Bas. Ay, but the worst of the match, too, is the devil.

Man. Well, sir, to let you see it is not so bad as you think it, as a reward for her honesty, in detecting your practices, instead of the forged bill you would have put upon her, there's a real one of five hundred pounds to begin a new honey moon with. [*Gives it to* MYRTILLA.

Count Bas. Sir, this is so generous an act—

Man. No compliments, dear sir—I am not at leisure now to receive them. Mr Constable, will you be so good as to wait upon this gentleman into the next room, and give this lady in marriage to him?

Con. Sir, I'll do it faithfully.

Count Bas. Well, five hundred will serve to make a handsome push with, however.

[*Exeunt* COUNT BASSET, MYRTILLA, *and Constable.*

Sir Fran. And that I may be sure my family's rid of him for ever—come, my lady, let's even take our children along with us, and be all witnesses of the ceremony.

[*Exeunt* SIR FRANCIS, LADY WRONGHEAD, MISS *and* SQUIRE.]

Man. Now, my lord, you may enter.

Enter LORD *and* LADY TOWNLY, *and* LADY GRACE.

Lord Town. So, sir, I give you joy of your negociation.

Man. You overheard it all, I presume?

Lady Grace. From first to last, sir.

Lord Town. Never were knaves and fools better disposed of.

Man. A sort of poetical justice, my lord, not much above the judgment of a modern comedy.

Lord Town. To heighten that resemblance, I think, sister, there only wants your rewarding the hero of the fable, by naming the day of his happiness.

Lady Grace. This day, to-morrow, every hour, I hope, of life to come, will shew I want not inclination to complete it.

Man. Whatever I may want, madam, you will always find endeavours to deserve you.

Lord Town. Then, all are happy.

Lady Town. Sister, I give you joy consummate as the happiest pair can boast.

In you, methinks, as in a glass, I see
The happiness, that once advanced to me.
So visible the bliss, so plain the way,
How was it possible my sense could stray?
But now, a convert to this truth I come,
That married happiness is never found from home. [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

BY

HOADLY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

MR STRICTLAND, *the suspicious husband.*
FRANKLY, *attached to* CLARINDA.
BELLAMY, *attached to* JACINTHA.
RANGER, *a generous rake.*
JACK MEGGOT, *a good-natured coxcomb.*
BUCKLE, *servant to* BELLAMY.
TESTER, *servant to* STRICTLAND.
SERVANT *to* RANGER.
SIMON, *servant to* CLARINDA.

WOMEN.

MRS STRICTLAND, *wife to* STRICTLAND.
CLARINDA, *her friend.*
JACINTHA, STRICTLAND'S *ward.*
LUCETTA, *maid to* MRS STRICTLAND.
LANDLADY.
MILLINER.
MAID.

Chairmen, Footmen, &c.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—RANGER'S *chambers in the Temple. A knocking is heard at the door for some time; when* RANGER *enters, having let himself in.*

Ran. Once more I am got safe to the Temple. Let me reflect a little. I have sat up all night. I have my head full of bad wine, and the noise of oaths, dice, and the damned thundering of tavern bells; my spirits jaded, and my eyes sunk in my head; and all this for the conversation of a company of fellows I despise. Their wit lies only in obscenity, their mirth in noise, and their oaths lie in a box and dice. Honest Ranger, take my word for it, thou art a mighty silly fellow!

Enter a Servant, with a wig dressed.

Where have you been, rascal? If I had not had the key in my pocket, I must have waited at the door in this dainty dress.

Ser. I was only below combing out your honour's wig.

Ran. Well, give me my cap.—[*Pulling off his wig.*] Why, how like a raking dog do you look, compared to that spruce, sober gentleman! Go, you battered devil, and be made fit to be seen!

[*Throwing his wig to the servant.*

Ser. Cod, my master's very merry this morning. [*Exit.*

Ran. And now for the law.

[*Sits down, and reads.*

'Tell me no more, I am deceiv'd,
'That Chloe's false and common;
'By Heaven, I all along believ'd
'She was a very woman!
'As such I lik'd, as such caress'd;
'She still was constant when possessed:
'She could do more for no man.'

Honest Congreve was a man after my own heart.

Servants pass over the stage.

Have you been for the money this morning, as I ordered you?

Ser. No, sir. You bade me go before you was up; I did not know your honour meant before you went to bed.

Ran. None of your jokes, I pray; but to business. Go to the coffee-house, and inquire if there has been any letter or message left for me.

Ser. I shall, sir.

Ran. [*Repeats.*]

'You think she's false; I'm sure she's kind:
'I take her body, You her mind;
'Which has the better bargain?'

Oh, that I had such a soft, deceitful fair, to lull my senses to their desired sleep! [*Knocking at the door.*] Come in.

Enter SIMON.

Oh, master Simon, is it you? How long have you been in town?

Sim. Just come, sir; and but for a little time neither; and yet I have as many messages as if we were to stay the whole year round. Here they are, all of them, [*Pulls out a number of cards.*] and, among them, one for your honour.

Ran. [*Reads.*] 'Clarinda's compliments to her 'cousin Ranger, and should be glad to see him 'for ever so little a time that he can be spared 'from the more weighty business of the law.' Ha, ha, ha! the same merry girl I ever knew her.

Sim. My lady is never sad, sir.

[*Knocking at the door.*

Ran. Pr'ythee, Simon, open the door.

Enter Milliner.

Well, child——and who are you?

Mil. Sir, my mistress gives her service to you; and has sent you home the linen you bespoke.

Ran. Well, Simon, my service to your lady, and let her know I will most certainly wait upon her. I am a little busy, Simon——and so——

Sim. Ah, you're a wag, Master Ranger, you're a wag——but mum for that. [*Exit.*

Ran. I swear, my dear, you have the prettiest pair of eyes——the loveliest pouting lips——I never saw you before.

Mil. No, sir! I was always in the shop.

Ran. Were you so?—Well, and what does your mistress say?——The devil fetch me, child, you looked so prettily, that I could not mind one word you said.

Mil. Lard, sir, you are such another gentleman!—Why, she says, she is sorry she could not send them sooner. Shall I lay them down?

Ran. No, child. Give them to me——Dear little smiling angel—— [*Catches, and kisses her.*

Mil. I beg, sir, you would be civil.

Ran. Civil! Egad, I think I am very civil.

[*Kisses her again.*

Enter a Servant, and BELLAMY.

Ser. Sir, Mr Bellamy.

Ran. Damn your impertinence——Oh, Mr Bellamy, your servant.

Mil. What shall I say to my mistress?

Ran. Bid her make half a dozen more; but be sure you bring them home yourself. [*Exit Milliner.*] Pshaw! Pox! Mr Bellamy, how should you like to be served so yourself?

Bel. How can you, Ranger, for a minute's pleasure, give an innocent girl the pain of heart I am confident she felt?——There was a modest blush upon her cheek that convinces me she is honest.

Ran. May be so. I was resolved to try, however, had you not interrupted the experiment.

Bel. Fy, Ranger! will you never think?

Ran. Yes; but I cannot be always athinking. The law is a damnable dry study, Mr Bellamy; and without something now and then to amuse and relax, it would be too much for my brain, I promise ye——But I am a mighty sober fellow grown. Here have I been at it these three hours; but the wenches will never let me alone.

Bel. Three hours! Why, do you usually study in such shoes and stockings?

Ran. Rat your inquisitive eyes! *Ex pede Herculem.* Egad, you have me. The truth is, I am but this moment returned from the tavern. What, Frankly here, too!

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. My boy, Ranger, I am heartily glad to see you. Bellamy, let me embrace you; you are the person I want. I have been at your lodgings, and was directed hither.

Ran. It is to him, then, I am obliged for this visit: but with all my heart. He is the only man to whom I don't care how much I am obliged.

Bel. Your humble servant, sir.

Frank. You know, Ranger, I want no inducement to be with you. But——you look sadly—What——no merciless jade has——has she?

Ran. No, no; sound as a roach, my lad. I only got a little too much liquor last night, which I have not slept off yet.

Bel. Thus, Frankly, it is every day. All the morning his head aches; at noon, he begins to clear up; towards evening, he is good company; and all night, he is carefully providing for the same course the next day.

Ran. Why, I must own, my ghostly father, I did relapse a little last night, just to furnish out a decent confession for the day.

Frank. And he is now doing penance for it. Were you his confessor, indeed, you could not well desire more.

Ran. Charles, he sets up for a confessor with

the worst grace in the world. Here has he been reproving me for being but decently civil to my milliner. Plague! because the coldness of his constitution makes him insensible of a fine woman's charms every body else must be so, too.

Bel. I am no less sensible of their charms than you are; though I cannot kiss every woman I meet, or fall in love, as you call it, with every face which has the bloom of youth upon it. I would only have you a little more frugal of your pleasures.

Frank. My dear friend, this is very pretty talking! But, let me tell you, it is in the power of the very first glance from a fine woman, utterly to disconcert all your philosophy.

Bel. It must be from a fine woman, then; and not such as are generally reputed so. And it must be a thorough acquaintance with her, too, that will ever make an impression on my heart.

Ran. Would I could see it once! For when a man has been all his life hoarding up a stock, without allowing himself common necessaries, it tickles me to the soul to see him lay it all out upon a wrong bottom, and become bankrupt at last.

Bel. Well, I don't care how soon you see it. For the minute I find a woman capable of friendship, love, and tenderness, with good sense enough to be always easy, and good-nature enough to like me, I will immediately put it to the trial, which of us shall have the greatest share of happiness from the sex, you or I.

Ran. By marrying her, I suppose! Capable of friendship, love, and tenderness! ha, ha, ha! that a man of your sense should talk so! If she be capable of love, 'tis all I require of my mistress; and as every woman, who is young, is capable of love, I am very reasonably in love with every young woman I meet. My Lord Coke, in a case I read this morning, speaks my sense.

Both. My lord Coke!

Ran. Yes, MY lord Coke. What he says of one woman, I say of the whole sex: I take their bodies, you their minds; which has the better bargain?

Fran. There is no arguing with so great a lawyer. Suppose, therefore, we adjourn the debate to some other time. I have some serious business with Mr Bellamy, and you want sleep, I am sure.

Ran. Sleep! mere loss of time, and hinderance of business——We men of spirit, sir, are above it.

Bel. Whither shall we go?

Fran. Into the park. My chariot is at the door.

Bel. Then if my servant calls, you'll send him after us? [*Exeunt.*

Ran. I will. [*Looking on the card.*] 'Clarinda's compliments'—A pox of this head of mine, never once to ask where she was to be found! 'Tis plain she is not one of us, or I should not have been so remiss in my inquiries. No matter; I shall meet her in my walks.

Servant enters.

Ser. There is no letter nor message, sir.

Ran. Then my things to dress.——I take her body, you her mind; which has the better bargain? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A chamber.*

Enter MRS STRICTLAND *and* JACINTHA, *meeting.*

Mrs Strict. Good-morrow, my dear Jacintha.

Jac. Good-morrow to you, madam. I have brought my work, and intend to sit with you this morning. I hope you have got the better of your fatigue? Where is Clarinda? I should be glad if she would come and work with us.

Mrs Strict. She work! she is too fine a lady to do any thing. She is not stirring yet—we must let her have her rest. People of her waste of spirits require more time to recruit again.

Jac. It is pity she should be ever tired with what is so agreeable to every body else. I am prodigiously pleased with her company.

Mrs Strict. And when you are better acquainted, you will be still more pleased with her. You must rally her upon her partner at Bath; for I fancy part of her rest has been disturbed on his account.

Jac. Was he really a pretty fellow?

Mrs Strict. That I cannot tell; I did not dance myself, and so did not much mind him. You must have the whole story from herself.

Jac. Oh, I warrant ye, I get it all out. None are so proper to make discoveries in love, as those who are in the secret themselves.

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Madam, Mr Strictland is inquiring for you. Here has been Mr Buckle with a letter from his master, which has made him very angry.

Jac. Mr Bellamy said, indeed, he would try him once more, but I fear it will prove in vain. Tell your master I am here.—[*Exit* LUCETTA.]—What signifies fortune, when it only makes us slaves to other people?

Mrs Strict. Do not be uneasy, my Jacintha. You shall always find a friend in me: but as for Mr Strictland, I know not what ill temper hangs about him lately. Nothing satisfies him. You saw how he received us when we came off our journey. Though Clarinda was so good company, he was barely civil to her, and downright rude to me.

Jac. I cannot help saying, I did observe it.

Mrs Strict. I saw you did. Hush! he's here.

Enter MR STRICTLAND.

Strict. Oh, your servant, madam! Here, I have received a letter from Mr Bellamy, wherein he desires I would once more hear what he has to say. You know my sentiments; nay, so does he.

Jac. For Heaven's sake, consider, sir, this is no new affair, no sudden start of passion; we have known each other long. My father valued, and loved him; and, I am sure, were he alive, I should have his consent.

Strict. Don't tell me. Your father would not have you marry against his will; neither will I against mine: I am your father now.

Jac. And you take a fatherly care of me.

Strict. I wish I had never had any thing to do with you.

Jac. You may easily get rid of the trouble.

Strict. By listening, I suppose, to the young gentleman's proposals?

Jac. Which are very reasonable, in my opinion.

Strict. Oh, very modest ones truly! and a very modest gentleman he is, that proposes them! A fool, to expect a lady of thirty thousand pounds fortune, should, by the care and prudence of her guardian, be thrown away upon a young fellow not worth three hundred a-year! He thinks being in love is an excuse for this; but I am not in love: what does he think will excuse me?

Mrs Strict. Well; but, Mr Strictland, I think the gentleman should be heard.

Strict. Well, well; seven o'clock's the time, and, if the man has had the good fortune, since I saw him last, to persuade somebody or other to give him a better estate, I give him my consent, not else. His servant waits below: you may tell him I shall be at home.—[*Exit* JACINTHA.]—But where is your friend, your other half, all this while? I thought you could not have breathed a minute, without your Clarinda.

Mrs Strict. Why, the truth is, I was going to see what makes her keep her chamber so long.

Strict. Look ye, Mrs Strictland; you have been asking me for money this morning. In plain terms, not one shilling shall pass through these fingers, till you have cleared my house of this Clarinda.

Mrs Strict. How can her innocent gaiety have offended you? She is a woman of honour, and has as many good qualities——

Strict. As women of honour generally have.—I know it, and therefore am uneasy.

Mrs Strict. But, sir——

Strict. But, madam—Clarinda, nor e'er a rake of fashion in England, shall live in my family, to debauch it.

Mrs Strict. Sir, she treated me with so much civility in the country, that I thought I could not do less than invite her to spend as much time with me in town as her engagements would permit. I little imagined you could have been displeased at my having so agreeable a companion.

Strict. There was a time, when I was company enough for leisure hours.

Mrs Strict. There was a time, when every word of mine was sure of meeting with a smile; but those happy days, I know not why, have long been over.

Strict. I cannot bear a rival, even of your own sex. I hate the very name of female friends.—No two of you can ever be an hour by yourselves, but one or both are the worse for it.

Mrs Strict. Dear Mr Strictland——

Strict. This I know, and will not suffer.

Mrs Strict. It grieves me, sir, to see you so much in earnest: but, to convince you how willing I am to make you easy in every thing, it shall be my request to her to remove immediately.

Strict. Do it—hark ye—Your request!—Why yours? 'Tis mine—my command—tell her so. I will be master of my own family, and I care not who knows it.

Mrs Strict. You fright me, sir! But it shall be as you please.—[*In tears.*] [*Goes out.*

Strict. Ha! Have I gone too far? for I am not master of myself. Mrs Strictland!—[*She returns.*]—Understand me right. I do not mean, by what I have said, that I suspect your innocence; but, by crushing this growing friendship all at once, I may prevent a train of mischief which you do not foresee. I was, perhaps, too harsh; therefore, do it in your own way: but let me see the house fairly rid of her.

[*Exit* STRICTLAND.

Mrs Strict. His earnestness in this affair amazes me; I am sorry I made this visit to Clarinda; and yet I'll answer for her honour. What can I say to her? Necessity must plead in my excuse—for, at all events, Mr Strictland must be obeyed. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*St James's Park.*

Enter BELLAMY *and* FRANKLY.

Frank. Now, Bellamy, I may unfold the secret of my heart to you with greater freedom; for, though Ranger has honour, I am not in a humour to be laughed at. I must have one that will bear with my impertinence, sooth me into hope, and, like a friend indeed, with tenderness advise me.

Bel. I thought you appeared more grave than usual.

Frank. Oh, Bellamy! My soul is full of joy, of pain, hope, despair, and ecstacy, that no word but love is capable of expressing what I feel!

Bel. Is love the secret Ranger is not fit to hear? In my mind, he would prove the more able counsellor. And is all the gay indifference of my friend at last reduced to love?

Frank. Even so—Never was a prude more re-

solute in chastity and ill-nature, than I was fixed in indifference; but love has raised me from that inactive state, above the being of a man.

Bel. Faith, Charles, I begin to think it has: but, pray, bring this rapture into order a little, and tell me regularly, how, where, and when.

Frank. If I was not most unreasonably in love, those horrid questions would stop my mouth at once; but, as I am armed against reason—I answer—at Bath, on Tuesday, she danced and caught me.

Bel. Danced! And was that all? But who is she? What is her name? Her fortune? Where does she live?

Frank. Hold! Hold! Not so many hard questions. Have a little mercy. I know but little of her, that's certain; but all I do know, you shall have. That evening was the first of her appearing at Bath; the moment I saw her, I resolved to ask the favour of her hand; but the easy freedom with which she gave it, and her unaffected good humour during the whole night, gained such a power over my heart, as none of her sex could ever boast before. I waited on her home; and the next morning, when I went to pay the usual compliments, the bird was flown; she had set out for London two hours before, and in a chariot and six, you rogue!

Bel. But was it her own, Charles?

Frank. That I don't know; but it looks better than being dragged to town in the stage.—That day and the next I spent in inquiries. I waited on the ladies who came with her; they knew nothing of her. So, without learning either her name or fortune, I e'en called for my boots, and rode post after her.

Bel. And how do you find yourself after your journey?

Frank. Why, as yet, I own, I am but on a cold scent: but a woman of her sprightliness and gentility, cannot but frequent all public places: and, when once she is found, the pleasure of the chase will overpay the pains of rousing her. Oh, Bellamy! There was something peculiarly charming in her, that seemed to claim my further acquaintance; and if, in the more familiar parts of life, she shines with that superior lustre, and at last I win her to my arms, how shall I bless my resolution in pursuing her!

Bel. But if, at last, she should prove unworthy——

Frank. I would endeavour to forget her.

Bel. Promise me that, Charles,—[*Takes his hand.*]—and I allow—But we are interrupted.

Enter JACK MEGGOT.

J. Meg. Whom have we here? My old friend Frankly! Thou art grown a mere antique since I saw thee. How hast thou done these five hundred years?

Frank. Even as you see me: well, and at your service ever.

J. Meg. Ha! Whose that?

Frank. A friend of mine. Mr Bellamy, this is Jack Meggot, sir; as honest a fellow as any in life.

J. Meg. Pho! Prithee! Pox! Charles—— Don't be silly—Sir, I am your humble: any one who is a friend of my Frankly's, I am proud of embracing.

Bel. Sir, I shall endeavour to deserve your civility.

J. Meg. Oh, sir! Well, Charles; what, dumb? Come, come; you may talk, though you have nothing to say, as I do. Let us hear, where have you been?

Frank. Why, for this last week, Jack, I have been at Bath.

J. Meg. Bath! the most ridiculous place in life! amongst tradesmen's wives that hate their husbands, and people of quality that had rather go to the devil than stay at home. People of no taste; no *gout;* and, for devertimenti, if it were not for the puppet-show, la vertu would be dead amongst them. But the news, Charles; the ladies—I fear your time hung heavy on your hands, by the small stay you made there.

Frank. Faith, and so it did, Jack; the ladies are grown such idiots in love. The cards have so debauched their five senses, that love, almighty love himself, is utterly neglected.

J. Meg. It is the strangest thing in life, but it is just so with us abroad. Faith, Charles, to tell you a secret, which I don't care if all the world knows, I am almost surfeited with the services of the ladies; the modest ones, I mean. The vast variety of duties they expect, as dressing up to the fashion, losing fashionably, keeping fashionable hours, drinking fashionable liquors, and fifty other such irregular niceties, so ruin a man's pocket and constitution, that, 'foregad, he must have the estate of a duke, and the strength of a gondolier, who would list himself into their service.

Frank. A free confession, truly, Jack, for one of your coat!

Bel. The ladies are obliged to you.

Enter BUCKLE, *with a letter to* BELLAMY.

J. Meg. Oh, Lard, Charles! I have had the greatest misfortune in life since I saw you; poor Otho, that I brought from Rome with me, is dead!

Frank. Well, well; get you another, and all will be well again.

J. Meg. No; the rogue broke me so much china, and gnawed my Spanish leather shoes so filthily, that, when he was dead, I began not to endure him.

Bel. Exactly at seven! run back and assure him I will not fail.—[*Exit* BUCKLE.]—Dead! Pray, who was the gentleman?

J. Meg. The gentleman was my monkey, sir; an odd sort of a fellow, that used to divert me,

and pleased every body so at Rome, that he always made one in our conversationi. But, Mr Bellamy, I saw a servant; I hope no engagement, for you two positively shall dine with me: I have the finest macaroni in life. Oblige me so far.

Bel. Sir, your servant; what say you, Frankly?

J. Meg. Pho! Pox! Charles, you shall go.—My aunts think you begin to neglect them; and old maids, you know, are the most jealous creatures in life.

Frank. Ranger swears they cannot be maids, they are so good-natured. Well, I agree, on condition I may eat what I please, and go away just when I will.

J. Meg. Ay, ay, you shall do just what you will. But how shall we do? My post chaise won't carry us all.

Frank. My chariot is here; and I will conduct Mr Bellamy.

Bel. Mr Meggot, I beg pardon; I cannot possibly dine out of town; I have an engagement early in the evening.

J. Meg. Out of town! No, my dear, I live just by. I see one of the dillettanti, I would not miss speaking to for the universe. And so I expect you at three. [*Exit.*

Frank. Ha, ha, ha! and so you thought you had at least fifty miles to go post for a spoonful of macaroni?

Bel. I suppose, then, he is just come out of the country?

Frank. Nor that neither. I would venture a wager, from his own house hither, or to an auction or two of old dirty pictures, is the utmost of his travels to-day; or he may have been in pursuit, perhaps, of a new cargo of Venetian toothpicks.

Bel. A special acquaintance I have made today.

Frank. For all this, Bellamy, he has a heart worthy your friendship. He spends his estate freely, and you cannot oblige him more, than by shewing him how he can be of service to you.

Bel. Now you say something. It is the heart, Frankly, I value in a man.

Frank. Right—and there is a heart even in a woman's breast, that is worth the purchase, or my judgment has deceived me. Dear Bellamy, I know your concern for me; see her first, and then blame me, if you can.

Bel. So far from blaming you, Charles, that, if my endeavours can be serviceable, I will beat the bushes with you.

Frank. That, I am afraid, will not do. For you know less of her than I: but if, in your walks, you meet a finer woman than ordinary, let her not escape till I have seen her. Whereso-ever she is, she cannot long be hid.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*St James's Park.*

Enter CLARINDA, JACINTHA, *and* MRS STRICTLAND.

Jac. Ay, ay; we both stand condemned out of our own mouths.

Cla. Why, I cannot but own, I never had a thought of any man that troubled me but him.

Mrs Strict. Then, I dare swear, by this time, you heartily repent your leaving Bath so soon.

Cla. Indeed, you are mistaken. I have not had one scruple since.

Jac. Why, what one inducement can he have ever to think of you again?

Cla. Oh, the greatest of all inducements, curiosity: let me assure you, a woman's surest hold over a man, is to keep him in uncertainty. As soon as ever you put him out of doubt, you put him out of your power; but, when once a woman has awaked his curiosity, she may lead him a dance of many a troublesome mile, without the least fear of losing him at last.

Jac. Now do I heartily wish he may have spirit enough to follow, and use you as you deserve. Such a spirit, with but a little knowledge of our sex, might put that heart of yours into a strange flutter.

Cla. I care not how soon. I long to meet with such a fellow. Our modern beaux are such joint-babies in love, they have no feeling; they are entirely insensible either of pain or pleasure, but from their own dear persons; and, according as we flatter, or affront their beauty, they admire or forsake ours: they are not worthy even of our displeasure; and, in short, abusing them is but so much ill-nature merely thrown away. But the man of sense, who values himself upon his high abilities, or the man of wit, who thinks a woman beneath his conversation—to see such the subjects of our power, the slaves of our frowns and smiles, is glorious indeed!

Mrs Strict. No man of sense, or wit either, if he be truly so, ever did, or ever can, think a woman of merit beneath his wisdom to converse with.

Jac. Nor will such a woman value herself upon making such a lover uneasy.

Cla. Amazing! Why, every woman can give ease. You cannot be in earnest.

Mrs Strict. I can assure you she is, and has put in practice the doctrine she has been teaching.

Cla. Impossible! Who ever heard the name of love mentioned without an idea of torment? But, pray let us hear.

Jac. Nay, there is nothing to hear that I know of.

Cla. So I suspected, indeed The novel is not likely to be long, when the lady is so well prepared for the *denoüement*.

Jac. The novel, as you call it, is not so short as you may imagine. I and my spark have been long acquainted: as he was continually with my father, I soon perceived that he loved me; and the manner of his expressing that love, was what pleased and wounded me most.

Cla. Well; and how was it? the old bait, flattery; dear flattery, I warrant ye.

Jac. No, indeed; I had not the pleasure of hearing my person, wit, and beauty painted out with forced praises; but I had a more sensible delight, in perceiving the drift of his whole behaviour was to make every hour of my time pass away agreeably.

Cla. The rustic! what, did he never say a handsome thing of your person?

Mrs Strict. He did, it seems, what pleased her better; he flattered her good sense, as much as a less cunning lover would have done her beauty.

Cla. On my conscience, you are well matched.

Jac. So well, that if my guardian denies me happiness (and this evening he is to pass his final sentence), nothing is left but to break my prison, and fly into my lover's arms for safety.

Cla. Hey-day! O' my conscience thou art a brave girl. Thou art the very first prude that ever had honesty enough to avow her passion for a man.

Jac. And thou art the first finished coquette who ever had any honesty at all.

Mrs Strict. Come, come; you are both too good for either of those characters.

Cla. And my dear Mrs Strictland, here, is the first young married woman of spirit who has an ill-natured fellow for a husband, and never once thinks of using him as he deserves——Good Heaven! If I had such a husband——

Mrs Strict. You would be just as unhappy as I am.

Cla. But come now, confess——do not you long to be a widow?

Mrs Strict. Would I were any thing but what I am!

Cla. Then, go the nearest way about it. I'd break that stout heart of his in less than a fortnight. I'd make him know ——

Mrs Strict. Pray, be silent. You know my resolution.

Cla. I know you have no resolution.

Mrs Strict. You are a mad creature, but I forgive you.

Cla. It is all meant kindly, I assure you. But, since you won't be persuaded to your good; I will think of making you easy in your submission, as soon as ever I can. I dare say, I may have the same lodging I had last year: I can know immediately—I see my chair: and so, ladies both, adieu. [*Exit.*

Jac. Come, Mrs Strictland, we shall but just have time to get home before Mr Bellamy comes.

Mrs Strict. Let us return, then, to our common prison. You must forgive my ill-nature, Jacintha, if I almost wish Mr Strictland may refuse to join your hand where your heart is given.

Jac. Lord, madam, what do you mean?

Mrs Strict. Self-interest only, child. Methinks your company in the country would soften all my sorrows, and I could bear them patiently.

Re-enter CLARINDA.

Cla. Dear Mrs Strictland—I am so confused, and so out of breath———

Mrs Strict. Why, what's the matter?

Jac. I protest you fright me.

Cla. Oh! I have no time to recover myself, I am so frightened, and so pleased. In short, then, the dear man is here.

Mrs Strict. Here—Lord—Where?

Cla. I met him this instant; I saw him at a distance, turned short, and ran hither directly.—Let us go home. I tell you he follows me.

Mrs Strict. Why, had you not better stay, and let him speak to you?

Cla. Ay! But then—he won't know where I live, without my telling him.

Mrs Strict. Come, then. Ha, ha, ha!

Jac. Ay, poor Clarinda!——*Allons donc.*

[*Exeunt.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Fran. Sure that must be she! her shape and easy air cannot be so exactly copied by another. Now, you young rogue, Cupid, guide me directly to her, as you would the surest arrow in your quiver. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the street before* MR STRICTLAND'S *door.*

Re-enter CLARINDA, JACINTHA, *and* MRS STRICTLAND.

Cla. Lord!—Dear Jacintha———for Heaven's sake make haste: he'll overtake us before we get in.

Jac. Overtake us! why, he is not in sight.

Cla. Is not he? Ha! Sure I have not dropt my twee—I would not have him lose sight of me neither. [*Aside.*

Mrs Strict. Here he is—

Cla. In——In——In, then.

Jac. [*Laughing.*] What, without your twee?

Cla. Pshaw! I have lost nothing———In, in, I'll follow you.

[*Exeunt into the house,* CLARINDA *last.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. It is impossible I should be deceived. My eyes, and the quick pulses at my heart, assure me it is she. Ha! 'tis she, by Heaven! and the door left open too—A fair invitation, by all the rules of love. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to an apartment in* MR STRICTLAND'S *house.*

Enter CLARINDA, FRANKLY *following her.*

Frank. I hope, madam, you will excuse the boldness of this intrusion, since it is owing to your own behaviour that I am forced to it.

Cla. To my behaviour, sir!

Frank. You cannot but remember me at Bath, madam, where I so lately had the favour of your hand——

Cla. I do remember, sir; but I little expected any wrong interpretation of my behaviour from one who had so much the appearance of a gentleman.

Frank. What I saw of your behaviour was so just, it would admit of no misrepresentation. I only feared, whatever reason you had to conceal your name from me at Bath, you might have the same to do it now; and though my happiness was so nearly concerned, I rather chose to venture thus abruptly after you, than be impertinently inquisitive.

Cla. Sir, there seems to be so much civility in your rudeness, that I can easily forgive it;—though I don't see how your happiness is at all concerned.

Frank. No, madam! I believe you are the only lady, who could, with the qualifications you are mistress of, be sensible of the power they give you over the happiness of our sex.

Cla. How vain should we women be, if you gentlemen were but wise! If you did not all of you say the same things to every woman, we should certainly be foolish enough to believe some of you were in earnest.

Frank. Could you have the least sense of what I feel whilst I am speaking, you would know me to be in earnest, and what I say to be the dictates of a heart that admires you; may I not say that—

Cla. Sir, this is carrying the———

Frank. When I danced with you at Bath, I was charmed with your whole behaviour, and felt the same tender admiration! but my hope of seeing you afterwards, kept in my passion till a more proper time should offer. You cannot, therefore, blame me now, if, after having lost you once, I do not suffer an inexcusable modesty to prevent my making use of this second opportunity.

Cla. This behaviour, sir, is so different from the gaiety of your conversation then, that I am at a loss how to answer you.

Frank. There is nothing, madam, which could take off from the gaiety with which your presence inspires every heart, but the fear of losing you. How can I be otherwise than as I am, when I know not but you may leave London as abruptly as you did Bath?

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Madam, the tea is ready, and my mistress waits for you.

Cla. Very well, I come—[*Exit* LUCETTA.] You see, sir, I am called away: but I hope you will excuse it, when I leave you with an assurance, that the business, which brings me to town, will keep me here some time.

Frank. How generous it is in you thus to ease the heart, that knew not how to ask for such a favour!—I fear to offend—But this house, I suppose, is yours?

Cla. You will hear of me, if not find me here.

Frank. I then take my leave. [*Exit* FRANK.

Cla. I'm undone!——He has me!

Enter MRS STRICTLAND.

Mrs Strict. Well; how do you find yourself?

Cla. I do find——that, if he goes on as he has begun, I shall certainly have him without giving him the least uneasiness.

Mrs Strict. A very terrible prospect, indeed!

Cla. But I must tease him a little——Where is Jacintha? how will she laugh at me, if I become a pupil of hers, and learn to give ease! No; positively I shall never do it.

Mrs Strict. Poor Jacintha has met with what I feared from Mr Strictland's temper; an utter denial. I know not why, but he really grows more and more ill-natured.

Cla. Well; now do I heartily wish my affairs were in his power a little, that I might have a few difficulties to surmount: I love difficulties; and yet, I don't know—it is as well as it is.

Mrs Strict. Ha, ha, ha! Come, the tea waits. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MR STRICTLAND.

Strict. These doings in my house distract me. I met a fine gentleman: when I inquired who he was, why, he came to Clarinda. I shall not be easy till she is decamped. My wife had the character of a virtuous woman—and they have not been long acquainted: but then they were by themselves at Bath——That hurts——that hurts——they must be watched, they must; I know them, I know all their wiles, and the best of them are but hypocrites——Ha!—[LUCETTA *passes over the stage.*] Suppose I bribe the maid: she is of their council, the manager of their secrets: it shall be so; money will do it, and I shall know all that passes. Lucetta!

Luc. Sir.

Strict. Lucetta!

Re-enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Sir! If he should suspect, and search me now, I'm undone. [*Aside.*

Strict. She is a sly girl, and may be serviceable. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, you are a good girl, and have an honest face. I like it. It looks as if it carried no deceit in it—Yet, if she should be false, she can do me most harm. [*Aside.*

Luc. Pray, sir, speak out.

Strict. [*Aside.*] No; she is a woman, and it is the highest imprudence to trust her.

Luc. I am not able to understand you.

Strict. I am glad of it. I would not have you understand me.

Luc. Then, what did you call me for?—If he should be in love with my face, it would be rare sport. [*Aside.*

Strict. Tester, ay, Tester is the proper person. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, tell Tester I want him.

Luc. Yes, sir. Mighty odd, this! It gives me time, however, to send Buckle with this letter to his master. [*Aside. Exit.*

Strict. Could I but be once well satisfied that my wife had really finished me, I believe I should be as quiet as if I were sure to the contrary: but, whilst I am in doubt, I am miserable.

Enter TESTER.

Test. Does your honour please to want me?

Strict. Ay, Tester——I need not fear. The honesty of his service, and the goodness of his look, make me secure. I will trust him. [*Aside.*] Tester, I think I have been a tolerable good master to you.

Test. Yes, sir,———very tolerable.

Strict. I like his simplicity well. It promises honesty. [*Aside.*] I have a secret, Tester, to impart to you; a thing of the greatest importance. Look upon me, and don't stand picking your fingers.

Test. Yes, sir.—No, sir.

Strict. But will not his simplicity expose him the more to Lucetta's cunning? Yes, yes; she will worm the secret out of him. I had better trust her with it at once.—So I will. [*Aside.*] Tester, go, send Lucetta hither.

Test. Yes, sir———Here she is.

Re-enter LUCETTA.

Lucetta, my master wants you.

Strict. Get you down, Tester.

Test. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Luc. If you want me, sir, I beg you would make haste, for I have a thousand things to do.

Strict. Well, well; what I have to say will not take up much time, could I but persuade you to be honest.

Luc. Why, sir, I hope you don't suspect my honesty?

Strict. Well, well: I believe you honest. [*Shuts the door.*

Luc. What can be at the bottom of all this? [*Aside.*

Strict. So; we cannot be too private. Come hither, hussy; nearer yet.

Luc. Lord, sir! You are not going to be rude? I vow I will call out.

Strict. Hold your tongue—Does the baggage laugh at me? She does; she mocks me, and will reveal it to my wife; and her insolence upon it will be more insupportable to me than cuckoldom itself. [*Aside.*] I have not leisure now, Lucetta—Some other time—Hush! Did not the bell ring? Yes, yes; my wife wants you. Go, go, go to her. [*Pushes her out.*] There is no hell on earth like being a slave to suspicion. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*The Piazza, Covent-Garden.*

Enter BELLAMY *and* JACK MEGGOT.

Bel. Nay, nay, I would not put your family into any confusion.

J. Meg. None in life, my dear, I assure you. I will go and order every thing this instant for her reception.

Bel. You are too obliging, sir; but you need not be in this hurry, for I am in no certainty when I shall trouble you; I only know, that my Jacintha has taken such a resolution.

J. Meg. Therefore, we should be prepared; for, when once a lady has such a resolution in her head, she is upon the rack till she executes it. 'Foregad, Mr Bellamy, this must be a girl of fire.

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. Buxom and lively as the bounding doe!—Fair as painting can express, or youthful poets fancy, when they love! Tol, de rol, lol! [*Singing and dancing.*

Bel. Who is this you talk thus rapturously of?

Frank. Who should it be, but—I shall know her name to-morrow. [*Sings and dances.*

J. Meg. What is the matter, ho? Is the man mad?

Frank. Even so, gentlemen; as mad as love and joy can make me.

Bel. But inform us whence this joy proceeds.

Frank. Joy! joy! my lads! she's found! my Perdita! my charmer!

J. Meg. Egad! her charms have bewitched the man, I think!——But who is she?

Bel. Come, come, tell us, who is this wonder?

Frank. But will you say nothing?

Bel. Nothing, as I live.

Frank. Nor you?

J. Meg. I'll be as silent as the grave——

Frank. With a tomb-stone upon it, to tell every one whose dust it carries.

J. Meg. I'll be as secret as a debauched prude——

Frank. Whose sanctity every one suspects. Jack, Jack, 'tis not in thy nature; keeping a secret is worse to thee than keeping thy accounts. But to leave fooling, listen to me both, that I may whisper it into your ears, that echo may not catch the sinking sound——I cannot tell who she is, faith—Tol de rol, lol——

J. Meg. Mad! mad! very mad!

Frank. All I know of her is, that she is a charming woman, and has given me liberty to visit her again——Bellamy, 'tis she, the lovely she! [*Aside.*

Bel. So I did suppose. [*To* FRANK.

J. Meg. Poor Charles! for Heaven's sake, Mr Bellamy, persuade him to go to his chamber, whilst I prepare every thing for you at home. Adieu. [*Aside to* BEL.] Bye Charles; ha, ha, ha! [*Exit.*

Frank. Oh, love! thou art a gift worthy of a god, indeed! dear Bellamy, nothing could add to my pleasure, but to see my friend as deep in love as I am.

Bel. I shew my heart is capable of love, by the friendship it bears to you.

Frank. The light of friendship looks but dim before the brighter flame of love: love is the spring of cheerfulness and joy. Why, how dull and phlegmatic do you shew to me now! whilst I am all life; light as feathered Mercury—You, dull and cold as earth and water; I, light and warm as air and fire. These are the only elements in love's world! Why, Bellamy, for shame! get thee a mistress, and be sociable.

Bel. Frankly, I am now going to——

Frank. Why that face now? Your humble servant, sir. My flood of joy shall not be stopped by your melancholy fits, I assure you. [*Going.*

Bel. Stay, Frankly; I beg you stay. What would you say now, if I really were in love?

Frank. Why, faith, thou hast such romantic notions of sense and honour, that I know not what to say.

Bel. To confess the truth, then, I am in love.

Frank. And do you confess it as if it were a sin? Proclaim it aloud; glory in it; boast of it as your greatest virtue; swear it with a lover's oath, and I will believe you.

Bel. Why, then, by the bright eyes of her I love——

Frank. Well said!

Bel. By all that's tender, amiable, and soft in woman——

Frank. Bravo!

Bel. I swear, I am as true an enamorato as ever tagged rhyme.

Frank. And art thou, then, thoroughly in love? Come to my arms, thou dear companion of my joys!——

[*They embrace.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Why—Hey!—is there never a wench to be got for love or money?

Bel. Pshaw! Ranger here?

Ran. Yes, Ranger is here, and perhaps does not come so impertinently as you may imagine. Faith! I think I have the knack of finding out secrets. Nay, never look so queer——Here is a letter, Mr Bellamy, that seems to promise you better diversion than your hugging one another.

Bel. What do you mean?

Ran. Do you deal much in these paper-tokens?

Bel. Oh, the dear kind creature! it is from herself. [*To* FRANK.

Ran. What, is it a pair of laced shoes she wants? or have the boys broke her windows?

Bel. Hold your profane tongue!

Frank. Nay, prithee, Bellamy, don't keep it to yourself, as if her whole affections were contained in those few lines.

Ran. Prithee, let him alone to his silent raptures. But it is as I always said—your grave men ever are the greatest whoremasters.

Bel. I cannot be disobliged now, say what you will. But how came this into your hands?

Ran. Your servant Buckle and I changed commissions; he went on my errand, and I came on his.

Bel. 'Sdeath! I want him this very instant.

Ran. He will be here presently; but I demand to know what I have brought you?

Frank. Ay, ay! out with it! you know we never blab, and may be of service.

Bel. Twelve o'clock! oh, the dear hour!

Ran. Why, it is a pretty convenient time, indeed.

Bel. By all that's happy, she promises in this letter here——to leave her guardian this very night——and run away with me.

Ran. How is this?

Bel. Nay, I know not how myself—she says at the bottom—'Your servant has full instruc-'tions from Lucetta how to equip me for my ex-'pedition. I will not trust myself home with 'you to-night, because I know it is inconvenient; 'therefore, I beg you would procure me a lodg-'ing; it is no matter how far off my guardian's.

Yours, JACINTHA.'

Ran. Carry her to a bagnio, and there you may lodge with her.

Frank. Why,-this must be a girl of spirit, faith!

Bel. And beauty equal to her sprightliness. I love her, and she loves me. She has thirty thousand pounds to her fortune.

Ran. The devil she has!

Bel. And never play at cards.

Ran. Nor does any one thing like any other woman, I suppose?

Frank. Not so, I hope, neither.

Bel. Oh, Frankly, Ranger, I never felt such ease before! the secret's out, and you don't laugh at me.

Frank. Laugh at thee, for loving a woman with thirty thousand pounds? thou art a most unaccountable fellow!

Ran. How the devil could he work her up to this! I never could have had the face to have done it. But—I don't know how—there is a degree of assurance in you modest gentlemen, which we impudent fellows never can come up to.

Bel. Oh! your servant, good sir. You should not abuse me now, Ranger, but do all you can to assist me.

Ran. Why, look ye, Bellamy, I am a damnable unlucky fellow, and so will have nothing to do in this affair: I'll take care to be out of the way, so as to do you no harm; that's all I can answer for; and so—success attend you. [*Going.*] I cannot leave you quite to yourself neither; for if this should prove a round-house affair, as I make no doubt it will, I believe I may have more interest there than you; and so, sir, you may hear of me at—— [*Whispers.*

Bel. For shame, Ranger! the most noted gaming-house in town.

Ran. Forgive me this once, my boy. I must go, faith, to pay a debt of honour to some of the greatest rascals in town. [*Exit* RAN.

Frank. But where do you design to lodge her?

Bel. At Mr Meggot's—He is already gone to prepare for her reception.

Frank. The properest place in the world: his aunts will entertain her with honour.

Bel. And the newness of her acquaintance will prevent its being suspected. Frankly, give me your hand: this is a very critical time.

Frank. Pho! none of your musty reflections now! When a man is in love, to the very brink of matrimony, what the devil has he to do with Plutarch and Seneca? Here is your servant, with a face full of business—I'll leave you together—I shall be at the King's Arms, where, if you want my assistance, you may find me. [*Exit* FRANK.

Enter BUCKLE.

Bel. So, Buckle, you seem to have your hands full.

Buckle. Not fuller than my head, sir, I promise you. You have had your letter, I hope?

Bel. Yes, and in it she refers me to you for my instructions.

Buckle. Why, the affair stands thus. As Mr Strictland sees the door locked and barred every night himself, and takes the key up with him, it is impossible for us to escape any way but through the window; for which purpose, I have a ladder of ropes.

Bel. Good.

Buckle. And because a hoop, as the ladies wear them now, is not the most decent dress to come down a ladder in, I have, in this other bundle, a suit of boy's clothes, which, I believe, will fit her; at least, it will serve the time she wants it. You will soon be for pulling it off, I suppose.

Bel. Why, you are in spirits, you rogue.

Buckle. These I am now to convey to Lucetta—Have you any thing to say, sir?

Bel. Nothing, but that I will not fail at the hour appointed. Bring me word to Mr Meggot's how you go on. Succeed in this, and it shall make your fortune.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The street before Mr* STRICTLAND'S *house.*

Enter BELLAMY *in a chairman's coat.*

Bel. How tediously have these minutes passed these last few hours! and the envious rogues will fly, no lightning quicker, when we would have them stay. Hold, let me not mistake—— this is the house. [*Pulls out his watch.*] By Heaven, it is not yet the hour! I hear somebody coming. The moon's so bright—I had better not be here till the happy instant comes.

[*Exit* BEL.

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. Wine is no antidote to love, but rather feeds the flame: Now am I such an amorous puppy, that I cannot walk straight home, but must come out of my way to take a view of my queen's palace by moonlight—Ay, here stands the temple where my goddess is adored—the doors open!

[*Retires.*

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. [*Under the window.*] Madam, madam, hist! madam—How shall I make her hear?

JACINTHA, *in boy's clothes, at the window.*

Jac. Who is there? What's the matter?

Luc. It is I, madam: you must not pretend to stir till I give the word; you'll be discovered if you do——

Frank. [*Aside.*] What do I see? A man!—My heart misgives me.

Luc. My master is below, sitting up for Mrs Clarinda. He raves as if he were mad about her being out so late.

Frank. [*Aside.*] Here is some intrigue or other.

I must see more of this before I give further way to love.

Luc. One minute he is in the street; the next he is in the kitchen: now he will lock her out, and then he'll wait himself, and see what figure she makes when she vouchsafes to venture home.

Jac. I long to have it over. Get me but once out of his house.

Frank. [*Aside.*] Cowardly rascal! would I were in his place!

Luc. If I can but fix him any where, I can let you out myself———You have the ladder ready in case of necessity?

Jac. Yes, yes. [*Exit* LUC.

Frank. [*Aside.*] The ladder! This must lead to some discovery; I shall watch you, my young gentleman, I shall.

Enter CLARINDA *and Servant.*

Cla. This whist is a most enticing devil. I am afraid I'm too late for Mr Strictland's sober hours.

Jac. Ha! I hear a noise!

Cla. No; I see a light in Jacintha's window. You may go home. [*Giving the servant money.*] I am safe.

Jac. Sure it must be he! Mr Bellamy—sir.

Frank. [*Aside.*] Does he not call me?

Cla. [*Aside.*] Ha! Who's that? I am frightened out of my wits———A man!

Jac. Is it you?

Frank. Yes, yes; 'tis I, 'tis I.

Jac. Listen at the door.

Frank. I will; 'tis open—There is no noise: all's quiet.

Cla. Sure it is my spark—and talking to Jacintha. [*Aside.*

Frank. You may come down the ladder——quick.

Jac. Catch it, then, and hold it.

Frank. I have it. Now I shall see what sort of mettle my young spark is made of. [*Aside.*

Cla. With a ladder, too! I'll assure you.—But I must see the end of it. [*Aside.*

Jac. Hark! Did not somebody speak?

Frank. No, no; be not fearful—'Sdeath! we are discovered.

[FRANKLY *and* CLARINDA *retire.*

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Hist! hist! are you ready?

Jac. Yes, may I venture?

Luc. Now is your time. He is in high conference with his privy counsellor, Mr Tester.—You may come down the back stairs, and I'll let you out. [*Exit* LUCETTA.

Jac. I will, I will; and am heartily glad of it. [*Exit* JAC.

Frank. [*Advancing.*] May be so: but you and I shall have a few words before you get off so cleanly.

Cla. [*Advancing.*] How lucky it was I came home at this instant: I shall spoil his sport I believe. Do you know me, sir?

Frank. I am amazed! You here! This was unexpected, indeed!

Cla. Why, I believe, I do come a little unexpectedly, but I shall amaze you more. I know the whole course of your amour: all the process of your mighty passion, from its first rise——

Frank. What is all this!

Cla. To the very conclusion, which you vainly hope to effect this night.

Frank. By Heaven, madam, I know not what you mean! I came hither purely to contemplate on your beauties.

Cla. Any beauties, sir, I find, will serve your turn. Did I not hear you talk to her at the window?

Frank. Her!

Cla. Blush, blush, for shame! but be assured you have seen the last both of Jacintha and me. [*Exit.*

Frank. Jacintha, hear me, madam—She is gone. This must certainly be Bellamy's mistress, and I have fairly ruined all the scheme.—This it is to be in luck.

Enter BELLAMY, *behind.*

Bel. Ha! a man under the window!

Frank. No, here she comes, and I may convey her to him.

Enter JACINTHA, *and runs to* FRANKLY.

Jac. I have at last got to you. Let us haste away—Oh!

Frank. Be not frightened, lady.

Jac. Oh! I am abused! betrayed!

Bel. Betrayed!——Frankly!

Frank. Bellamy!

Bel. I can scarce believe it though I see it.—Draw——

Frank. Hear me, Bellamy—lady———

Jac. Stay—do not fight!

Frank. I am innocent; it is all a mistake!

Jac. For my sake, be quiet! We shall be discovered! the family is alarmed!

Bel. You are obeyed. Mr Frankly, there is but one way——

Frank. I understand you. Any time but now. You will certainly be discovered! To-morrow at your chambers.

Bel. Till then, farewell.

[*Exeunt* BEL. *and* JAC.

Frank. Then, when he is cool, I may be heard; and the real, though suspicious, account of this matter may be believed. Yet, amidst all this perplexity, it pleases me to find my fair incognita is jealous of my love.

Strict. [*Within.*] Where's Lucetta? Search every place.

Frank. Hark! the cry is up! I must be gone. [*Exit* FRANK.

Enter MR STRICTLAND, TESTER, *and Servants.*

Strict. She's gone! she's lost! I am cheated! pursue her! seek her!

Test. Sir, all her clothes are in her chamber.

Ser. Sir, Mrs Clarinda said she was in boy's clothes.

Strict. Ay, ay, I know it—Bellamy has her—Come along—Pursue her. [*Exeunt.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. Hark!——Was not the noise this way? No, there is no game stirring. This same goddess, Diana, shines so bright with her chastity, that, egad, I believe the wenches are ashamed to look her in the face. Now am I in an admirable mood for a frolic: have wine in my head, and money in my pocket, and so am furnished out for the cannonading of any countess in Christendom. Ha! what have we here! a ladder! this cannot be placed here for nothing——and a window open! Is it love or mischief now that is going on within? I care not which—I am in a right cue for either. Up I go, neck or nothing. Stay—do I not run a greater chance of spoiling sport, than I do of making any? that I hate, as much as I love the other. There can be no harm in seeing how the land lies—I'll up.—[*Goes up softly.*] All is hush———Ha! a light, and a woman! by all that's lucky, neither old nor crooked! I'll in———Ha! she is gone again! I will after her. [*Gets in at the window.*] And for fear of the squalls of virtue, and the pursuit of the family, I will make sure of the ladder. Now, Fortune, be my guide!

SCENE II.—MRS STRICTLAND'S *dressing-room.*

Enter MRS STRICTLAND, *followed by* LUCETTA.

Mrs Strict. Well, I am in great hopes she will escape.

Luc. Never fear, madam; the lovers have the start of him, and I warrant they keep it.

Mrs Strict. Were Mr Strictland ever to suspect my being privy to her flight, I know not what might be the consequence.

Luc. Then you had better be undressing. He may return immediately.

[*As she is sitting down at the toilet,* RANGER *enters behind.*]

Ran. Young and beautiful. [*Aside.*

Luc. I have watched him pretty narrowly of late, and never once suspected till this morning——

Mrs Strict. And who gave you authority to watch his actions, or pry into his secrets?

Luc. I hope, madam, you are not angry. I thought it might have been of service to you to know my master was jealous.

Ran. And her husband jealous! If she does not send away the maid, I am happy.

Mrs Strict. [*Angrily.*] Leave me.

Luc. This it is to middle with other people's affairs. [*Exit in anger.*

Ran. What a lucky dog I am! I never made a gentleman a cuckold before. Now, impudence, assist me!

Mrs Strict. [*Rising.*] Provoking! I am sure I never have deserved it of him.

Ran. Oh, cuckold him by all means, madam; I am your man! [*She shrieks.*] Oh, fy, madam! if you squall so cursedly, you will be discovered.

Mrs Strict. Discovered! What mean you, sir? do you come to abuse me?

Ran. I'll do my endeavour, madam; you can have no more.

Mrs Strict. Whence came you? How got you here?

Ran. Dear madam, so long as I'm here, what signifies how I got here, or whence I came? but that I may satisfy your curiosity, first, as to your whence came you? I answer, out of the street: and to your how got you here? I say, in at the window: it stood so invitingly open, it was irresistible. But, madam——you were going to undress. I beg I may not incommode you.

Mrs Strict. This is the most consummate piece of impudence!——

Ran. For Heaven's sake, have one drop of pity for a poor young fellow, who has long loved you.

Mrs Strict. What would the fellow have?

Ran. Your husband's usage will excuse you to the world.

Mrs Strict. I cannot bear this insolence! Help! Help!

Ran. Oh, hold that clamorous tongue, madam! Speak one word more, and I am gone, positively gone.

Mrs Strict. Gone! So I would have you.

Ran. Lord, madam, you are so hasty!

Mrs Strict. Shall I not speak, when a thief, a robber, breaks into my house at midnight! Help! help!

Ran. Ha! no one hears. Now, Cupid assist me!—Look ye, madam, I never could make fine speeches, and cringe, and bow, and fawn, and flatter, and lie. I have said more to you already, than ever I said to a woman in such circumstances in all my life. But since I find you will yield to no persuasion to your good, I will gently force you to be grateful. [*Throws down his hat, and seizes her.*] Come, come, unbend that brow, and look more kindly on me!

Mrs Strict. For shame, sir! Thus on my knees let me beg for mercy. [*Kneeling.*

Ran. And thus on mine, let me beg the same. [*He kneels, catches, and kisses her.*

Strict. [*Within.*] Take away her sword! she'll hurt herself!

Mrs Strict. Oh, Heavens! that's my husband's voice!

Ran. [*Rising.*] The devil it is!

Strict. [*Within.*] Take away her sword, I say, and then I can close with her.

Mrs Strict. He is upon the stairs, now coming up! I am undone, if he sees you!

Ran. Pox on him, I must decamp then. Which way?

Mrs Strict. Through this passage into the next chamber.

Ran. And so into the street. With all my heart. You may be perfectly easy, madam: mum's the word; I never blab. [*Aside.*] I shall not leave off so, but wait till the last moment.

[*Exit* RANGER.

Mrs Strict. So, he's gone. What could I have said, if he had been discovered!

Enter MR STRICTLAND *driving in* JACINTHA, LUCETTA *following.*

Strict. Once more, my pretty masculine madam, you are welcome to home; and I hope to keep you somewhat closer than I have done; for to-morrow morning, eight o'clock, is the latest hour you shall stay in this lewd town.

Jac. Oh, sir; when once a girl is equipped with a hearty resolution, it is not your worship's sagacity, nor the great chain at your gate, can hinder her from doing what she has a-mind.

Strict. Oh, Lord! Lord! how this love improves a young lady's modesty!

Jac. Am I to blame to seek for happiness any where, when you are resolved to make me miserable here?

Strict. I have this night prevented your making yourself so; and will endeavour to do it for the future. I have you safe now, and the devil shall not get you out of my clutches again. I have locked the doors, and barred them, I warrant you. So, here—[*Giving her a candle.*]—Troop to your chamber, and to bed, while you are well. Go!—[*He treads on* RANGER'S *hat.*]—What's here? A hat! A man's hat in my wife's dressing-room!

[*Looking at the hat.*

Mrs Strict. What shall I do? [*Aside.*

Strict. [*Taking up the hat, and looking at* MRS STRICTLAND.]—Ha! By hell, I see 'tis true!

Mrs Strict. My fears confound me! I dare not tell the truth, and know not how to frame a lie! [*Aside.*

Strict. Mrs Strictland, Mrs Strictland, how came this hat into your chamber?

Luc. Are you that way disposed, my fine lady, and will not trust me? [*Aside.*

Strict. Speak, wretch, speak——

Jac. I could not have suspected this. [*Aside.*

Strict. Why dost thou not speak?

Mrs Strict. Sir——

Strict. Guilt—'tis guilt that ties your tongue!

Luc. I must bring her off, however. No chambermaid can help it. [*Aside.*

Strict. My fears are just, and I am miserable—Thou worst of women!

Mrs Strict. I know my innocence, and can bear this no longer.

Strict. I know you are false, and 'tis I how will bear my injuries no longer.

[*Both walk about in a passion.*

Luc. [*To* JACINTHA *aside.*]—Is not the hat yours? own it, madam.

[*Takes away* JACINTHA'S *hat, and exit.*

Mrs Strict. What ground, what cause have you for jealousy, when you yourself can witness, your leaving me was accidental, your return uncertain; and expected even sooner than it happened? The abuse is gross and palpable.

Strict. Why, this is true!

Mrs Strict. Indeed, Jacintha, I am innocent.

Strict. And yet this hat must belong to somebody.

Jac. Dear Mrs Strictland, be not concerned. When he has diverted himself a little longer with it——

Strict. Ha!

Jac. I suppose he will give me my hat again.

Strict. Your hat!

Jac. Yes, my hat. You brushed it from my side yourself, and then trod upon it; whether on purpose to abuse this lady or no, you best know yourself.

Strict. It cannot be—'tis all a lie.

Jac. Believe so still, with all my heart; but the hat is mine. Now, sir, who does it belong to? [*Snatches it, and puts it on.*

Strict. Why did she look so?

Jac. Your violence of temper is too much for her. You use her ill, and then suspect her for that confusion which you yourself occasion.

Strict. Why did not you set me right at first?

Jac. Your hard usage of me, sir, is a sufficient reason why I should not be much concerned to undeceive you at all. 'Tis for your lady's sake I do it now, who deserves much better of you than to be thus exposed for every slight suspicion.—See where she sits—Go to her.

Mrs Strict. [*Rising.*]—Indeed, Mr Strictland, I have a soul as much above——

Strict. Whew! Now you have both found your tongues, and I must bear with their eternal rattle.

Jac. For shame, sir! go to her, and——

Strict. Well, well; what shall I say? I forgive—all is over. I, I, I forgive.

Mrs Strict. Forgive! What do you mean?

Jac. Forgive her! Is that all? Consider, sir—

Strict. Hold, hold your confounded tongues, and I'll do any thing. I'll ask pardon—or forgive—or any thing. Good now, be quiet—I ask your pardon—there—[*Kisses her.*]—For you, madam, I am infinitely obliged to you, and I could find in my heart to make you a return in kind, by marrying you to a beggar, but I have more conscience. Come, come; to your chamber.—Here, take this candle.

Enter LUCETTA *pertly.*

Luc. Sir, if you please, I will light my young lady to bed.

Strict. No, no! no such thing, good madam. She shall have nothing but her pillow to consult this night, I assure you. So, in, in.—[*The ladies take leave. Exit* JACINTHA.]—Good night, kind madam.

Luc. Pox of the jealous fool! We might both have escaped out of the window, purely. [*Aside.*

Strict. Go! get you down; and, do you hear, order the coach to be ready in the morning at eight, exactly.—[*Exit* LUCITTA.]—So, she is safe till to-morrow, and then for the country; and, when she is there, I can manage as I think fit.

Mrs Strict. Dear Mr Strictland——

Strict. I am not in a humour, Mrs Strictland, fit to talk with you. Go to bed. I will endeavour to get the better of my temper, if I can; I'll follow you.—[*Exit* MRS STRICTLAND.]—How despicable have I made myself! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Another chamber.*

Enter RANGER.

Ran. All seems hushed again, and I may venture out. I may as well sneak off whilst I am in a whole skin. And, shall so much love and claret as I am in possession of, only lull me to sleep, when it might so much better keep me waking? Forbid it fortune, and forbid it love. This is a chamber, perhaps, of some bewitching female, and I may yet be happy. Ha! A light! The door opens. A boy! Pox on him!

[*He retires.*

Enter JACINTHA *with a candle.*

Jac. I have been listening at the door, and, from their silence, I conclude they are peaceably gone to bed together.

Ran. A pretty boy, faith! he seems uneasy. [*Aside.*

Jac. [*Sitting down.*]—What an unlucky night has this proved to me! Every circumstance has fallen out unhappily.

Ran. He talks aloud. I'll listen. [*Aside.*

Jac. But what most amazes me is, that Clarinda should betray me!

Ran. Clarinda! She must be a woman. Well, what of her? [*Aside.*

Jac. My guardian, else, would never have suspected my disguise.

Ran. Disguise! Ha, it must be so! What eyes she has! What a dull rogue was I not to suspect this sooner! [*Aside.*

Jac. Ha! I had forgot; the ladder is at the window still, and I will boldly venture by myself. —[*Rising briskly, sees* RANGER.]—Ha! A man, and well drest! Ha, Mrs Strictland! Are you then at last dishonest!

Ran. By all my wishes, she is a charming woman! Lucky rascal! [*Aside.*

Jac. But I will, if possible, conceal her shame, and stand the brunt of his impertinence.

Ran. What shall I say to her? No matter; any thing soft will do the business. [*Aside.*

Jac. Who are you?

Ran. A man, young gentleman.

Jac. And what would you have?

Ran. A woman.

Jac. You are very free, sir. Here are none for you.

Ran. Ay, but there is one, and a fair one, too; the most charming creature nature ever set her hand to; and you are the dear little pilot that must direct me to her heart.

Jac. What mean you, sir? It is an office I am not accustomed to.

Ran. You won't have far to go, however. I never make my errands tedious. It is to your own heart, dear madam, I would have you whisper in my behalf. Nay, never start. Think you such beauty could ever be concealed from eyes so well acquainted with its charms?

Jac. What will become of me! If I cry out, Mrs Strictland is undone. This is my last resort. [*Aside.*

Ran. Pardon, dear lady, the boldness of this visit, which your guardian's care has forced me to: but I long have loved you, long have doated on that beauteous face, and followed you from place to place, though, perhaps, unknown and unregarded.

Jac. Here's a special fellow! [*Aside.*

Ran. Turn, then, an eye of pity on my sufferings; and, by Heaven, one touch of this soft hand— [*Going to take her hand.*

Jac. Hold, sir! no nearer.

Ran. Would more than repay whole years of pain.

Jac. Hear me; but keep your distance, or I raise the family.

Ran. Blessings on her tongue, only for prattling to me! [*Aside.*

Jac. Oh, for a moment's courage, and I shall shame him from his purpose. [*Aside.*] If I were certain so much gallantry had been shewn on my account only——

Ran. You wrong your beauty to think, that any other could have power to draw me hither. By all the little loves that play about your lips, I swear——

Jac. You came to me, and me alone?

Ran. By all the thousand graces that inhabit there, you, and only you, have drawn me hither.

Jac. Well said—Could I but believe you——

Ran. By Heaven, she comes! Ah, honest Ranger, I never knew thee fail. [*Aside.*

Jac. Pray, sir, where did you leave this hat?

Ran. That hat! that hat—'tis my hat—I dropt it in the next chamber as I was looking for yours.

Jac. How mean and despicable do you look now!

Ran. So, so! I am in a pretty pickle! [*Aside.*

Jac. You know by this, that I am acquainted with every thing that has passed within, and how ill it agrees with what you have professed to me. Let me advise you, sir, to be gone immediately: through that window, you may easily get into the street. One scream of mine, the least noise at that door, will wake the house.

Ran. Say you so? [*Aside.*

Jac. Believe me, sir, an injured husband is not so easily appeased, and a suspected wife that is jealous of her honour——

Ran. Is the devil; and so let's have no more of her. Look ye, madam, [*Getting between the door and her.*] I have but one argument left, and that is a strong one. Look on me well: I am as handsome, a strong, well made fellow as any about town; and, since we are alone, as I take it, we can have no occasion to be more private.

[*Going to lay hold of her.*

Jac. I have a reputation, sir, and will maintain it.

Ran. You have a bewitching pair of eyes.

Jac. Consider my virtue. [*Struggling.*

Ran. Consider your beauty, and my desires.

Jac. If I were a man, you dared not use me thus.

Ran. I should not have the same temptation.

Jac. Hear me, sir; I will be heard. [*Breaks from him.*] There is a man who will make you repent this usage of me. Oh, Bellamy! where art thou now?

Ran. Bellamy!

Jac. Were he here, you durst not thus affront me. [*Bursting into tears.*

Ran. His mistress, on my soul! [*Aside.*] You can love, madam; you can love, I find. Her tears affect me strangely. [*Aside.*

Jac. I am not ashamed to own my passion for a man of virtue and honour. I love, and glory in it.

Ran. Oh, brave! and you can write letters, you can. I will not trust myself home with you this evening, because I know it is inconvenient.

Jac. Ha!

Ran. Therefore I beg you would procure me a lodging; 'tis no matter how far off my guardian's. Yours, Jacintha.

Jac. The very words of my letter! I am amazed! Do you know Mr Bellamy?

Ran. There is not a man on earth I have so great a value for: and he must have some value for me, too, or he would never have shewn me your pretty epistle; think of that, fair lady. The ladder is at the window, and so, madam, I hope delivering you safe into his arms, will, in some measure, expiate the crime I have been guilty of to you.

Jac. Good Heaven! How fortunate is this!

Ran. I believe I make myself appear more wicked than I really am. For, damn me, if I do not feel more satisfaction in the thoughts of restoring you to my friend, than I could have pleasure in any favour your bounty could have bestowed. Let any other rake lay his hand upon his heart, and say the same.

Jac. Your generosity transports me!

Ran. Let us lose no time, then; the ladder's ready. Where was you to lodge?

Jac. At Mr Meggot's.

Ran. At my friend Jacky's! better and better still.

Jac. Are you acquainted with him, too?

Ran. Ay, ay; why, did I not tell you at first, that I was one of your old acquaintance? I know all about you, you see; though the devil fetch me if ever I saw you before! Now, madam, give me your hand.

Jac. And now, sir, have with you.

Ran. Then thou art a girl of spirit. And though I long to hug you for trusting yourself with me, I will not beg a single kiss, till Bellamy himself shall give me leave. He must fight well, that takes you from me. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Piazza.*

Enter BELLAMY *and* FRANKLY.

Bel. PSHA! what impertinent devil put it into your head to meddle with my affairs?

Frank. You know I went thither in pursuit of another.

Bel. I know nothing you had to do there at all.

Frank. I thought, Mr Bellamy, you were a lover.

Bel. I am so; and therefore should be forgiven this sudden warmth.

Frank. And therefore should forgive the fond impertinence of a lover.

Bel. Jealousy, you know, is as natural an incident to love——

Frank. As curiosity. By one piece of silly curiosity, I have gone nigh to ruin both myself and you; let not, then, your jealousy complete our misfortunes. I fear I have lost a mistress as well as you. Then let us not quarrel. All may come right again.

Bel. It is impossible. She is gone, removed for ever from my sight: she is in the country by this time.

Frank. How did you lose her after we parted?

Bel. By too great confidence. When I got her to my chair, the chairmen were not to be found. And, safe as I thought in our disguise,

I actually put her into the chair, when Mr Strictland and his servants were in sight; which I had no sooner done, than they surrounded us, overpowered me, and carried her away.

Frank. Unfortunate indeed! Could you not make a second attempt?

Bel. I had designed it; but when I came to the door, I found the ladder removed; and, hearing no noise, seeing no lights, nor being able to make any body answer, I concluded all attempts as impracticable as I now find them.——Ha! I see Lucetta coming. Then they may be still in town.

Enter LUCETTA.

Lucetta, welcome! what news of Jacintha?

Luc. News, sir! you fright me out of my senses! Why, is she not with you?

Bel. What do you mean? With me! I have not seen her since I lost her last night.

Luc. Good Heaven!-then she is undone for ever.

Frank. Why, what's the matter?

Bel. Speak out—I'm all amazement!

Luc. She is escaped, without any of us knowing how. Nobody missed her till morning. We all thought she went away with you. But Heaven knows now what may have happened.

Bel. Somebody must have accompanied her in her flight.

Luc. We know of nobody: we are all in confusion at home. My master swears revenge on you. My mistress says a stranger has her.

Bel. A stranger!

Luc. But Mrs Clarinda——

Bel. Clarinda! Who is she?

Luc. [*To* FRANKLY.] The lady, sir, who you saw at our house last night.

Frank. Ha! what of her?

Luc. She says, she is sure one Frankly is the man; she saw them together, and knows it to be true.

Frank. Damned fortune! [*Aside.*

Luc. Sure this is not Mr Frankly.

Frank. Nothing will convince him now. [*Aside.*

Bel. [*Looking at* FRANKLY.] Ha! 'tis true!—I see it is true. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, run up to Buckle, and take him with you to search wherever you can. [*Puts her out.*] Now, Mr Frankly, I have found you.——You have used me so ill, that you force me to forget you are my friend.

Frank. What do you mean?

Bel. Draw!

Frank. Are you mad? By Heavens, I am innocent.

Bel. I have heard you, and will no longer be imposed on. Defend yourself!

Frank. Nay, if you are so hot, I draw to defend myself, as I would against a madman.

Enter RANGER.

Ran. What the devil, swords at noon-day! Have among you, faith! [*Parts them.*] What's here, Bellamy!——Yes, egad, you are Bellamy, and you are Frankly: put up, both of you——or else——I am a devilish fellow when once my sword is out.

Bel. We shall have a time——

Ran. [*Pushing* BELLAMY *one way.*] A time for what?

Frank. I shall be always as ready to defend my innocence as now.

Ran. [*Pushing* FRANKLY *the other way.*] Innocence! ay, to be sure—at your age—a mighty innocent fellow, no doubt. But what, in the name of common sense, is it that ails you both? are you mad? The last time I saw you, you were hugging and kissing; and now you are cutting one another's throats—I never knew any good come of one fellow's beslavering another—But I shall put you into better humour, I warrant you——Bellamy, Frankly, listen both of you—Such fortune—such a scheme——

Bel. Prithee, leave fooling. What, art drunk?

Frank. He is always so, I think.

Ran. And who gave you the privilege of thinking? Drunk! no; I am not drunk. Tipsy, perhaps, with my good fortune—merry, and in spirits—though I have not fire enough to run my friend through the body. Not drunk, though Jack Meggot and I have boxed it about—Champaign was the word for two whole hours, by Shrewsbury clock.

Bel. Jack Meggot! Why, I left him at one, going to bed.

Ran. That may be, but I made shift to rouse him and his family by four this morning. Ounds! I picked up a wench, and carried her to his house.

Bel. Ha!

Ran. Such a variety of adventures—Nay, you shall hear——But, before I begin, Bellamy, you shall promise me half a dozen kisses before hand: for the devil fetch me if that little jade, Jacintha, would give me one, though I pressed hard.

Bel. Who, Jacintha? press to kiss Jacintha?

Ran. Kiss her! ay; why not? is she not a woman, and made to be kissed?

Bel. Kiss her!—I shall run distracted!

Ran. How could I help it, when I had her alone, you rogue, in her bed-chamber, at midnight! if I had been to be sacrificed, I should have done it.

Bel. Bed-chamber, at midnight! I can hold no longer——Draw!

Frank. Be easy, Bellamy. [*Interposing.*

Bel. He has been at some of his damned tricks with her.

Frank. Hear him out.

Ran. 'Sdeath, how could I know she was his mistress? But I tell this story most miserably. I

should have told you first, I was in another lady's chamber. By the Lord, I got in at the window by a ladder of ropes!

Frank. Ha! Another lady?

Ran. Another: and stole in upon her whilst she was undressing; beautiful as an angel, blooming and young——

Frank. What, in the same house?

Bel. What is this to Jacintha? Ease me of my pain.

Ran. Ay, ay, in the same house, on the same floor. The sweetest little angel—But I design to have another touch with her.

Frank. 'Sdeath! but you shall have a touch upon me first.

Bel. Stay, Frankly. [*Interposing.*

Ran. Why, what strange madness has possessed you both, that nobody must kiss a pretty wench but yourselves?

Bel. What became of Jacintha?

Ran. Ounds! what have you done, that you must monopolize kissing?

Frank. Prithee, honest Ranger, ease me of the pain I am in. Was her name Clarinda?

Bel. Speak in plain words, where Jacintha is, where to be found. Dear boy, tell me.

Ran. Ay, now it is honest Ranger; and, dear boy, tell me—and a minute ago, my throat was to be cut——I could find in my heart not to open my lips. But here comes Jack Meggot, who will let you into all the secret, though he designed to keep it from you, in half the time that I can, though I had ever so great a mind to tell it you.

Enter JACK MEGGOT.

J. Meg. So, save ye, save ye, lads! we have been frightened out of our wits for you. Not hearing of Mr Bellamy, poor Jacintha is ready to sink for fear of any accident.

Bel. Is she at your house?

J. Meg. Why, did not you know that? We dispatched master Ranger to you three hours ago.

Ran. Ay, plague! but I had business of my own, so I could not come—Hark ye, Frankly, is your girl maid, wife, or widow?

Frank. A maid, I hope.

Ran. The odds are against you, Charles—— But mine is married, you rogue, and her husband jealous—The devil is in it if I do not reap some reward for my last night's service.

Bel. He has certainly been at Mrs Strictland herself. But, Frankly, I dare not look on you.

Frank. This one embrace cancels all thoughts of enmity.

Bel. Thou generous man!—But I must haste to ease Jacintha of her fears. [*Exit* BEL.

Frank. And I to make up matters with Clarinda. [*Exit* FRANK.

Ran. And I to some kind wench or other, Jack. But where shall I find her, Heaven knows. And so, my service to your monkey.

J. Meg. Adieu, rattlepate. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The hall of* MR STRICTLAND'S *house.*

Enter MRS STRICTLAND *and* CLARINDA.

Mrs Strict. But why in such a hurry, my dear? stay till your servants can go along with you.

Cla. Oh, no matter; they'll follow with my things. It is but a little way off, and my chair will guard me. After my staying out so late last night, I am sure Mr Strictland will think every minute an age whilst I am in his house.

Mrs Strict. I am as much amazed at his suspecting your innocence as my own; and every time I think of it, I blush at my present behaviour to you.

Cla. No ceremony, dear child.

Mrs Strict. No, Clarinda; I am too well acquainted with your good humour. But, I fear, in the eye of a malicious world, it may look like a confirmation of his suspicion.

Cla. My dear, if the world will speak ill of me for the little innocent gaiety, which I think the peculiar happiness of my temper, I know no way to prevent it, and am only sorry the world is so ill-natured: but I shall not part with my mirth, I assure them, so long as I know it innocent. I wish, my dear, this may be the greatest uneasiness your husband's jealousy ever gives you.

Mrs Strict. I hope he never again may have such occasion as he had last night.

Cla. You are so unfashionable a wife! Why, last night's accident would have made half the wives in London easy for life. Has not his jealousy discovered itself openly? And are not you innocent? There is nothing but your foolish temper that prevents his being absolutely in your power.

Mrs Strict. Clarinda, this is too serious an affair to laugh at. Let me advise you, take care of Mr Frankly, observe his temper well, and if he has the least taint of jealousy, cast him off, and never trust to keeping him in your power.

Cla. You will hear little more of Frankly, I believe. Here is Mr Strictland.

Enter MR STRICTLAND *and* LUCETTA.

Strict. Lucetta says you want me, madam.

Cla. I trouble you, sir, only that I might return you thanks for the civilities I have received in your family, before I took my leave.

Strict. Keep them to yourself, dear madam. As it is at my request that you leave my house, your thanks, upon that occasion, are not very desirable.

Cla. Oh, sir, you need not fear. My thanks were only for your civilities. They will not overburden you. But I'll conform to your humour, sir, and part with as little ceremony——

Strict. As we met.

Cla. The brute! [*Aside.*] My dear, good b'ye, we may meet again. [*To* MRS STRICT.

Strict. If you dare trust me with your hand.

Clu. Lucetta, remember my instructions. Now, sir, have with you.

[MR STRICTLAND *leads* CLARINDA *out.*

Mrs Strict. Are her instructions cruel or kind, Lucetta? For I suppose they relate to Mr Frankly.

Luc. Have you a mind to try if I can keep a secret as well as yourself, madam? But I will shew you I am fit to be trusted, by keeping this, though it signifies nothing.

Mrs Strict. This answer is not so civil, I think.

Luc. I beg pardon, madam, I meant it not to offend.

Mrs Strict. Pray let us have no more such. I neither desire, nor want your assistance.

Re-enter MR STRICTLAND.

Strict. She is gone; I feel myself somewhat easier already. Since I have begun the day with gallantry, madam, shall I conduct you up?

Mrs Strict. There is something, sir, which gives you secret uneasiness. I wish——

Strict. Perhaps so, madam; and perhaps it may soon be no secret at all. [*Leads her out.*

Luc. Would I were once well settled with my young lady! for, at present, this is but an odd sort of a queer family. Last night's affair puzzles me. A hat there was, that belonged to none of us, that's certain; madam was in a fright, that is as certain; and I brought all off. Jacintha escaped, no one of us knows how. The good man's jealousy was yesterday groundless; yet to-day, in my mind, he is very much in the right. Mighty odd, all this!—Somebody knocks. If this should be Clarinda's spark, I have an odd message for him, too. [*She opens the door.*

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. So, my pretty handmaid, meeting with you gives me some hopes. May I speak with Clarinda?

Luc. Whom do you want, sir?

Frank. Clarinda, child. The young lady I was admitted to yesterday.

Luc. Clarinda! No such person lives here, I assure you.

Frank. Where, then?

Luc. I don't know, indeed, sir.

Frank. Will you inquire within?

Luc. Nobody knows in this house, sir, you will find.

Frank. What do you mean? She is a friend of Jacintha's, your lady. I will take my oath she was here last night; and you yourself spoke of her being here this morning—Not know!

Luc. No; none of us know. She went away of a sudden—no one of us can imagine whither.

Frank. Why, faith, child, thou hast a tolerable face, and hast delivered this denial very handsomely: but let me tell you, your impertinence this morning had like to have cost me my life now, therefore, make me amends. I come from your young mistress; I come from Mr Bellamy; I come with my purse full of gold, that persuasive rhetoric, to win you to let me see and speak to this Clarinda once again.

Luc. She is not here, sir.

Frank. Direct me to her.

Luc. No; I cannot do that, neither.

Enter MR STRICTLAND *behind.*

Strict. I heard a knocking at the door, and a man's voice—Ha! [*Aside.*

Frank. Deliver this letter to her.

Strict. By all my fears, a letter! [*Aside.*

Luc. I don't know but I may be tempted to do that.

Frank. Take it, then—and with it this.

[*Kisses her, and gives her money.*

Strict. Um! There are two bribes in a breath? What a jade she is! [*Aside.*

Luc. Ay; this gentleman understands reason.

Frank. And, be assured, you oblige your mistress while you are serving me.

Strict. Her mistress! Damned sex! And damned wife! thou art an epitome of that sex! [*Aside.*

Frank. And, if you can procure me an answer, your fee shall be enlarged.

[*Exit* FRANKLY.

Luc. The next step is to get her to read this letter.

Strict. [*Snatches the letter.*]—No noise—But stand silent there, whilst I read this.—[*Breaks it open, and drops the case.*]—'Madam, the gaiety 'of a heart happy as mine was yesterday, may, I 'hope, easily excuse the unseasonable visit I 'made your house last night.'—Death and the devil! Confusion! I shall run distracted. It is too much! There was a man, then, to whom the hat belonged; and I was gulled, abused, cheated, imposed on by a chit, a child—Oh, woman, woman! But I will be calm, search it to the bottom, and have a full revenge——

Luc. [*Aside.*]—So, here's fine work! He'll make himself very ridiculous, though.

Strict. [*Reads on.*]—'I know my innocence 'will appear so manifestly, that I need only ap- 'peal to the lady who accompanied me to Bath.' Your very humble servant, good, innocent, fine Madam Clarinda. 'And I do not doubt but 'her good-nature,' bawd! bawd! 'will not let 'you persist in injuring your obedient humble 'servant,

'CHARLES FRANKLY.'

Now, who can say my jealousy lacked foundation, or my suspicion of fine madam's innocent gaiety was unjust? Gaiety! Why, ay; 'twas gaiety brought him hither. Gaiety makes her a bawd——My wife may be a whore in gaiety.—What a number of things become fashionable under the notion of gaiety! What, you received this epistle in gaiety, too? and were to deliver it to my wife, I suppose, when the gay fit came

next upon her? Why, you impudent young strumpet, do you laugh at me?

Luc. I would, if I dared, laugh most heartily. Be pleased, sir, only to look at that piece of paper that lies there.

Strict. Ha!

Luc. I have not touched it, sir. It is the case that letter came in; and the direction will inform you whom I was to deliver it to.

Strict. This is directed to Clarinda!

Luc. Oh, is it so? Now, read it over again, and all your foolish doubts will vanish.

Strict. I have no doubts at all. I am satisfied that you, Jacintha, Clarinda, my wife, all are——

Luc. Lud! Lud! You will make a body mad.

Strict. Hold your impertinent tongue.

Luc. You'll find the thing to be just as I say, sir.

Strict. Begone!—[*Exit* LUCETTA.]—They must be poor at the work, indeed, if they did not lend one another their names. 'Tis plain, 'tis evident, and I am miserable. But, for my wife, she shall not stay one night longer in my house. Separation, shame, contempt, shall be her portion. I am determined in the thing; and, when once it is over, I may, perhaps, be easy.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Street.*

CLARINDA *brought in a chair*, RANGER *following.*

Ran. Hark'e, chairmen! Damn your confounded trot! Go slower.

Cla. Here stop.

Ran. By Heavens! The monsters hear reason, and obey.

Cla. [*Letting down the window.*]—What troublesome fellow was that?

1 *Chair.* Some rake, I warrant, that cannot carry himself home, and wants us to do it for him.

Cla. There—And pray do you take care I be not troubled with him. [*Goes in.*

Ran. That's as much as to say now, pray follow me. Madam, you are a charming woman, and I will do it——

1 *Chair.* Stand off, sir!

Ran. Prithee, honest fellow—what—what writing is that? [*Endeavouring to get in.*

2 *Chair.* You come not here.

Ran. Lodgings to be let; a pretty convenient inscription, and the sign of a good modest family. There may be lodgings for gentlemen as well as ladies. Hark'e, rogues; I'll lay you all the silver I have in my pocket, there it is, I get in there in spite of your teeth, ye pimps.

[*Throws down the money, and goes in.*

[*Within*] Chair, chair, chair!

Chair. Who calls chair?

1 *Chair.* What, have you let the gentleman in?

2 *Chair.* I'll tell you what, partner, he certainly slipt by whilst we were picking up the money. Come, take up. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—CLARINDA'S *lodgings.*

Enter CLARINDA, *and maid following.*

Maid. Bless me, madam, you seem disordered! what's the matter?

Cla. Some impertinent fellow followed the chair, and I am afraid they let him in.—[*A noise between* RANGER *and Landlady.*]—I should certainly know that voice.—[RANGER *talks with the Landlady.*]—My madcap cousin Ranger, as I live! I am sure he does not know me. If I could but hide my face now, what sport I should have! A mask, a mask! Run and see if you can find a mask.

Maid. I believe there is one above.

Cla. Run, run, and fetch it.—[*Exit Maid.*]—Here he comes.

Enter RANGER *and Landlady.*

How unlucky is this? [*Turning from them.*

Land. What's your business here, unmannerly sir?

Ran. Well, let's see these lodgings that are to be let. Gad, a very pretty neat tenement—But hark'e, is it real and natural, all that, or only patched up, and new-painted this summer season, against the town fills?

Land. What does the saucy fellow mean with his double tenders here? Get you down——

Enter Maid with a mask.

Maid. Here is a very dirty one.

[*Aside to* CLARINDA.

Cla. No matter——now we shall see a little what he would be at. [*Aside.*

Land. This is an honest house. For all your laced waistcoat, I'll have you thrown down, neck and heels.

Ran. Pho! not in such a hurry, good old lady ——A mask! Nay, with all my heart. It saves me a world of blushing. Have you ne'er a one for me? I am apt to be ashamed myself, on these occasions.

Land. Get you down, I say——

Ran. Not if I guess right, old lady. Madam, —[*To* CLARINDA, *who makes signs to the Landlady to retire.*]—look ye there, now! that a woman should live to your age, and know so little of the matter. Begone!—[*Exit Landlady.*]—By her forwardness, this should be a whore of quality. My boy, Ranger, thou art in luck to-day. She wont speak, I find—then, I will.—[*Aside.*]—Delicate lodgings, truly, madam! and very neatly furnished—a very convenient room this, I must needs own, to entertain a mixed company. But, my dear charming creature, does not that

door open to a more commodious apartment, for the happiness of a private friend, or so? The prettiest brass lock---fast, um; that won't do.---'Sdeath, you are a beautiful woman; I am sure you are. Prithee, let me see your face. It is your interest, child---the longer you delay, the more I shall expect. Therefore,---[*Taking her hand.*] my dear, soft, kind, new acquaintance, thus let me take your hand; and, whilst you gently, with the other, let day-light in upon me, let me softly hold you to me, that, with my longing lips, I may receive the warmest, best impression.---[*She unmasks.*]---Clarinda!

Cla. Ha, ha! your servant, cousin Ranger—Ha, ha, ha!

Ran. Oh, your humble servant, madam. You had like to have been beholden to your mask, cousin—I must brazen it out. [*Aside.*

Cla. Ha, ha, ha! You were not so happy in your disguise, sir. The pretty stagger in your gait, that happy disposition of your wig, the genteel negligence of your whole person, and those pretty flowers of modish gallantry, made it impossible to mistake you, my sweet coz.——Ha, ha, ha!

Ran. Oh, I knew you, too; but I fancied you had taken a particular liking to my person, and had a mind to sink the relation under that little piece of black velvet! and, egad, you never find me behind hand in a frolic. But, since it is otherwise, my merry, good-humoured cousin, I am as heartily glad to see you in town, as I should be to meet any of my old bottle acquaintance.

Cla. And, on my side, I am as happy in meeting your worship, as I should be in a rencounter with e'er a petticoat in Christendom.

Ran. And if you have any occasion for a dangling gallant to Vauxhall, Ranelagh, or even the poor neglected Park, you are so unlike the rest of your virtuous sisters of the petticoat, that I will venture myself with you.

Cla. Take care what you promise; for who knows but this face, you were pleased to say so many pretty things before you saw it, may raise so many rivals among your kept mistresses, and reps of quality———

Ran. Hold, hold! a truce with your satire, sweet coz; or, if scandal must be the topic of every virtuous woman's conversation, call for your tea-waiter, and let it be in it's proper element. Come, your tea, your tea!

Enter Maid.

Cla. With all my heart———Who's there? Get tea—upon condition that you stay till it comes.

Ran. That is according as you behave, madam.

Cla. Oh, sir, I am very sensible of the favour.

Ran. Nay, you may, I assure you; for there is but one woman of virtue, besides yourself, I would stay with ten minutes (and I have not known her above these twelve hours;) the insipidity, or the rancour of their discourse is insufferable—'Sdeath! I had rather take the air with my grandmother.

Cla. Ha, ha, ha! the ladies are highly obliged to you, I vow.

Ran. I tell you what; the lady I speak of was obliged to me, and the generous girl is ready to own it.

Cla. And, pray, when was it you did virtue this considerable service?

Ran. But this last night, the devil fetch me! A romantic whim of mine conveyed me into her chamber, where I found her, young and beautiful, alone, at midnight, dressed like a soft Adonis; her lovely hair all loose about her shoulders———

Cla. In boy's clothes! this is worth attending to. [*Aside.*

Ran. Gad, I no more suspected her being a woman, than I did your being my cater-cousin.

Cla. How did you discover it at last?

Ran. Why, faith, she very modestly dropt me a hint of it herself.

Cla. Herself! If this should be Jacintha! [*Aside.*

Ran. Ay, 'foregad, did she; which I imagined a good sign at midnight—eh, cousin? So I e'en invented a long story of a passion I had for her, though I had never seen her before—you know my old way; and said so many tender things—

Cla. As you said to me just now.

Ran. Pho! quite in another style, I assure you. It was midnight, and I was in a right cue.

Cla. Well! And what did she answer to all these protestations?

Ran. Why, instead of running into my arms at once, as I expected———

Cla. To be sure.

Ran. 'Gad, like a free-hearted, honest girl, she frankly told me she liked another better than she liked me; that I had something in my face that shewed I was a gentleman; and she would e'en trust herself with me, if I would give her my word I would convey her to her spark.

Cla. Oh, brave! and how did you bear this?

Ran. Why, curse me, if I am ever angry with a woman for not having a passion for me!

Cla. No!

Ran. Never. I only hate your sex's vain pretence of having no passions at all. Gad, I loved the good-natured girl for it; took her at her word; stole her out of the window; and this morning made a very honest fellow happy in the possession of her.

Cla. And her name is Jacintha?

Ran. Ha!

Cla. Your amours are no secrets, sir. You see you might as well have told me all the whole of last night's adventure; for you find I know——

Ran. All! Why, what do you know?

Cla. Nay, nothing; I only know that a gentleman's hat cannot be dropt in a lady's chamber———

Ran. The devil!

Cla. But a husband is such an odd, impertinent, awkward creature, that he will be stumbling over it.

Ran. Here has been fine work. [*Aside.*] But how, in the name of wonder, should you know all this?

Cla. By being in the same house.

Ran. In the same house!

Cla. Ay, in the same house, a witness of the confusion you have made.

Ran. Frankly's Clarinda, by all that's fortunate! It must be so! [*Aside.*

Cla. And let me tell you, sir, that even the dull, low-spirited diversions you ridicule in us tame creatures, are preferable to the romantic exploits that only wine can raise you to.

Ran. Yes, cousin: but I'll be even with you. [*Aside.*

Cla. If you reflect, cousin, you will find a great deal of wit in shocking a lady's modesty, disturbing her quiet, tainting her reputation, and ruining the peace of a whole family.

Ran. To be sure.

Cla. These are the high-mettled pleasures of you men of spirit, that the insipidity of the virtuous can never arrive at. And can you, in reality, think your Burgundy, and your Bacchus, your Venus, and your Loves, an excuse for all this? Fie, cousin, fie!

Ran. No, cousin.

Cla. What, dumb! I am glad you have modesty enough left not to go about to excuse yourself.

Ran. It is as you say; when we are sober, and reflect but ever so little on the follies we commit, we are ashamed and sorry: and yet the very next minute we run again into the same absurdities.

Cla. What! moralizing, cousin! ha, ha, ha!

Ran. What you know is not half, not a hundredth part of the mischief of my last night's frolic; and yet the very next petticoat I saw this morning, I must follow it, and be damned to me; though, for aught I know, poor Frankly's life may depend upon it.

Cla. Whose life, sir?

Ran. And here do I stand prating to you now.

Cla. Pray, good cousin, explain yourself.

Ran. Good cousin! She has it. [*Aside.*]—Why, whilst I was making off with the wench, Bellamy and he were quarrelling about her; and though Jacintha and I made all the haste we could, we did not get to them before——

Cla. Before what? I'm frightened out of my wits!

Ran. Not that Frankly cared three half-pence for the girl.

Cla. But there was no mischief done, I hope?

Ran. Pho! a slight scratch; nothing at all, as the surgeon said: though he was but a queer looking son of a bitch of a surgeon, neither.

Cla. Good God! why, he should have the best that can be found in London.

Ran. Ay, indeed, so he should: that was what I was going for, when I saw you. [*Sits down.*] They are all at Jack Meggot's hard by, and you will keep me here?

Cla. I keep you here! For Heaven's sake, be gone.

Ran. Your tea is a damned while a coming.

Cla. You shall have no tea now, I assure you.

Ran. Nay! one dish.

Cla. No, positively, you shall not stay.

Ran. Your commands are absolute, madam. [*Going.*

Cla. Then Frankly is true, and I only am to blame.

Ran. [*Returns.*] But I beg ten thousand pardons, cousin, that I should forget———

Cla. Forget what!

Ran. Forget to salute you.

Cla. Pshaw! how can you trifle at such a time as this?

Ran. A trifle! wrong not your beauty.

Cla. Lord, how teasing you are. There.

Ran. [*Kisses her.*] Poor thing! how uneasy she is. Nay, no ceremony, you shall not stir a step with me.

Cla. I do not intend it. This is downright provoking. [*Exit* RANGER.] Who's there?

Enter Landlady.

Land. Madam, did your ladyship call?

Cla. Does one Mr Meggot live in this neighbourhood?

Land. Yes, madam, a fine gentleman, and keeps a noble house, and a world of company.

Cla. Very well; I don't want his history. I wonder my servants are not come yet.

Land. Lack a-day, madam, they are all below.

Cla. Send up one, then, with a card to me. I must know the truth of this immediately.

[*Exeunt*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A room in* MR STRICTLAND'S *house.*

MR *and* MRS STRICTLAND *discovered: she weeping, and he writing.*

Mrs Strict. HEIGH ho!

Strict. What can possibly be the occasion of that sigh, madam? you have yourself agreed to a maintenance, and a maintenance no dutchess need be ashamed of.

Mrs Strict. But the extremities of provocation, that drove me to that agreement——

Strict. Were the effect of your own follies. Why do you disturb me? [*Writes on.*

Mrs Strict. I would not willingly give you a moment's uneasiness; I but desire a fair and equal hearing; and if I satisfy you not in every point, then abandon me, discard me to the world, and its malicious tongues.

Strict. What was it you said? Damn this pen!

Mrs Strict. I say, Mr Strictland, I would only——

Strict. You would only——You would only repeat what you have been saying this hour; I am innocent; and when I shewed you the letter I had taken from your maid, what was then your poor evasion, but that it was to Clarinda, and you were innocent?

Mrs Strict. Heaven knows, I am innocent!

Strict. But I know your Clarinda, your woman of honour, is your blind, your cover, your—— But why do I distract myself about a woman I have no longer any concern with? Here, madam, is your fate. A letter to your brother in the country.

Mrs Strict. Sir——

Strict. I have told him what a sister he has to receive, and how to bid her welcome.

Mrs Strict. Then my ruin is complete. My brother!

Strict. I must vindicate my own honour, else what will the world say?

Mrs Strict. That brother was my only hope, my only ground of patience. In his retirement, I hoped my name might have been safe, and slept, till, by some happy means, you might at length have known me innocent, and pitied me.

Strict. Retirement! pretty soul! no, no; that face was never made for retirement; it is another sort of retiring you are fittest for. Ha! hark! What's that? [*A knocking at the door.*] Two gentle taps—and why but two! was that the signal, madam? Stir not, on your life!

Mrs. Strict. Give me resolution, Heaven, to bear this usage, and keep it secret from the world! [*Aside.*

Strict. I will have no signs, no items, no hem to tell him I am here. Ha! another tap. The gentleman is in haste, I find. [*Opens the door, and enter* TESTER.] Tester! Why did you not come in, rascal? [*Beats him.*] All vexations meet to cross me.

Test. Lard, sir! what do you strike me for? my mistress ordered me never to come in where she was, without first knocking at the door.

Strict. Oh, cunning devil! Tester is too honest to be trusted.

Mrs Strict. Unhappy man! will nothing undeceive him? [*Aside.*

Test. Sir, here is a letter.

Strict. To my wife?

Test. No, sir, to you. The servant waits below.

Strict. Art sure it is a servant?

Test. Sir! [*Staring.*] it is Mr Buckle, sir.

Strict. I am mad: I know not what to say, or do, or think. But let's read: [*Reads to himself.*]

'Sir, we cannot bear to reflect that Mrs Strict-
'land may possibly be ruined in your esteem, and
'in the voice of the world, only by the confusion
'which our affairs have made in your family,
'without offering all within our power to clear
'the misunderstanding between you. If you will
'give yourself the trouble but to step to Mr Meg-
'got's, where all parties will be, we doubt not
'but we can entirely satisfy your most flagrant
'suspicions, to the honour of Mrs Strictland, and
'the quiet of your lives.

'JACINTHA. JOHN BELLAMY.'

Hey! Here is the whole gang witnessing for one another. They think I am an ass, and will be led by the nose to believe every thing. Call me a chair. [*Exit* TESTER.] Yes, I will go to this rendezvous of enemies—I will—and find out all her plots, her artifices and contrivances: it will clear my conduct to her brother, and all her friends. [*Exit* MR STRICTLAND.

Mrs Strict. Gone so abruptly! What can that letter be about? no matter; there is no way left to make us easy, but by my disgrace, and I must learn to suffer; time and innocence will teach me to bear it patiently.

Enter LUCETTA.

Luc. Mrs Bellamy, madam, (for my young lady is married) begs you would follow Mr Strictland to Mr Meggot's; she makes no doubt but she shall be able to make you and my master easy.

Mrs Strict. But how came she to know any thing of the matter?

Luc. I have been with them, madam; I could not bear to see so good a lady ill-treated.

Mrs Strict. I am indeed, Lucetta, ill-treated: but I hope this day will be the last of it.

Luc. Madam Clarinda and Mr Frankly will be there: and the young gentleman, madam, who was with you in this room last night.

Mrs Strict. Ha! if he is there, there may be hopes; and it is worth the trying.

Luc. Dear lady, let me call a chair.

Mrs Strict. I go with you. I cannot be more wretched than I am. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A room in* JACK MEGGOT'S *house.*

Enter FRANKLY, RANGER, BELLAMY, JACINTHA, *and* JACK MEGGOT.

Frank. Oh, Ranger, this is news indeed! your cousin, and a lady of such fortune!

Ran. I have done the business for you: I tell you she's your own. She loves you.

Frank. You make my heart dance with joy! Words are too faint to tell the joy I feel!

Ran. I have put that heart of hers into such a flutter, that I'll lay a hundred guineas, with the assistance which this lady has promised me, I fix her yours directly.

Jac. Ay, ay, Mr Frankly, we have a design upon her which cannot fail. But you must obey orders.

Frank. Most willingly: but remember, dear lady, I have more than life at stake.

Jac. Away, then, into the next room; for she is this instant coming hither.

Frank. Hither! you surprise me more and more.

Jac. Here is a message from her, by which she desires leave to wait on me this afternoon.

Ran. Only for the chance of seeing you here, I assure ye.

Frank. Let me hug thee; though I know not how to believe it.

Ran. Psha! prithee don't stifle me! It is a busy day, a very busy day.

J. Meg. Thou art the most unaccountable creature in life.

Ran. But the most lucky one, Jack, if I succeed for Frankly as I have for Bellamy; and my heart whispers me I shall. Come in, most noble Mr Buckle! and what have you to propose?

Enter BUCKLE.

Buc. A lady, madam, in a chair, says her name is Clarinda.

Jac. Desire her to walk up.

Bel. How could you let her wait? [*Exit* BUCKLE.] You must excuse him, madam; Buckle is a true bachelor's servant, and knows no manners.

Jac. Away, away, Mr Frankly, and stay till I call you. A rap with my fan shall be the signal. [*Exit* FRANKLY.] We make very free with your house, Mr Meggot.

J. Meg. Oh! you could not oblige me more.

Enter CLARINDA.

Cla. Dear Mrs Bellamy, pity my confusion. I am to wish you joy, and ask you pardon, all in a breath. I know not what to say; I am quite ashamed of my last night's behaviour.

Jac. Come, come, Clarinda, it is all well; all is over, and forgot. Mr Bellamy——— [*Salute.*

Cla. I wish you joy, sir, with all my heart, and should have been very sorry if any folly of mine had prevented it.

Bel. Madam, I am obliged to you.

Cla. I see nothing of Mr Frankly! my mind misgives me. [*Aside.*

Ran. And so, you came hither purely out of friendship, good-nature, and humility?

Cla. Purely.

Ran. To confess your offences, to beg pardon, and to make reparation?

Cla. Purely. Is this any thing so extraordinary?

J. Meg. The most so of any thing in life, I think.

Ran. A very whimsical business for so fine a lady! and an errand you seldom went on before, I fancy, my dear cousin?

Jac. Never, I dare swear, if I may judge by the awkward concern she shews in delivering it.

Cla. Concern! Lard! well, I protest, you are all exceeding pretty company! Being settled for life, Jacintha, gives an ease to the mind that brightens conversation strangely.

Jac. I am sorry, with all my heart, you are not in the same condition; for, as you are, my dear, you are horridly *chagrine.*

Ran. But with a little of our help, madam, the lady may recover, and be very good company.

Cla. Hum! What does he mean, Mr Bellamy?

Bel. Ask him, madam.

Cla. Indeed, I shall not give myself the trouble.

Jac. Then, you know what he means?

Cla. Something impertinent, I suppose, not worth explaining.

Jac. It is something you won't let him explain, I find.

Enter BUCKLE, *and whispers* MEGGOT.

J. Meg. Very well. Desire him to walk into the parlour. Madam, the gentleman is below.

Jac. Then every one to your posts. You know your cues?

Ran. I warrant ye. [*Exeunt Gentlemen.*

Cla. All gone! I am glad of it, for I want to speak to you.

Jac. And I, my dear Clarinda, have something which I do not know how to tell you: but it must be known sooner or latter.

Cla. What's the matter?

Jac. Poor Mr Frankly———.

Cla. You fright me out of my senses!

Jac. Has no wounds but what you can cure. Ha, ha, ha!

Cla. Psha! I am angry.

Jac. Psha! You are pleased; and will be more so, when I tell you, this man, whom fortune has thrown in your way, is, in rank and temper, the man in the world who suits you best for a husband.

Cla. Husband! I say, husband, indeed! Where will this end? [*Aside.*

Jac. His very soul is yours; and he only waits an opportunity of telling you so. He is in the next room. Shall I call him in?

Cla. My dear girl, hold!

Jac. How foolish is this coyness now, Clarinda! If the men were here, indeed, something might be said——And so, Mr Frankly——

Cla. How can you be so teasing?

Jac. Nay, I am in downright earnest: and, to shew how particular I have been in my inquiries, though I know you have a spirit above regarding the modish, paltry way of a Smithfield bargain ——his fortune——

Cla. I don't care what his fortune is.

Jac. Don't you so? Then you are farther gone than I thought you were.

Cla. No, psha! prithee, I don't mean so, neither.

Jac. I don't care what you mean: but you won't like him the worse, I hope, for having a fortune superior to your own? Now, shall I call him in?

Cla. Pho, dear girl—Some other time.

Jac. [*Raps with her fan.*] That's the signal, and here he is. You shall not stir: I positively will leave you together. [*Exit* JACINTHA.

Cla. I tremble all over!

Enter FRANKLY.

Frank. Pardon this freedom, madam: but I hope our having so luckily met with a common friend in Mrs Bellamy——

Cla. Sir!

Frank. Makes any farther apology for my behaviour last night absolutely unnecessary.

Cla. So far, Mr Frankly, that I think the apology should be rather on my side, for the impertinent bustle I made about her.

Frank. This behaviour gives me hopes, madam: pardon the construction—but, from the bustle you made about the lady, may I not hope you was not quite indifferent about the gentleman?

Cla. Have a care of being too sanguine in your hopes: might not a love of power, or the satisfaction of shewing that power, or the dear pleasure of abusing that power; might not these have been foundation enough for more than what I did?

Frank. Charming woman! with most of your sex, I grant, they might; but not with you. Whatever power your beauty gives, your good-nature will allow you no other use of it than to oblige.

Cla. This is the height of compliment, Mr Frankly.

Frank. Not in my opinion, I assure you, madam; and I am now going to put it to the trial.

Cla. What is he going to say, now? [*Aside.*

Frank. What is it that ails me, that I cannot speak? Psha! be here! [*Aside.*

Enter RANGER.

Interrupted! impertinent!

Ran. There is no sight so ridiculous as a pair of your true lovers. Here are you two now, bowing and cringing, and keeping a passion secret from one another, that is no secret to all the house beside. And, if you don't make up the matter immediately, it will be all over the town within these two hours.

Cla. What do you mean?

Frank. Ranger———

Ran. Do you be quiet, can't ye? [*Aside.*] But it is over, I suppose, cousin, and you have given him your consent.

Cla. Sir, the liberties you are pleased to take with me——

Ran. Oh! in your airs still, are you? Why, then, Mr Frankly, there is a certain letter of yours, sir, to this lady——

Cla. A letter to me!

Ran. Ay! to you, madam.

Frank. Ha! what of that letter?

Ran. It is only fallen into Mr Strictland's hands, that is all; and he has read it.

Frank. Read it!

Ran. Ay, read it to all his family at home, and to all the company below: and if some stop be not put to it, it will be read in all the coffee-houses in town.

Frank. A stop! this sword shall put a stop to it, or I will perish in the attempt.

Ran. But will that sword put a stop to the talk of the town?——Only make it talk the faster, take my word for it.

Cla. This is all a trick.

Ran. A trick! Is it so? you shall soon see that, my fine cousin. [*Exit* RANGER.

Frank. It is but too true, I fear. There is such a letter, which I gave Lucetta. Can you forgive me? Was I much to blame, when I could neither see nor hear of you?

Cla. [*Tenderly.*] You give yourself, Mr Frankly, a thousand times more uneasiness than you need about me.

Frank. If this uneasiness but convinces you how much I love you——Interrupted again!

Cla. This is downright malice. [*Aside.*

Enter RANGER, *followed by* JACINTHA, MR STRICTLAND, BELLAMY, *and* MEGGOT.

Ran. Enter, enter, gentlemen and lady. Now you shall see whether this is a trick or no.

Cla. Mr Strictland here! What is all this?

Jac. Do not be uneasy, my dear; we will explain it to you.

Frank. I cannot bear this trifling, Ranger, when my heart is on the rack.

Ran. Come this way, then, and learn.

[JACINTHA, CLARINDA, FRANKLY, *and* RANGER, *retire.*]

[MR STRICTLAND, BELLAMY, *and* MEGGOT, *advance.*]

Strict. Why, I know not well what to say. This has a face. This letter may as well agree with Clarinda, as with my wife, as you have told the story; and Lucetta explained it so: but she, for a sixpenny piece, would have construed it the other way.

J. Meg. But, sir, if we produce this Mr Frankly to you, and he owns himself the author of this letter——

Bel. And if Clarinda likewise be brought before your face to encourage his addresses, there can be no farther room for doubt?

Strict. No. Let that appear, and I shall, I think I shall, be satisfied—But yet it cannot be——

Bel. Why not? Hear me, sir. [*They talk.*

[JACINTHA, CLARINDA, FRANKLY, *and* RANGER, *advance.*

Jac. In short, Clarinda, unless the affair is made up directly, a separation, with all the obloquy on her side, must be the consequence.

Cla. Poor Mrs Strictland! I pity her: but, for him, he deserves all he feels, were it ten times what it is.

Jac. It is for her sake only, that we beg of you both to bear his impertinence.

Cla. With all my heart. You will do what you please with me.

Frank. Generous creature!

Strict. Ha! here she is, and, with her, the very man I saw deliver the letter to Lucetta. I do begin to fear I have made myself a fool. Now for the proof. Here is a letter, sir, which has given me great disturbance, and these gentlemen assure me, it was writ by you.

Frank. That letter, sir, upon my honour, I left this morning with Lucetta, for this lady.

Strict. For that lady! and Frankly, the name at the bottom, is not feigned, but your real name?

Frank. Frankly is my name.

Strict. I see, I feel myself ridiculous.

Jac. Now, Mr Strictland, I hope—

J. Meg. Ay, ay; a clear case.

Strict. I am satisfied, and will go this instant to Mrs Strictland.

Ran. Why, then, the devil fetch me if this would satisfy me!

Strict. What's that?

Ran. Nay, nothing; it is no affair of mine.

Bel. What do you mean, Ranger?

Strict. Ay, what do you mean? I will know before I stir.

Ran. With all my heart, sir. Cannot you see that all this may be concerted matter between them?

Frank. Ranger, you know I can resent.

Strict. Go on; I will defend you, let who will resent it.

Ran. Why, then, sir, I declare myself your friend: and, were I as you, nothing but their immediate marriage should convince me.

Strict. Sir, you're right, and are my friend indeed. Give me your hand.

Ran. Nay, were I to hear her say, I, Clarinda, take thee, Charles, I would not believe them, till I saw them a-bed together. Now, resent it as you will.

Strict. Ay, sir, as you will: but nothing less shall convince me: and so, my fine lady, if you are in earnest——

Cla. Sure, Mr Strictland——

Strict. Nay, no flouncing; you cannot escape.

Ran. Why, Frankly, hast no soul?

Frank. I pity her confusion.

Ran. Pity her confusion! the man's a fool—Here, take her hand.

Frank. Thus, on my knees, then let me ravish, with your hand, your heart.

Cla. Ravish it you cannot; for it is with all my heart I give it you.

Strict. I am satisfied.

Cla. And so am I, now it is once over.

Ran. And so am I, my dainty cousin; and I wish you joy of a man your whole sex would go to cuffs for, if they knew him but half so well as I do—Ha! she's here; this is more than I bargained for. [*Aside.*

JACINTHA *leads in* MRS STRICTLAND.

Strict. [*Embracing* MRS STRICTLAND.]—Madam, reproach me not with my folly, and you shall never hear of it again.

Mrs Strict. Reproach you! No! If ever you hear the least reflection pass my lips, forsake me in that instant: or, what would yet be worse, suspect again.

Strict. It is enough. I am ashamed to talk to thee. This letter, which I wrote to your brother, thus I tear in pieces, and, with it, part for ever with my jealousy.

Mrs Strict. This is a joy, indeed! As great as unexpected. Yet there is one thing wanting, to make it lasting.

Ran. What the devil is coming now? [*Aside.*

Mrs Strict. Be assured, every other suspicion of me was as unjust as your last: though, perhaps, you had more foundation for your fears.

Ran. She wont tell, sure, for her own sake. [*Aside.*

Mrs Strict. All must be cleared, before my heart will be at ease.

Ran. It looks plaguy like it, though! [*Aside.*

Strict. What mean you? I am all attention.

Mrs Strict. There was a man, as you suspected, in my chamber last night.

Strict. Ha! take care; I shall relapse.

Mrs Strict. That gentleman was he——

Ran. Here is a devil for you! [*Aside*

Mrs Strict. Let him explain the rest.

Ran. A frolic, a mere frolic, on my life!

Strict. A frolic! Zounds! [*They interpose.*

Ran. Nay, don't let us quarrel the very moment you declared yourself my friend. There was no harm done, I promise you. Nay, never frown. After I have told my story, any satisfaction you are pleased to ask, I shall be ready to give.

Strict. Be quick, then, and ease me of my pain.

Ran. Why, then, as I was strolling about last night upon the look-out, I must confess, chance, and chance only, conveyed me to your house; where I espied a ladder of ropes most invitingly fastened to the window——

Jac. Which ladder I had fastened for my escape.

Strict. Proceed.

Ran. Up mounted I, and up I should have gone, if it had been into the garret; it's all one to Ranger. I opened one door, then another, and, to my great surprise, the whole house was silent; at last, I stole into a room where this lady was undressing——

Strict. 'Sdeath and the devil! You did not dare, sure——

Ran. I don't know whether I had dared, or no, if I had not heard the maid say something of her master's being jealous. Oh, damn me, thought I, then the work is half done to my hands!

Jac. Do you mind that, Mr Strictland?

Strict. I do—I do, most feelingly.

Ran. The maid grew saucy, and, most conveniently to my wishes, was turned out of the room; and, if you had not the best wife in the world——

Strict. 'Ounds, sir! But what right have you——

Ran. What right, sir? If you will be jealous of your wife without a cause; if you will be out at that time of night, when you might have been so much better employed at home; we, young fellows, think we have a right——

Strict. No joking, I beseech you; you know not what I feel.

Ran. Then, seriously, I was mad, or drunk enough, call it what you will, to be very rude to this lady, for which I ask both her pardon and yours. I am an odd sort of a fellow, perhaps; but I am above telling you, or any man, a lie, damn me, if I am not!

Strict. I must, I cannot but believe you; and for the future, madam, you shall find a heart ready to love, and trust you. No tears, I beg; I cannot bear them.

Mrs Strict. I cannot speak; and yet there is a favour, sir——

Strict. I understand you; and, as proof of the sincerity with which I speak, I beg it as a favour, of this lady in particular,—[*To* CLARINDA]—and of all the company in general, to return to my house immediately, where every thing, Mr Bellamy, shall be settled to your entire satisfaction. No thanks; I have not deserved them.

J. Meg. I beg your pardon, sir; the fiddles are ready; Mrs Bellamy has promised me her hand, and I won't part with one of you till midnight; and, if you are as well satisfied as you pretend to be, let our friend Rattle, here, begin the ball with Mrs Strictland; for he seems to be the hero of the day.

Strict. As you and the company please.

Ran. Why, this is honest; continue but in this humour, and faith, sir, you may trust me to run about your house like a spaniel. I cannot sufficiently admire at the whimsicalness of my good fortune, in being so instrumental to this general happiness. Bellamy, Frankly, I wish you joy, with all my heart—though I had rather you should be married than I, for all that. Never did matrimony appear to me with a smile upon her face, till this instant.

Sure joys for ever wait each happy pair,
When sense the man, and virtue crowns the fair,
And kind compliance proves their mutual care.

[*A dance. Exeunt omnes.*

THE

WAY TO KEEP HIM.

BY

MURPHY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

LOVEMORE, *a dissipated man of fashion.*
SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT, *a sheepish humourist.*
SIR BRILLIANT FASHION, *a coxcomb.*
WILLIAM, *servant to* LOVEMORE.
SIDEBOARD, *servant to* SIR BASHFUL.
POMPEY, *a black servant.*
JOHN.

WOMEN.

MRS LOVEMORE, *neglected by her husband.*
THE WIDOW BELLMOUR, *a woman of fashion.*
LADY CONSTANT, *wife to sir Bashful.*
MUSLIN, *maid to* MRS LOVEMORE.
MIGNIONET, *maid to* MRS BELLMOUR.
FURNISH, *maid to* LADY CONSTANT.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An apartment in* LOVEMORE'S *house.*

WILLIAM *and* SIDEBOARD *discovered at a game of cards.*

Wil. A PLAGUE go with it! I have turned out my game: Is forty-seven good?

Side. Equal.

Wil. Confound the cards! tierce to a queen?

Side. Equal.

Wil. There again! ruined, stock and block: nothing can save me. I don't believe there is a footman in England plays with worse luck than myself. Four aces are fourteen.

Side. That's hard; cruel, by Jupiter! Aces against me every time.

Wil. Four aces are fourteen: fifteen. [*Plays.*

Side. There's your equality.

Wil. Very well: I turned out my point. Sixteen; [*Plays.*] seventeen. [*Plays.*]

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. There's a couple of you, indeed! You are so fond of the vices of your betters, that you are scarce out of your beds, but you must imitate them and their profligate ways. Set you up, forsooth!

Wil. Prithee be quiet, woman, do. Eighteen. [*Plays.*

Mus. Upon my word!—With your usual ease, Mr Coxcomb.

Wil. Manners, Mrs Muslin: you see Mr Sideboard here; he is just come on a message from sir Bashful Constant. Have some respect for a stranger. Nineteen, clubs. [*Plays.*

Mus. It would become Mr Sideboard to go back with his answer; and it would become you to send my lady word——

Wil. Command your tongue, Mrs Muslin:

you'll put me out. What shall I play?—He will go back with his answer in good time. Let his master wait till it suits our convenience. Nineteen, clubs: where shall I go now?

Mus. Have done with your folly, Mr Impertinent! My lady desires to know——

Wil. I tell you, woman, my master and I desire to have nothing to do with you and your lady. Twenty, diamonds. [*Plays.*

Mus. But I tell you, Mr Brazen, that my lady desires to know at what hour your master came home last night, and how he does this morning?

Wil. Ridiculous! Don't disturb us with that nonsense now; you see I am not at leisure. I and my master are resolved to be teased no more by you; and so, Mrs Go-between, you may return as you came. What the devil shall I play? We will have nothing to do with you, I tell you.

Mus. You'll have nothing to do with us? But you shall have to do with us, or I'll know the reason why.

[*She snatches the cards from him, and throws them about.*]

Wil. Death and fury! this meddling woman has destroyed my whole game. A man might as well be married, as be treated in this fashion.

Side. I shall score you for this, Mr William: I was sure of the cards, and that would have made me up.

Wil. No, you'll score nothing for this. You win too much of me. I am a very pretty annuity to you.

Side. Annuity, say you? I lose a fortune to you in the course of the year. How could you, Mrs Muslin, behave in this sort to persons of our dignity?

Mus. Decamp with your dignity; take your answer to your master: turn upon your rogue's heel, and rid the house.

Side. I shan't dispute with you. I hate wrangling: I leave that to lawyers and married people; they have nothing else to do. Mr William, I shall let sir Bashful know, that Mr Lovemore will be at home for him. When you come to our house, I'll give you your revenge. We can have a snug party there, and I promise you a glass of choice Champaigne: it happens to be a good batch; sir Bashful gets none of it: I keep it for my own friends. *Au revoir.* [*Exit.*

Wil. [*To* MUSLIN.] You see what mischief you have made.

Mus. Truce with your foolery; and now, sir, be so obliging as to send my lady an answer to her questions: How and when your rakehelly master came home last night?

Wil. I'll tell you one thing, Mrs Muslin; you and my master will be the death of me at last. In the name of charity, what do you both take me for? Whatever appearances may be, I am but of mortal mould; nothing supernatural about me.

Mus. Upon my word, Mr Powder-Puff!——

Wil. I have not, indeed; and flesh and blood, let me tell you, can't hold it always at this rate. I can't be for ever a slave to Mr Lovemore's eternal frolics, and to your second-hand airs.

Mus. Second-hand airs!

Wil. Yes, second-hand airs! you take them at your ladies' toilets with their cast gowns, and so you descend to us with them.—And then, on the other hand, there's my master!—Because he chooses to live upon the principal of his health, and so run out his whole stock as fast as he can, he must have my company with him in his devil's dance to the other world! Never at home till three, four, five, six in the morning.

Mus. Ay, a vile, ungrateful man! always ranging abroad, and no regard for a wife that dotes upon him. And your love for me is all of a piece. I have no patience with you both; a couple of false, perfidious, abandoned profligates!

Wil. Hey! where is your tongue running? My master, as the world goes, is a good sort of a civil kind of a husband; and I, heaven help me! a poor simpleton of a constant, amorous puppy, who bears with all the whims of my little tyrant here. Come and kiss me, you jade; come and kiss me.

Mus. Paws off, Cæsar. Don't think to make me your dupe. I know when you go with him to this new lady, this Bath acquaintance; and I know you are as false as my master, and give all my dues to yours Mrs Mignionet there.

Wil. Hush! not a word of that. I am ruined, pressed, and sent on board a tender directly, if you blab that I trusted you with that secret.—But to charge me with falsehood!——injustice and ingratitude!——My master, to be sure, does drink an agreeable dish of tea with the widow. He has been there every evening this month past. How long things are to be in this train, Heaven only knows. But he does visit there, and I attend him. I ask my master, sir, says I, what time will you please to want me? He fixes the hour, and I strut by Mrs Mignionet, without so much as tipping her a single glance. She stands watering at the mouth, and a pretty fellow that, says she: Ay gaze on, say I, gaze on: I know what you would be at: you would be glad to have me: but sour grapes, my dear; and so home I come, to cherish my own lovely little wanton: you know I do, and after toying with thee, I fly back to my master, later indeed than he appoints, but always too soon for him. He is loth to part: he lingers and dangles, and I stand cooling my heels. Oh! to the devil I pitch such a life!

Mus. Why don't you strive to reclaim the vile man?

Wil. Softly; not so fast. I have my talent to be sure; yes, I must acknowledge some talent.

But can you suppose that I have power to turn the drift of his inclinations? Can I give him a new taste, and lead him as I please? And to whom? To his wife? Ridiculous! A wife has no attraction now; the spring of the passions flies back; it won't do.

Mus. Fine talking! and you admire yourself for it, don't you? Can you proceed, sir?

Wil. I tell you a wife is out of date; the time was—but that's all over; a wife is a drug now; mere tarwater, with every virtue under heaven, but nobody takes it.

Mus. Have done, or I'll print these ten nails upon your rogue's face.

Wil. Come and kiss me, I say.

Mus. A fiddlestick for your kisses, while you encourage your master to open rebellion against the best of wives.

Wil. I tell you 'tis all her own fault. Why does not she study to please him as you do me. Come and throw your arms about my neck.

Mus. As I used to do, Mr Impudence?

Wil. Then I must force you to your own good. [*Kisses her.*] Pregnant with delight! egad, if my master was not in the next room———

[*Bell rings.*

Mus. Hush! my lady's bell: how long has he been up?

Wil. He has been up—[*Kisses her.*] 'Sdeath! you have set me all on fire. [*Kisses her.*

Mus. There, there; have done now; the bell rings again. What must I say? When did he come home?

Wil. He came home—[*Kisses her.*] he came home at five this morning; damned himself for a blockhead; [*Kisses.*] went to bed in a surly humour; was tired of himself and every body else, [*Bell rings, he kisses her.*] and he is now tip-toe spirits with sir Brilliant Fashion in that room yonder.

Mus. Sir Brilliant Fashion! I wish my lady would mind what he says to her—You great bear! you have given me such a flush in my face! [*Takes a pocket looking-glass.*] I look pretty well, I think. There [*Kisses him.*], have done, and let me be gone. [*Exit.*

Wil. There goes high and low life contrasted in one person. She has not dived to the bottom of my master's secrets; that's one good thing.—What she knows, she'll blab. We shall hear of this widow from Bath: but the plot lies deeper than they are aware of. Inquire they will; and let them, say I; their answer will do them no good. 'Mr Lovemore visit the widow Bellmour?' We know 'no such person.' That's what they'll get for their pains. Their puzzle will be greater than ever, and they may sit down to chew the cud of disappointed malice. Hush! my master and sir Brilliant; I'll take care of a single rogue, and get me out of their way.

[*Exit.*

Enter LOVEMORE *and* SIR BRILLIANT.

Love. My dear sir Brilliant, I must both pity and laugh at you. Thou art metamorphosed into the most whimsical being!

Sir Bril. If your raillery diverts you, go on with it. This is always the case: apply for sober advice, and your friend plays you off with a joke.

Love. Sober advice! very far gone, indeed.—There is no such thing as talking soberly to the tribe of lovers. That eternal absence of mind that possesses you all! There is no society with you. I was damnable company myself, when I was one of the pining herd: but a dose of matrimony has cooled me pretty handsomely; and here comes *repetatur haustus.*

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady sends her compliments, and begs to know how you do this morning.

Love. [*Aside to* SIR BRILLIANT.] The novelty of the compliment is enlivening—It is the devil to be teased in this manner. What did you say, child?

Mus. My lady hopes you find yourself well this morning.

Love. Ay, your lady: give her my compliments, and tell her—and tell her I hope she is well, and—— [*Yawns.*

Mus. She begs you won't think of going out, without seeing her.

Love. To be sure, she has such variety every time one sees her—my head aches woefully—— tell your lady—I shall be glad to see her; I'll wait on her—[*Yawns.*]—tell her what you will.

Mus. A brute! I shall let my lady know, sir.

[*Exit* MUS.

Love. My dear sir Brilliant, you see me an example before your eyes. Put the widow Bellmour out of your head, and let my lord Etheridge be the victim for you.

Sir Bril. Positively no; my pride is picqued. My lord Etheridge shall find me a more formidable rival than he imagines. By the way, how long has the noble peer been in England?

Love. His motions are unknown to me. [*Aside.*] I don't like that question. His lordship is in France, is not he?

Sir Bril. No; he is certainly returned. The match is to be concluded privately. He visits her *incog.*

Love. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Oh! no; that cannot be; my lord Etheridge loves parade. I cannot help laughing. The jealousy of you lovers is for ever conjuring up phantoms to torment yourselves. My dear sir Brilliant, wait for realities; there are enough in life, and you may teach your fancy to be at rest, and give you no further trouble.

Sir Bril. Nay, don't let your fancy run away with you. What I tell you, is the real truth.

Love. Well, if it be true, and if lord Ethe-

ridge is come to England to marry, do you go to France not to marry, and you will have the best of the bargain.

Enter WILLIAM.

Wil. Sir Bashful Constant is in his chariot at the upper end of the street, and if your honour is at leisure, he will wait upon you.

Love. Have not I sent him word I should be at home? Let him come as soon as he will.—— [*Exit* WILLIAM.] Another instance, sir Brilliant, to deter you from all thoughts of matrimony.

Sir Bril. Po! hang him! he is no precedent for me. A younger brother, who lived in middling life, comes to a title and an estate on the death of a consumptive baronet; marries a woman of quality, and now carries the primitive ideas of his narrow education into high life.—Don't you remember, when he had chambers in Fig-tree-court, and used to saunter and lounge away his time in Temple coffee-houses? The fellow is as dull as a bill in Chancery.

Love. But he is improved since that time.

Sir Bril. Impossible; don't you see how he goes on? He knows nothing of the world; if his eyes meet yours, he blushes up to his ears, and looks suspicious, as if he imagined you had a design upon him.

Love. I can explain that part of his character. He has a mortal aversion to wit and raillery, and dreads nothing so much as being laughed at for being particular.

Sir Bril. And so, fearing to be ridiculous, he becomes substantially so every moment.

Love. Even so; and if you look at him, he shrinks back from your observation, casting a sly, slow, jealous eye all around him, like Miss Bumpkin in a country village, awkwardly endeavouring to conceal what the increase of her shape discovers to the whole parish.

Sir Bril. And then his behaviour to his lady!

Love. Why, as to that point, I don't think he hates her. His fear of ridicule may be at the bottom. He has strange notions about the dignity of a husband. There is a secret, which he would fain tell me, and yet he is shy, and he hints, and he hesitates, and then he retreats back into himself, and ends just where he began. But with all his faults, he has fits of good nature. There; his chariot's at the door.

Sir Bril. Lady Constant, you mean, has fits of good nature. Have you made any progress there?

Love. That's well from you, who are the formidable man in that quarter.

Sir Bril. Oh! no; positively, no pretence, no colour for it.

Love. Don't I know that you have made advances?

Sir Bril. Advances! I pity my lady Constant, and——

Love. Well, that's generous—hush! I hear him coming. Sir Brilliant, I admire your amorous charity of all things!

Enter SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore, I have taken the liberty—but you seem to be busy, and I intrude, perhaps.

Love. Oh, by no means: walk in, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Sir Brilliant, I am glad to see you. [*Bows awkwardly.*

Sir Bril. You do me honour, sir. I hope you left my lady well.

Sir Bash. I can't say, sir; I am not her physician.

Sir Bril. [*Aside.*] An absurd brute! Lovemore, I'll just step and pay a short visit to our friend over the way.

Love. Why in such a hurry?

Sir Bril. I shall return immediately. I'll be with you before you are dressed. Sir Bashful, I kiss your hand. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. I am glad he is gone. I have something, Mr Lovemore, that I want to advise with you about.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. I have had another brush with my wife.

Love. I am sorry for it, sir Bashful. [*Aside.*] I am perfectly glad of it.

Sir Bash. Pretty warm the quarrel was. She took it in a high tone. 'Sir Bashful,' says she, 'I wonder you will disgrace yourself at this 'rate. You know my pin-money is not sufficient. 'The mercer and every body dunning me! I 'can't go on after this fashion,' says she, and then something about her quality. You know, Mr Lovemore, [*Smiling.*] she is a woman of high quality.

Love. Yes, and a very fine woman.

Sir Bash. No, no, no; not much of that—— and yet [*Looks at him and smiles.*] Do you think her a fine woman?

Love. Undoubtedly; where do you see any body that outshines her?

Sir Bash. Why to be sure—[*Smiling.*] one does not often see her eclipsed. I think she is what you may call a fine woman. She keeps good company.

Love. The very best.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; your tiptop, none else.—And yet to encourage her too far were dangerous. Too complying a husband makes but a sorry figure in the eyes of the world.

Love. The world will talk, sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Too fast, Mr Lovemore. Their tongues will run on, and one does not like to give them a subject. I answered her stoutly: Madam, says I, a fig for your quality: I am master in my own house, and who do you think—— [*Winks at* LOVEMORE.] putting myself in a pas-

sion, you know—Who do you think is to pay for your cats, and your dogs, and your monkeys, and your squirrels, and your gaming debts?

Love. How could you? That was sharply said.

Sir Bash. Yes; I gave it her. But, for all that, I am main good-natured at the bottom.

Love. You was not in earnest, then?

Sir Bash. No, no; that's the point: a man must keep up his own dignity. I'll tell you what I did.

Love. Well;—you did what's proper, I dare say.

Sir Bash. I hope you'll think so. Don't laugh at me.———Come, I will tell you. I went to her mercer slily, and paid him the money.

[*Smiling.*

Love. Did you!

Sir Bash. [*Looking alarmed.*] Was not it right?

Love. It was elegant.

Sir Bash. I am glad you approve. I took care to save appearances. One would not have the world know it.

Love. By no means.

Sir Bash. It would make them think me too uxorious.

Love. So it would. [*Aside.*] I must encourage that notion. While you live, guard against being too uxurious. Though our wives deserve our fondness the world will laugh at us; and hark ye, if our wives don't deserve it, they'll laugh at us the more.

Sir Bash. I know it. And so, says I, Mr Lutestring, there's your money, but tell no body that I paid it slily.

Love. Why, that's doing a genteel thing by stratagem. Admirably contrived!

Sir Bash. I think it was. But I have a deeper secret for you.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. I have. May I trust you?

Love. Now, there you hurt me. I feel that, sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. I beg your pardon. I know you are my friend. I have great confidence in you. You must know—look ye, Mr Lovemore——you must know———

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady desires to know if you chuse a dish of tea this morning.

Love. Po! ridiculous!—tell your mistress—go about your business. [*Turns her out.*

Sir Bash. I see how it is. He does not care a cherry-stone for his wife.

Love. Such impertinence!——Well, sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. He does not value her a pinch of snuff. [*Aside.*

Love. Well, I am all attention.

Sir Bash. It does not signify. A foolish affair; I won't trouble you.

Love. Nay, that's unkind. It will be no trouble.

Sir Bash. Well, well, I—I—Do you think Muslin did not overhear us?

Love. Not a syllable. Come, we are safe.

Sir Bash. I don't know but—let me ask you a question first. Have you any regard for your lady?

Love. The highest value for her. But then, you know, appearances——

Sir Bash. Right!—I repose it with you. You must know, Mr Lovemore, as I told you, I am at the bottom very good natured, and though it may be thought——we are interrupted again.

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Lovemore, I have paid my visit.

Love. Pshaw!—this is unlucky——You are as good as your word, sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. Perhaps you have business?

Sir Bash. No, no business—[*Turns to* LOVE.] there's no proceeding now——I was going, sir Brilliant. Mr Lovemore, I wish you a good day.

Love. Po! Prithee, you shan't leave me yet.

Sir Bash. I must; I can't stay. [*Aside to* LOVE.] Another time. Suppose you call at my house at one o'clock?

Love. With all my heart.

Sir Bash. Do so; nobody shall interrupt us. Mr Lovemore, I take my leave. Sir Brilliant, I kiss your hand. You won't forget, Mr Lovemore?

Love. Oh! no; depend upon me.

Sir Bash. A good morning. He is the only friend I have.

[*Exit* SIR BASH.

Love. Ha, ha! you broke in, in the most critical moment! He was just going to be delivered of his secret.

Sir Bril. I beg your pardon. How could you let me?

Love. Nay, no matter. I shall worm it out of him.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady, sir, is quite impatient.

Love. Po! for ever teasing! I'll wait upon her presently. [*Exit* MUS.

Sir Bril. I'll step and chat with her while you dress. May I take the liberty?

Love. You know you may: no ceremony. How could you ask me such a question?——Apropos, sir Brilliant, I want a word with you. Step with me into the study for a moment.

Sir Bril. I attend you.

Love. Poor sir Bashful!——ha, ha!——a ridiculous, unaccountable——What does he mean?

[*Exeunt*

SCENE II.—*Another apartment.*

MRS LOVEMORE *at her tea-table.*

Mrs Love. This trash of tea! I don't know why I drink so much of it. Heigho!—What keeps Muslin? Surely never was an unhappy woman treated with such cruel indifference; nay, with such open, such undisguised insolence of gallantry.

Enter MUSLIN.

Well, Muslin, have you seen his prime minister?

Mus. Yes, ma'am, I have seen Mr William. He says his master is going out, according to the old trade, and he does not expect to see him again till to-morrow morning. Mr Lovemore is now in the study. Sir Brilliant Fashion is with him: I heard them, as I passed by the door, laughing as loud as two actors in a comedy.

Mrs Love. About some precious mischief, I'll be sworn, and all at my cost. Heigho!

Mus. Dear Ma'am, why chagrin yourself about a vile man, that is not worth——no, as I hope for mercy, not worth a single sigh!

Mrs Love. What can I do, Muslin?

Mus. Do, ma'am!—If I was as you, I'd do for him. If I could not cure my grief, I'd find some comfort; that's what I would.

Mrs Love. Comfort? alas! there is none for me.

Mus. And whose fault, then? Would any body but you—It provokes me to think of it—Would any but you—young, handsome, with wit, graces, talents—would any body, with so many accomplishments, sit at home here, as melancholy as a poor servant out of place?—And all for what? For a husband! And such a husband! What do you think the world will say of you, ma'am?

Mrs Love. I care not what they say; I am tired of the world, and the world may be tired of me, if it will. My troubles are to myself only, and I must endeavour to bear them. Who knows what patience may do? If Mr Lovemore has any feeling left, my conduct and his own heart may one day incline him to do me justice.

Mus. But, dear ma'am, that's waiting for dead men's shoes. Incline him to do you justice!—What signifies expecting and expecting? Give me a bird in the hand. If all the women in London, who happen to be in your case, were to sit down and die of the spleen, what would become of the public places? They might turn Vauxhall to a hop-garden; make a brewhouse of Ranelagh, and let both the play-houses to a methodist-preacher. We should not have the racketing we have now. John, let the horses be put to——John, go to my lady Trumpabout, and invite her to a small party of twenty or thirty card-tables. John, run to my lady Catgut, and let her know I'll wait upon her ladyship to the opera. John, run, as fast as ever you can, with my compliments to Mr Varney, and tell him, it will be the death of me, if I have not a box for the new play. Lord bless you, ma'am, they rantipole it about this town, with as unconcerned looks, and as florid outsides, as if they were treated at home like so many goddesses: though every body knows possession has ungoddessed them all long ago, and their husbands care no more for them, no, by jingo, no more than they care for their husbands!

Mrs Love. At what a rate you run on!

Mus. It is enough to make a body run on. If every body thought like you, ma'am—

Mrs Love. If every body loved like me!

Mus. A brass thimble for love, if it is not returned by love. What the deuce is here to do? Love for love is something: but to love alone, where's the good of that? Shall I go and fix my heart upon a man, who shall despise me for that very reason? And ay, says he, 'Poor fool! I see 'she adores me. The woman is well enough, 'only she has one inconvenient circumstance 'about her; I am married to her, and marriage 'is the devil!'

Mrs Love. Will you have done?

Mus. I have not half done, ma'am. And when the vile man goes a-rogueing, he smiles impudently in your face, 'and I am going to the cho-'colate-house, my dear; amuse yourself in the 'mean time, my love.' Fy upon them! I know them all. Give me a husband that will enlarge the circle of my innocent pleasures: but a husband now-a-days is no such thing. A husband now is nothing but a scare-crow, to shew you the fruit, but touch it if you dare. The devil's in them! the Lord forgive me for swearing! A husband is a mere bugbear, a snap-dragon, a monster; that is to say, if one makes him so, then he is a monster indeed; and if one do not make him so, then he behaves like a monster; and of the two evils, by my troth——But here, ma'am, here comes one who can tell you all about it. Here comes sir Brilliant: ask his advice, ma'am.

Mrs Love. His advice?——Ask advice of the man, who has estranged Mr Lovemore's affections from me?

Mus. Well, I protest and vow, I think sir Brilliant a very pretty gentleman. He is the very pink of the fashion. He dresses fashionably, lives fashionably, wins your money fashionably, loses his own fashionably, and does every thing fashionably; and then he looks so lively, and so much to say, and so never at a loss!—But here he comes.

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Mrs Lovemore, my dear madam, always in a vis-a-vis party with your *suivante*?—Afford me your pardon, if I say this does a little wear the appearance of being out of humour with the world.

Mrs Love. Far from it, sir Brilliant. We were engaged in your panegyric.

Sir Bril. My panegyric? Then am I come most apropos to give the portrait a few finishing touches. Mr Lovemore, as soon as he is dressed, will wait upon you: in the mean time, I can help you to some anecdotes, which will enable you to colour your canvas a little higher.

Mrs Love. Among those anecdotes, I hope you will not omit the bright exploit of seducing Mr Lovemore from all domestic happiness?

[*She makes a sign to* MUSLIN *to go.*

Sir Bril. I, madam?—Let me perish, if ever—

Mrs Love. Oh! sir, I can make my observations.

Sir Bril. May fortune eternally forsake me, and beauty frown on me, if I am conscious of any plot upon earth!

Mrs Love. Don't assert too strongly, sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. May I never throw a winning cast—

Mrs Love. It is in vain to deny it, sir.

Sir Bril. May I lose the next sweepstakes, if I have ever, in thought, word, or deed, been accessary to his infidelity! I alienate the affections of Mr Lovemore! Consider, madam, how would this tell in Westminster Hall? Sir Brilliant Fashion, what say you? guilty of this indictment, or not guilty? Not guilty, poss. Thus issue is joined. You enter the court: but, my dear madam, veil those graces that adorn your person: abate the fire of those charms: so much beauty will corrupt the judges: give me a fair trial.

Mrs Love. And thus you think to laugh it away.

Sir Bril. Nay, hear me out. You appear in court: you charge the whole upon me, without a syllable as to the how, when, and where: no proof positive; the prosecution ends, and I begin my defence.

Mrs Love. And, by playing these false colours, you think I am to be amused?

Sir Bril. Nay, Mrs Lovemore, I am now upon my defence. Only hear.—You will please to consider, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr Lovemore is not a minor, nor I his guardian. He loves gaiety, pleasure, and enjoyment: is it my fault? He is possessed of talents, and a taste for pleasure, which he knows how to gratify: can I restrain him? He knows the world, makes the most of life, and plucks the fruit that grows around him: am I to blame? This is the whole affair. How say you, gentlemen of the jury?—Not guilty. There, you see how it is. I have cleared myself.

Mrs Love. Brisk, lively, and like yourself, sir Brilliant! But if you can imagine this bantering way——

Sir Bril. Acquitted by my country, madam; fairly acquitted.

Mrs Love. After the very edifying counsel which you give to Mr Lovemore, this loose strain is not in the least surprising. And, sir, your late project——

Sir Bril. My late project!

Mrs Love. Your late project, sir. Not content with leading Mr Lovemore into a thousand scenes of dissipation, you have introduced him lately to your Mrs Bellmour. You understand me, sir?

Sir Bril. Madam, he does not so much as know the widow Bellmour.

Mrs Love. Nay, sir Brilliant, have a care: justify it, if you can, or give it a turn of wit.—There is no occasion to hazard yourself too far.

Sir Bril. Falsehood I disdain, madam, and I, sir Brilliant Fashion, declare that Mr Lovemore is not acquainted with the widow Bellmour.—And if he was, what then? Do you know the lady?

Mrs Love. I know her, sir? A person of that character?

Sir Bril. Oh! I see you don't know her; but I will let you into her history. Pray, be seated. You shall know her whole history, and then judge for yourself. The widow Bellmour, madam——

Love. [*Within.*]—William, are the horses put to?

Sir Bril. We are interrupted.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Love. Very well: let the carriage be brought round directly. How do you do, my dear? Sir Brilliant, I beg your pardon. My love, you don't answer me: how do you do this morning?

[*With an air of cold civility.*

Mrs Love. A little indisposed in mind: but indisposition of the mind is of no consequence: nobody pities it.

Love. I beg you pardon, Mrs Lovemore. Indisposition of the mind——Sir Brilliant, that's a mighty pretty ring on your finger.

Sir Bril. A bauble: will you look at it?

[*Gives the ring.*

Mrs Love. Though I have but few obligations to sir Brilliant, I suppose I am to ascribe to him the favour of this visit, Mr Lovemore?

Love. [*Looking at the ring, and laughing.*]—Now, there you wrong me. Your inquiries about my health have been very obliging this morning, and I came to return the compliment before I got out. It is set very neatly.

[*Gives back the ring.*

Mrs Love. Are you going out, sir?

Love. A matter of business—How I do hae business! But business—[*Examining his ruffles.*]—business must be done. Pray, is there any news? Any news, my dear?

Mrs Love. It would be news to me, sir, if you would be kind enough to let me know whether I may expect the favour of your company at dinner to-day?

Love. It would be impertinent in me to answer such a question; for I can give no direct answer to it. I am the slave of events; just as

things happen; perhaps I may; perhaps not.—But don't let me be of any inconvenience to you. Is it material where a body eats? Have you heard what happened to me?

[*Aside to* SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. When, and where?

Love. A word in your ear—with your permission, madam?

Mrs Love. That cold, contemptuous civility, Mr Lovemore——

Love. Po! Prithee, now, how can you? that is very peevish, and very ill-natured.—[*Turning to* SIR BRILLIANT.]—I lost every thing I played for, after you went. The foreigner and he understand one another. I beg your pardon, Mrs Lovemore: it was only about an affair at the opera.

Mrs Love. The opera, or any thing, is more agreeable than my company.

Love. Now, there again you wrong me.—[*To* SIR BRILLIANT.]—We dine at the St Alban's.—How can you, Mrs Lovemore? I make it a point not to incommode you. You possibly may have some private party; and it would be unpolite in me to obstruct your schemes of pleasure. Would not it, sir Brilliant?

Sir Bril. Oh! Gothic to the last degree!

Love. Very true; vulgar and mechanic!

[*Both stand laughing.*

Mrs Love. Go on; make sport for yourselves, gentlemen.

Love. Ho, ho, ho! I am sore with laughing.—If you, madam, have arranged an agreeable party, for me to be present, it would look as if we lived together like sir Bashful Constant and his lady; who are always, like two game-cocks, ready armed to goad and spur one another. Hey! Sir Brilliant?

Sir Bril. Oh, the very thing: or, like sir Theodore Traffic, at Tunbridge, taking his wife under the arm in the public rooms, and 'Come 'along home, I tell you.'

Love. Exactly so.—[*Both continue laughing.*]—Odds my life! I shall be beyond my time.—[*Looks at his watch.*]—Any commands into the city, my dear?

Mrs Love. Commands! No, sir, I have no commands.

Love. I have an appointment at my banker's, sir Brilliant. You know old Discount?

Sir Bril. He that was in parliament, and had the large contract?

Love. The same: Entire Butt, I think, was the name of his borough. Can I set you down?

Sir Bril. No; my carriage waits. I shall rattle half the town over, presently.

Love. As you will. Sir Brilliant will entertain you, madam. *Au revoir*, my love. Sir Brilliant, yours. Who waits there? [*Exit singing.*

Sir Bril. Bon voyage. You see, madam, that I don't deprive you of his company.

Mrs Love. Your influence is now unnecessary. It is grown habitual to him: he will drive to your Mrs Bellmour, I suppose.

Sir Bril. Apropos; that brings us back to the little history I was going to give you of that lady. What is your charge against her? That she is amiable? Granted. Young, gay, rich, handsome, with enchanting talents, it is no wonder all the pretty fellows are on their knees to her. Her manner so entertaining! That quickness of transition from one thing to another! That round of variety! and every new attitude does so become her; and she has such a feeling heart, and, with an air of giddiness, so nice a conduct!

Mrs Love. Mighty well, sir: she is a very vestal. Finish your portrait. A vestal, from your school of painting, must be a curiosity——But how comes it, sir, if she is this wonder, that your honourable proposals are at an end there?

Sir Bril. Compulsion, madam: it is not voluntary. My lord Etheridge is the happy man. I thought he was out of the kingdom; but his lordship is with her every evening. I can scarce gain admittance; and so all that remains for me, is to do justice to the lady, and console myself in the best way I can, for the insufficiency of my pretensions.

Mrs Love. Am I to believe all this?

Sir Bril. May the first woman I pay my addresses to, strike me to the centre with a supercilious eye-brow, if every syllable is not minutely true! So that, you see, I am not the cause of your inquietude. There is not in the world a person, who more earnestly aspires to prove the tender esteem he bears you. I have long panted for an opportunity—by all that's soft, she listens to me!—[*Aside.*]—I have long panted, madam, for a tender moment like this——

Mrs Love. [*Looking gravely at him.*]—Sir!

Sir Bril. I have panted with all the ardour, which charms, like yours, must kindle in every heart——

Mrs Love. [*Walks away.*]—This liberty, sir—

Sir Bril. Consider, madam: we have both cause of discontent; both disappointed; both crossed in love; and the least we can do is both to join, and sweeten each other's cares.

Mrs Love. And your friend, sir, who has just left you——

Sir Bril. He, madam, for a long time—I have seen it, with vexation seen it—yes, he has long been false to honour, love, and you.

Mrs Love. Sir Brilliant, I have done. You take my wrongs too much to heart, sir.

[*Rings a bell.*

Sir Bril. Those eyes, that tell us what the sun is made of, those hills of driven snow!

Mrs Love. Will nobody answer there?

Enter MUSLIN.

Sir Bril. Madam, I desist: when you are in better humour, recollect what I have said. Your adorer takes his leave. Sir Brilliant, mind your

hits, and her strait-laced virtue will surrender at last. Madam———

[*Bows respectfully. Exit.*

Mus. As I live and breathe, madam, if I was as you, I would not fluster myself about it.

Mrs Love. About what!

Mus. What signifies mincing the matter? I heard it all.

Mrs Love. You did? Did you?

[*Looks angrily.*

Mus. Madam?

Mrs Love. Impertinence!—[*Walks about.*]—Oh, Mr Lovemore! To make his character public, and render him the topic of every tea-table throughout this town! I must avoid that.

Mus. What the deuce is here to do? An unmannerly thing, for to go for to huff me in this manner! [*Aside.*

Mrs Love. That would only widen the breach; and, instead of neglect, might call forth resentment, and settle, at last, into a fixed aversion; lawyers, parting, and separate maintenance!—What must be done?

Mus. What is she thinking of now? A sulky thing, not to be more familiar with such a friend as I am. Did you speak to me, madam?

Mrs Love. It may succeed; suppose I try it? Muslin?

Mus. Madam? [*Running to her.*

Mrs Love. You heard sir Brilliant say that Mr Lovemore is not acquainted with the widow?

Mus. Lard, madam, he's as full of tricks as a French milliner. I know he does visit there: I know it from William; I'll be hanged in my own garters, if he does not!

Mrs Love. I know not what to do. Let my chair be got ready.

Mus. Your chair, madam! Are you going out?

Mrs Love. Let me hear no more questions: do as I order you. [*Exit.*

Mus. Which way is the wind now? No matter; she does not know what she'd be at. If she would but take my advice—go abroad, visit every where, see the world, throw open her doors, give balls, assemblies, concerts; sing, dance, dress, spend all her money, run in debt, ruin her husband; there would be some sense in that: the man would stay at home, then, to quarrel with her. She would have enough of his company.—But no; mope, mope for ever; heigho! tease, tease; Muslin, step to William; where's his master? When did he come home? How long has he been up? A fine life, truly! I love to be in the fashion, for my part. Bless me, I had like to have forgot! Mrs Marmalet comes to my route to-night. She might as well stay away: she is nothing but mere lumber. The formal thing won't play higher than shilling whist. How the devil does she think I can make a shilling party for her? There is no such a thing now-a-days: nobody plays shilling whist now, unless I was to invite the trade's-people; but I shan't let myself down for Madam Marmalet, that I promise her.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An apartment at* SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT'S.

Enter SIR BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. DID not I hear a rap at the door? Yes, yes, I did; I am right. The carriage is just now driving away. Who answers there? Sideboard! step hither, Sideboard. I must know who it is: my wife keeps the best company in England. Hold, I must be wary. Servants love to pry into their masters' secrets.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Whose carriage was that at the door?

Side. The duchess of Hurricane, your honour.

Sir Bash. The duchess of Hurricane?—[*Walks aside, and smiles.*]—A woman of great rank! What did she want?

Side. She has left this card for my lady.

Sir Bash. A card? Let me see it.—[*Reads.*]—'The duchess of Hurricane presents compliments 'to lady Constant. She has left the hounds and 'foxes, and the brutes that gallop after them, to 'their own dear society for the rest of the winter. Her grace keeps Wednesdays at Hurricane 'House for the rest of the winter.'—Make me thankful, here's a card from a duchess! What have you there?

Side. A parcel of cards, that have been left here this morning.

Sir Bash. All these in one morning?—[*Looks at them.*]—Why, I may as well keep an inn; may as well keep the coach and horses in Piccadilly.—[*Reads fast.*]—Lady Riot—Mrs Allnight—the duchess of Carmine—look ye there, another duchess!—Lady Basset—lord Pleurisie—the countess of Ratifie—sir Richard Lungs—lord Laudanum—sir Charles Valerian—lady Hectick—lady Mary Gabble—I cannot bear all this, Sideboard—[*Aside, and smiling.*]—I cannot bear the pleasure of it: all people of tip-top condition to visit my wife!

Enter FURNISH.

Sir Bash. What's the matter, Furnish?

Fur. The matter, sir? Nothing's the matter.

Sir Bash. What are you about? Where are you going? What have you to do now?

Fur. Only to tell the chairmen they must take

Black George with his flambeau with them this evening, and carry the chair to pay visits for my lady.

Sir Bash. An empty chair to pay visits! what polite ways people of fashion have got of being intimate with each other!—[*Aside.*]—Absurd as it is, I am glad to see my wife keep pace with the best of them. I laugh at it, and yet like it. 'Zounds! I shall be found out by my servants.—I tell you, Sideboard, and you, Mrs Busy Body, that your mistress leads a life of noise and hurry, and cards and dice, and vanity and nonsense, and I am resolved to bear it no longer. Don't I hear her coming?

Fur. My lady is coming, sir.

Sir Bash. [*Aside, and smiling.*] She looks charmingly.—Now, I'll tell her roundly a piece of my mind. You shall see who commands in this house.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. [*Steals a look.*] I could almost give up the point when I look at her.—So, madam, I have had my house full of duns again to-day?

Lady Con. Obliging creatures, to call so often. What did they want?

Sir Bash. Want!—what should they want but money?

Lady Con. And you paid them, I suppose?

Sir Bash. You suppose!——'Sdeath, madam, what do you take me for?

Lady Con. I took you for a husband: my brother prescribed you. But his prescription has done me no good.

Sir Bash. Nor me either: I have had a bitter pill of it.

Lady Con. But the pill was gilded for you. My fortune, I take it, has paid off the old family mortgage on your estate.

Sir Bash. And, at the rate you go on, a new mortgage will swallow up my estate.—I see you are an ungrateful woman.

Lady Con. That is, as you keep the account.

Sir Bash. And my accounts will shew it. Day after day, nothing but extravagance to gratify your vanity! Did not I go into parliament to please you? Did not I go down to the borough of Smoke-and-Sot, and get drunk there for a whole month together? Did not I get mobbed at the George and Vulture? and pelted and horse-whipped the day before the election? And was not I obliged to steal out of the town in a rabbit-cart? And all this to be somebody, as you call it! Did not I stand up in the House to make a speech, to shew what an orator you had married? And did not I expose myself? Did I know whether I stood upon my head or my heels for half an hour together? And did not a great man from the Treasury-bench tell me never to speak again?

Lady Con. And why not take his advice?

Sir Bash. What, in the name of common sense, had I do in parliament? My country! What's my country to me? The debts of the nation, and your gaming debts, are nothing to me. I must help to pay both, must I? I can vote against taxes, and can advertise in the gazette to secure me from your extravagance. I have not lived in the Temple for nothing.

Fur. He slept there, and calls it studying the law.

Sir Bash. Hold you your tongue, Mrs Pert; leave the room. Go both about your business.

[*Exeunt* FURNISH *and* SIDEBOARD.

[*Aside.*] I have kept it up before my servants. [*Looks at* LADY CONSTANT.] She is a fine woman, after all!

Lady Con. Is there never to be an end of this usage, sir? Am I to be for ever made unhappy by your humours?

Sir Bash. Humours! good sense and sound judgment, in the fine lady's dictionary, are to be called humours?

Lady Con. And your humours are now grown insupportable.

Sir Bash. Your profusion is insupportable. At the rate you go on, how am I to find money for my next election?—If you would but talk this matter over coolly—She talks like an angel, and I wish I could say—[*Aside.*]—the same of myself.——What will the world think?—Only command your temper—what will they think, if I am seen to encourage your way of life?

Lady Con. Amuse yourself that way, sir.—Avoid one error, and run into the opposite extreme.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] There; a translation from Horace! *Dum vitant stulti vitia*—She is a notable woman!

Lady Con. Let me tell you, there is not in life a more ridiculous sight, than the person who guards, with imaginary wisdom, against one giant vice, and leaves himself open to a million of absurdities.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] I am nothing to her in argument—she has a tongue that can reason me out of my senses.—I could almost find it in my heart to tell her the whole truth.—You know, my lady Constant, that when you want any thing in reason—

Lady Con. Is it unreasonable to live with decency? Is it unreasonable to keep the company my rank and education have entitled me to? Is it unreasonable to conform to the modes of life, when your fortune can so well afford it?

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] She is a very reasonable woman; and I wish I had but half her sense.—You know I am good-natured in the main, and if a sum of money within a moderate compass—If a brace of hundreds—[*Aside.*] why should not I make it three?—I know that you have contracted habits of life, and [*In a softened tone.*] habit, I know, is not easily conquered: and if three [*Smiling.*] hundred pounds will prevent disputes

why [*Smiling.*] as to the matter of three hundred pound———

Enter FURNISH, *with a band-box.*

Fur. Your ladyship's things from the milliner's.

Sir Bash. Death and fury, this woman has overheard me! Three hundred pounds, madam! [*In a violent passion.*] let me tell you that three hundred pounds—what right have you to shovel away three hundred pounds?

Lady Con. Why does the man fly out into such a passion?

Sir Bash. I will allow no such doings in my house. Don't I often come when my hall is besieged with a parcel of powder-monkey servants? And did not I the other day, before I could get into my own doors, entangle myself among the chairmen's poles, and was not I confined there, like a man in the stocks?

Lady Con. Why would you be so awkward?

Sir Bash. An eternal scene of routs and drums. Have not I seen you put a fee-simple of a score of my best acres upon a single card? And have not I muttered to myself, if that woman was as much in love with me as she is with Pam, what an excellent wife she would make!

Lady Con. Pam is very obliging. Why won't you strive to be as agreeable?

Sir Bash. 'Sdeath, madam, you are so fond of play, that I should not wonder to see my next child marked on the forehead with a pair of royal aces.

Fur. I am sure you deserve to be marked on the forehead with a pair of—

Sir Bash. Malapert hussy! do you meddle? Begone this moment! [*Exit* FURNISH.

Lady Con. Fy upon it, sir Bashful! I am tired of blushing for you.

Sir Bash. I am afraid I have gone too far: she is ashamed of me. [*Aside.*

Lady Con. You agreed to a separation the other day, and there remains nothing but to execute articles, and make an end of all this disquiet.

Sir Bash. A separate maintenance will go but a little way to answer the bawling of milliners, mercers, jewellers, and gaming debts.

Lady Con. It will purchase content; and nothing can obtain that under your roof.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] I have shot my bolt too far—I fancy, my lady Constant, that you don't know me. We might explain matters, and—'sdeath! [*Aside.*] I am going to blab——I say, madam, if you understand me rightly——as to the authority of a husband, I might, perhaps, be brought to give it up, in part at least; and if nobody was the wiser, I might connive—Po! confusion! interrupted again by that———

Enter FURNISH.

Fur. A servant from Mrs Lovemore, madam, to know—

Sir Bash. The authority of a husband I never will give up.—

Lady Con. A storm, a whirlwind is fitter to converse with.

Sir Bash. I will storm like a whirlwind in my own house. I have done, madam: you are an ungovernable woman—[*Aside, and smiling.*] she is a charming woman; and if nobody saw it, I would let her govern me with all my heart.

[*Exit* SIR BASHFUL.

Lady Con. Did any body ever see such behaviour?

Fur. Never; and how your ladyship bears it, I can't tell.

Lady Con. That it should be my fate to be married to such a quicksand! What does Mrs Lovemore say?

Fur. If your ladyship will be at home, she intends to do herself the pleasure of waiting upon you, madam.

Lady Con. Very well; I shall be at home. Upon recollection, I want to see her. Let the servant wait: I'll write an answer.

[*Exit* LADY CONSTANT.

SCENE II.—*Another apartment.*

Enter SIR BASHFUL *and* LOVEMORE.

Sir Bash. Walk in, Mr Lovemore, walk in.—I am heartily glad to see you. This is kind.

Love. I am ready, you see, to attend the call of friendship.

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore, you are a friend, indeed.

Love. You do me honour, sir Bashful. And your lady, how does she do?

Sir Bash. Perfectly well: in great spirits.—[*Smiling at* LOVEMORE.] I never saw her look better: but we have had t'other skirmish since I saw you.

Love. Another?

Sir Bash. Ay, another; and I did not bate her an ace. She is a rare one to argue. She is fit to discuss a point with any man. Nobody like her. Wit at will. I thought I managed the dispute, and that I should soon have had her at what you call a *non-plus.* But no, no; no such thing; she can give you a sharp turn in a moment.

Love. Ay!

Sir Bash. Give her her due, I am nothing to her. I thought I had her fast; but she went round me quick as lightning: and would you believe it? [*Looks highly pleased.*] She did not leave me a word to say.

Love. Well! that was hard upon you.

Sir Bash. No, not hard at all. Those little victories I don't mind. You know I told you I had something for your private ear. Have you observed nothing odd and singular in me?

Love. Not in the least. In the whole circle of my acquaintance, I know nobody so little tinged with oddity.

Sir Bash. What, have you seen nothing?—— [*Laughs.*] Have you remarked nothing particular in regard to my wife?

Love. Why, you don't live happy with her: but that is not a singular case.

Sir Bash. But I tell you—this must be in confidence——I am, at the bottom, a very odd fellow.

Love. You do yourself injustice, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. No, not in the least. It is too true—I am in the main a very odd fellow; I am indeed; as odd a fish as lives; and you must have seen it before now.

Love. I see it! I am not apt to spy defects in my friends. What can this be? You are not jealous, I hope?

Sir Bash. You have not hit the right nail on the head. No, not jealous. Do her justice, I am safe as to that point. My lady has high notions of honour. No, it is not that.

Love. Not a ray of light to guide me: explain, sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. [*Smiling at him.*] You could never have imagined it. But, first, let me shut this door.

Love. What whim has got possession of him now?

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore, I have great dependence upon you. I am going to make a discovery. I blush at the very thought of it! [*Turns away.*

Love. Be a man, sir Bashful; out with it at once; let me advise you.

Sir Bash. The very thing I want. The affair is—but then if he should betray me! Mr Lovemore, I doubt you, and yet esteem you. Some men there are, who, when a confidence is reposed in them, take occasion, from thence, to hold a hank over their friend, and tyrannize him all the rest of his days.

Love. O fy! this is ungenerous. True friendship is of another quality: it feels from sympathy; honour is the active principle; and the strictest secrecy is an inviolable rule.

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore, I have no further doubt—stay; did not you hear a noise? Don't I see a shadow moving under the bottom of that door? [*Goes to the door.*

Love. What has got into his head?

Sir Bash. [*Looking out.*] Servants have a way of listening.

Love. Rank jealousy! he has it through the very brain.

Sir Bash. No, no; all's safe. Mr Lovemore, I will make you the depositary, the faithful depositary of a secret: let it pass from the bottom of my heart to the inmost recess of yours: there let it rest, concealed from every prying eye. My inclination—There! I see a laugh already forming in every feature of your face.

Love. Then, my face is no true index of my mind. Were you to know the agitations in which you keep me by this suspense——

Sir Bash. I believe it. To make an end at once, my inclinations are totally changed—no, not changed, but they are not what they seemed to be. Love is the passion that possesses me—I am in love, and—[*Turns from him.*] and I am ashamed of myself!

Love. Ashamed! love is a noble passion: but don't let me hear any more about it. Lady Constant will discover all, and then the blame will fall on me. If your heart revolts from her, don't let me be thought in league with you.—— You need not involve me in a quarrel with her ladyship.

Sir Bash. You don't take me right. You are wide, quite wide of the mark. Hear me out.

Love. No, no more. You must excuse me.

Sir Bash. You shall hear me. The object of my passion, this charming woman, whom I dote on to distraction——

Love. Your pardon; I won't hear it—[*Walks away from him.*] When her ladyship hears of his gallantry, the devil is in the dice, if the spirit of revenge does not mould her to my purposes.

Sir Bash. [*Following* LOVEMORE.] I say, Mr Lovemore, this adorable creature——

Love. Keep your secret, sir Bashful. [*Avoiding him.*]

Sir Bash. [*Following him.*] Who looks so lovely in my eyes——

Love. Well; I don't desire to know her.

Sir Bash. You do know her. [*Following him.*] This idol of my heart——is my own wife.

Love. [*Stares at him.*] Your own wife?

Sir Bash. Yes, my own wife. [*Looks silly, and turns away.*] 'Tis all over with me: I am undone!

Love. This is the most unexpected discovery!

Sir Bash. Look ye there now! he laughs at me already.

Love. [*Aside.*] His wife must not know this. The grass is cut under my feet, if she ever hears a word of it.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] He is struck with amazement, and does not say a word to me.

Love. [*Aside.*] I must not encourage him.—And can this be possible, sir Bashful? In love with your own wife?

Sir Bash. Spare my confusion! I have made myself very ridiculous. [*Looks at him, and turns away.*] I know I have.

Love. Ridiculous! Far from it. Can it be wrong to love a valuable woman? Not to feel the impressions of beauty and of merit were downright insensibility; but then we should always admire with discretion. The folly of us married men consists in letting our wives perceive the vehemence with which we love; and the consequence is, we are enslaved for the rest of our lives. I could trust you with a secret, which, perhaps, would keep you in countenance. Could you imagine it? I love my wife.

Sir Bash. How?

Love. I am in love with my wife.

Sir Bash. Oh! no, no; hey! [*Looking highly pleased.*] you make me laugh. You don't love her, do you?

Love. Passionately, tenderly; with all the ardour of affection.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. Ha! ha! I did not expect this. This is some relief. Ha! ha! you have made me happy. And have you led the life you have done all this time, on purpose to conceal your regard from her?

Love. For that very purpose. I esteem her; I love her; but I would not have her know it.

Sir Bash. No!

Love. Upon no consideration; nor would I have the world know it.

Sir Bash. Perfectly right.

Love. To be sure. Tell your wife that you esteem her good qualities, and admire her person, she cries, *Victoria*, falls to plundering, and then you must either break her chain, or wear it in the face of the world, a laughing-stock for all your acquaintance.

Sir Bash. That is what I have always been afraid of.

Love. Not without reason. The world delights in ridicule. Do you know, if our secrets were to transpire, that we should have nothing but wit, and raillery, and fleers, and taunts, flying about our ears?

Sir Bash. But I have taken good care. I have quarrelled with my lady ten times a-day, on purpose to cloak the affair, and prevent all suspicion.

Love. Admirable! I commend your prudence. Besides,—my lady Constant, you know, has some youthful vigour about her; a graceful person, and an eye that inflames desire; and desire at your time of life, you know——

Sir Bash. Po! it is not for that; that is nothing. I wear admirably well, Mr Lovemore.

Love. Do you?

Sir Bash. As young as ever: but I don't let her know it.

Love. Well! if you are discreet in that point, you are a very Machiavel!

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; I fight cunning. [*Laughs.*

Love. Let nothing betray you. Be upon your guard: that is my own plan exactly. You want no advice from me.

Sir Bash. Pardon me: you can assist me.—My dear brother sufferer, give me your hand. We can, in a sly way, be of great use to each other.

Love. As how?

Sir Bash. I'll tell you. There are some things which, you know, our wives expect to be done.

Love. So there are.——[*Aside.*] What the devil is he at now?

Sir Bash. Now, if you will assist me—

Love. You may depend upon my assistance.

Sir Bash. Thus it is: my wife, you know, keeps a power of company, and makes a great figure there. I could shew her in any company in England: I wish she could say the same of me.

Love. Why, truly, I wish she could.

Sir Bash. But that's out of the question. Now, if you will come into my scheme—It must be a deep secret—How? Is that Sir Brilliant's voice?

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, you see what attraction you have. Lovemore, I did not expect to see you here.

Love. Nor did I expect you, Sir Brilliant. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Confusion!—This unseasonable visit— [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. And your lady, is she at home, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Her own people keep that account, sir: I know nothing of her.

Sir Bril. Nay, never talk slightingly of a lady, who possesses so many elegant accomplishments. She has spirit, sense, wit, and beauty.

Sir Bash. Spirit, sense, wit, and beauty! she has them all sure enough.—Sir, I am no sworn appraiser, to take an inventory of her effects.—[*Aside.*] Hey, Lovemore!

Looks at him, and laughs.

Love. [*To* SIR BASHFUL.] Vastly well.

Sir Bril. Is her ladyship visible this morning?

Sir Bash. Whether she is visible, or not, is no business of mine; but I know she is unintelligible this morning, and incomprehensible this morning. She has the vapours; but your conversation, I suppose, will brighten her up for the rest of the day.

Sir Bril. Why, as it happens, I have the rarest piece of news to communicate to her! Lovemore, you know sir Amorous la Fool?

Love. He that was sheriff the other day? Came up with an address, and got himself knighted?

Sir Bril. The same. He declared he would live with his friends upon the same familiar footing as before, and his new dignities should make no alteration.

Sir Bash. I have seen the knight. What of him?

Sir Bril. Poor devil! he is in such a scrape!

Sir Bash. What's the matter? Bubbled at play, I suppose?

Sir Bril. Worse, much worse.

Love. He has been blackballed at one of the clubs?

Sir Bash. Or run through the body in a duel?

Sir Bril. Why, that's a scrape indeed: but it is not that.

Sir Bash. What then?

Sir Bril. So unfortunate a discovery; he is fallen in love—I cannot help laughing at him.

Love. Po! fallen in love with some coquette, who plays off her airs, and makes a jest of him.

Sir Bash. A young actress, may be, or an opera singer?

Sir Bril. No; you will never guess. Sir Bashful—like a silly devil, he is fallen in love with his own wife.

Sir Bash. Fallen in love with his own wife! [*Stares at him.*

Sir Bril. Yes; he has made up all quarrels; his jealousy is at an end; and he is to be upon his good behaviour for the rest of his life.—Could you expect this, Lovemore?

Love. No, sir; neither I, nor my friend, sir Bashful, expected this.

Sir Bash. It is a stroke of surprise to me. [*Looking uneasy.*

Sir Bril. I heard it at my lady Betty Scandal's; and we had such a laugh! the whole company were in astonishment: whist stood still, quadrille laid down the cards, and brag was in suspense. Poor sir Amorous! it is very ridiculous; is not it, sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Very ridiculous, indeed.—[*Aside.*] My own case, exactly, and my friend Lovemore's, too.

Sir Bril. The man is lost, undone, ruined, dead, and buried.

Love. [*Laughing.*] He will never be able to shew his face after this discovery.

Sir Bril. Oh, never, 'tis all over with him. Sir Bashful, this does not divert you; you don't enjoy it.

Sir Bash. Who, I?—I—I—nothing can be more pleasant, and—I—laugh as heartily as I possibly can. [*Forcing a laugh.*

Sir Bril. Lovemore, you remember Sir Amorous used to strut, and talk big, and truly he did not care a pinch of snuff for his wife, not he! pretended to be as much at ease as sir Bashful about his lady, and as much his own master as you yourself, or any man of pleasure about town.

Love. I remember him: But as to sir Bashful and myself, we know the world; we understand life.

Sir Bash. So we do; the world will never have such a story of us. Will they, Lovemore?

Love. Oh! we are free; we are out of the scrape.

Sir Bril. Sir Amorous la Fool will be a proverb. Adieu, for him, the side-box whisper, the soft assignation, and all the joys of freedom! He is retired with his Penelope to love one another in the country; and next winter they will come to town to hate one another.

Sir Bash. Do you think it will end so?

Sir Bril. No doubt of it. That is always the denouement of modern matrimony. But I have not told you the worst of his case. Our friend, sir Charles Wildfire, you know, was writing a comedy; and what do you think he has done? He has drawn the character of sir Amorous, and made him the hero of the play.

Sir Bash. What! put him into a comedy?

Sir Bril. Even so. It is called, 'The Amorous Husband; or, The Man in Love with his own wife.' Oh! oh! oh! oh!

Love. We must send in time for places.

[*Laughs with* SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Bash. Lovemore carries it with an air. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Yes, we must secure places. Sir Bashful, you shall be of the party.

Sir Bash. The party will be very agreeable. I shall enjoy the joke prodigiously! Ha! ha! [*Forces a laugh.*

Love. Yes, sir Bashful, we shall relish the humour. [*Looks at him, and laughs.*

Sir Bril. The play will have a run: the people of fashion will crowd after such a character.—I must drive to a million of places, and put it about; but first, with your leave, sir Bashful, I will take the liberty to give a hint of the affair to your lady. It will appear so ridiculous to her.

Sir Bash. Do you think it will?

Sir Bril. Without doubt: she has never met with any thing like it: has she, Lovemore?

Love. I fancy not: Sir Bashful, you take care of that.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes: I shall never be the town-talk.—Hey, Lovemore!

Sir Bril. Well, I'll step and pay my respects to my lady Constant. Poor sir Amorous! he will have his horns added to his coat of arms in a little time. Ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. There, you see how it is. I shall get lampooned, be-rhymed, and niched into a comedy.

Love. Po! never be frightened at this. Nobody knows of your weakness but myself; and I can't betray your secret for my own sake.

Sir Bash. Very true.

Love. This discovery shews the necessity of concealing our loves. We must act with caution. Give my lady no reason to suspect that you have the least kindness for her.

Sir Bash. Not for the world.

Love. Keep to that.

Sir Bash. I have done her a thousand kindnesses, but all by stealth; all in a sly way.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. Oh! a multitude. I'll tell you. She has been plaguing me a long time for an addition to her jewels. She wants a diamond cross, and a better pair of diamond buckles. Madam, says I, I will have no such trumpery; but then goes I, and bespeaks them of the first jeweller in town—all under the rose. The buckles are finished: worth five hundred! She will have them this very day, without knowing from what quarter they come—I can't but laugh at the contri-

vance—the man that brings them will run away directly, without saying a word.

[*Laughs heartily.*

Love. Sly, sly———You know what you are about.

Sir Bash. Ay, let me alone——[*Laughs with* LOVEMORE.] And then, to cover the design still more, when I see her wear her baubles, I can take occasion to be as jealous as bedlam.

Love. So you can: ha! ha!—[*Aside.*] I wish he may never be jealous of me in good earnest.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. [*Looks at him, and laughs.*] I am safe, I think?

Love. [*Laughing with him.*] Perfectly safe—[*Aside.*] if it was not for his own folly,

Sir Bash. But I was telling you, Mr Lovemore:—we can be of essential use to each other.

Love. As how, pray?

Sir Bash. Why, my lady is often in want of money. It would be ridiculous in me to supply her. Now, if you will take the money from me, and pretend to lend it to her, out of friendship, you know——

Love. Nothing can be better—[*Aside.*] Here is a fellow pimping for his own horns.——I shall be glad to serve you.

Sir Bash. I am for ever obliged to you—here, here; take it now—here it is in bank-notes——one, two, three; there is three hundred—give her that, and tell her you have more at her service to-morrow, or next day, if her occasions require it.

Love. My good friend, to oblige you. [*Takes the money.*] This is the rarest adventure!

Sir Bash. I'll do any thing for you in return.

Love. I shall have occasion for your friendship——that is, to forgive me, if you find me out.

[*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Lose no time; step to her now——hold, hold; sir Brilliant is with her.

Love. I can dismiss him. Rely upon my friendship: I will make her ladyship easy for you.

Sir Bash. It will be kind of you.

Love. It shall be her own fault if I don't.

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you——well, is not this the rarest project?

Love. It is the newest way——of satisfying a man's wife!

Sir Bash. Ay! let this head of mine alone.

Love. [*Aside.*] Not, if I can help it. Hush!—I hear sir Brilliant; he is coming down stairs. I'll take this opportunity, and step to her ladyship now.

Sir Bash. Do so, do so.

Love. I am gone. [*Aside.*] Who can blame me now, if I cuckold this fellow? [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. Prosper you, prosper you, Mr Lovemore. Make me thankful! he is a true friend. I don't know what I should do without him.

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, how have you managed this?

Sir Bash. I have no art, no management. What's the matter?

Sir Bril. I don't know what you have done, but your lady laughs till she is ready to expire at what I have been telling her.

Sir Bash. And she thinks sir Amorous la Fool an object of ridicule?

Sir Bril. She does not give credit to a single syllable of the story. A man that loves his wife would be a Phœnix indeed! Such a thing might exist formerly, but, in this polished age, is no where to be found. That's her opinion of the matter.

Sir Bash. [*Laughs.*] A whimsical notion of hers! and so she thinks you may go about with a lanthorn to find a man that sets any value upon his wife?

Sir Bril. You have managed to convince her of it. How the devil do you contrive to govern so fine a woman? I know several, without her pretensions, who have long ago thrown off all restraint. You keep up your dignity.

Sir Bash. Yes, I know what I am about.

Sir Bril. You!—you are quite in the fashion.—Apropos; I fancy I shall want you to afford me your assistance. You know my lady Charlotte Modelove? She has a taste for the theatre: at Bell-Grove Place she has an elegant stage, where her select friends amuse themselves now and then with a representation of certain comic pieces. We shall there act the new comedy; but we apprehend some difficulty in the arrangement of the several characters. Now, you shall act sir Amorous, and——

Sir Bash. I act, sir!—I know nothing of the character.

Sir Bril. Po! say nothing of that. In time you may reach the ridiculous absurdity of it, and play it as well as another.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Confusion! he does not suspect, I hope—divert yourselves, sir, as you may; but not at my expence I promise you.

Sir Bril. Never be so abrupt. Who knows but lady Constant may be the happy wife, the *Cara Sposa* of the piece! and then, you in love with her, and she laughing at you for it, will give a zest to the humour, which every body will relish in the most exquisite degree.

Sir Bash. Po! this is too much. You are very pleasant, but you won't easily get me to play the fool.

Sir Bril. Well, consider of it. I shall be delighted to see my friend sir Bashful tied to his wife's apronstring, and, with a languishing look, melting away in admiration of her charms. Oh, ho, ho, ho!—adieu; *a l'honneur*; good morning, sir Bashful. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. I don't know what to make of all this. But there is no danger. As long as no body knows it, I may venture to love my wife. There will be no harm, while the secret is kept close as night, concealed, in tenfold darkness, from the wits and scoffers of the age.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Well, well;—how? what have you done?

Love. As I could wish: she is infinitely obliged to me, and will never forget the civility.

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you. I am not suspected?

Love. She has not a distant idea of you in this business. She was rather delicate at first, and hesitated, and thought it an indecorum to accept of money even from a friend. But that objection soon vanished. I told her, it is but too visible that she is unfortunately yoked with a husband, whose humour will never be softened down to the least compliance with her inclinations.

Sir Bash. That was well said, and had a good effect, I hope.

Love. I hope so, too.

Sir Bash. It helps to carry on the plot, you know.

Love. Admirably; it puts things in the train I wish.

Sir Bash. And so, to cover the design, you gave me the worst of characters?

Love. I painted you in terrible colours.

Sir Bash. Do so always, and she will never suspect me of being privy to any civility you may shew her.

Love. I would not have you know any thing of my civility to her for the world. [*Aside.*] I have succeeded thus far. I talked a few musty sentences, such as the person who receives a civility confers the obligation, with more jargon to that purpose; and so, with some reluctance she complied at last, and things are now upon the footing I would have them.—Death and fury! there comes my wife.

Sir Bash. Ay, and here comes my wife.

Love. What the devil brings her hither?

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Now, now; now let me see how he will carry it before Mrs Lovemore.—— Walk in, madam! walk in, Mrs Lovemore.

Enter MRS LOVEMORE, *and* LADY CONSTANT, *at opposite doors.*

Lady Con. Mrs Lovemore, to see you abroad is a novelty indeed.

Mrs Love. As great, perhaps, as that of finding your ladyship at home. Mr Lovemore, I did not expect to have the pleasure of meeting you.

Love. Then we are both agreeably surprised.

Sir Bash. Now, mind how he behaves. [*Aside.*

Mrs Love. I thought you were gone to your city banker.

Love. And you find that you are mistaken. I have deferred it till the evening—[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath! to be teased in this manner.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] No, no; he won't drop the mask. [*Looks at* LADY CONSTANT.] She has touched the cash; I can see the bank-notes sparkling in her eyes.

Mrs Love. If you don't go into the city till the evening, may I hope for your company at dinner, Mr Lovemore?

Love. The question is entertaining; but, as it was settled this morning, I think it has lost the graces of novelty.

Sir Bash. He won't let her have the least suspicion of his regard. [*Aside.*

Lady Con. I dare say Mr Lovemore will dine at home, if it conduces to your happiness, madam; and sir Bashful, I take it, will dine at home, for the contrary reason.

Sir Bash. Madam, I will dine at home, or I will dine abroad, for what reason I please; and it is my pleasure to give no reason for either.—Lovemore! [*Looks at him, and smiles.*

Love [*Aside to* SIR BASHFUL.] Bravo!—What a blockhead it is!

Mrs Love. As you have your chariot at the door, Mr Lovemore, if you have no objection, I will send away my chair, and you may do me the honour of a place in your carriage.

Love. The honour will be very great to me; but——so many places to call at.——If I had known this sooner——You had better keep your chair.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Cunning! cunning! he would not be seen in his chariot with her for the world. He has more discretion than I have.

Lady Con. Mrs Lovemore, since you have, at last, ventured to come abroad, I hope you will think it a change for the better. You are too domestic. I shall expect now to see you often: and apropos, I am to have a route to-morrow evening; if you will do me the honour of your company——

Sir Bash. A route to-morrow evening! you have a route every evening, I think. Learn of Mrs Lovemore; imitate her example, and don't let me have your hurricane months all the year round in my house.—Hip! [*Aside.*] Lovemore, how do you like me?

Love. [*Aside to* SIR BASHFUL.] You improve upon it every time. But I am loitering here, as if I had nothing to do.—My lady Constant, I have the honour to wish your ladyship a good morning. Sir Bashful, yours—madam.

[*Bows gravely to* MRS LOVEMORE, *hums a tune, and exit.*

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] He knows how to play the game. I'll try what I can do. Mrs Lovemore, I have the honour to wish you a good morning. Madam—

[*Bows gravely to* LADY CONSTANT, *hums a tune, and exit.*

Mrs Love. Two such husbands!

Lady Con. As to my swain, I grant you: Mr

Lovemore is, at least, well-bred; he has an understanding, and may, in time, reflect. Sir Bashful never qualifies himself with the smallest tincture of civility.

Mrs Love. If civility can qualify the draught, I must allow Mr Lovemore to have a skilful hand. But there is no end to his projects.—— Every day opens a new scene. Another of his intrigues is come to light. I came to consult with your ladyship. I know you are acquainted with the widow Bellmour.

Lady Con. The widow Bellmour! I know her perfectly well.

Mrs Love. Not so well, perhaps, as you may imagine. She has thrown out the lure for my wild gallant, and in order to deceive me——

Lady Con. My dear, you must be mistaken.—Who tells you this?

Mrs Love. Oh, I can trust to my intelligence. Sir Brilliant Fashion, by way of blind to me, has been this morning drawing so amiable a picture of the lady——

Lady Con. Sir Brilliant's authority is not always the best; but, in this point, you may trust him.

Mrs Love. But when you have heard all the circumstances——

Lady Con. Depend upon it, you are wrong.—I know the widow Bellmour. Her turn of character, and way of thinking——

Mrs Love. Excuse me, madam. You decide without hearing me.

Lady Con. All scandal, take my word for it. However, let me hear your story. We'll adjourn to my dressing-room, if you will; and I promise to confute all you can say. I would have you know the widow Bellmour: you will be in love with her. My dear madam, have not you a tinge of jealousy? Beware of that malady. If you see things through that medium, I shall give you up.

That jaundice of the mind, whose colours strike
On friend and foe, and paint them all alike.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An apartment at the* WIDOW BELLMOUR'S: *several chairs, a toilette, a book-case, and a harpsichord, disposed up and down.*

MIGNIONET. *Putting things in order.*

Mig. I DON'T well know what to make of this same lord Etheridge. He is coming here again to-day, I suppose: all this neatness, and all this care, must be for him. Well, it does not signify: —[*Arranging the chairs.*]—there is a pleasure in obeying Madam Bellmour. She is a sweet lady, that's the truth of it. 'Twere a pity if any of these men, with their deceitful arts, should draw her into a snare. But she knows them all. They must rise early who can outwit her.—[*Settling the toilette.*]

Enter MRS BELLMOUR, *reading.*

'Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
'Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day!
'She, who can own a sister's charms, and hear
'Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear;
'That never answers till a husband cools,
'And, if she rules him, never shews she rules.'
Sensible, elegant Pope!
'Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
'Yet has her humour most, when she obeys.'
[*Seems to read on.*

Mig. Lord love my mistress! Always so charming, so gay, and so happy!

Mrs Bell. These exquisite characters of women! They are a sort of painter's gallery, where one sees the portraits of all one's acquaintance, and sometimes we see our own features, too.—Mignionet, put this book in its place.

Mig. Yes, madam; and there's your toilette looks as elegant as hands can make it.

Mrs Bell. Does it? I think it does. You have some taste. Apropos, where is my new song? Oh! here it is! I must make myself mistress of it.—[*Plays upon the harpsichord, and sings a little.*]—I believe I have conquered it.—[*Rises, and goes to her toilette.*]—This hair is always tormenting me, always in disorder: this lock must be for ever gadding out of its place. I must, and will, subdue it. Do you know, Mignionet, that this is a pretty song? It was writ by my lord Etheridge. My lord has a turn—[*Sings a little.*] —I must be perfect before he comes.—[*Hums the tune.*]—Do you know that I think my lord is one of those men who may be endured?

Mig. Yes, madam; I know you think so.

Mrs Bell. Do you?

Mig. And if I have any skill, madam, you are not without a little partiality for his lordship.

Mrs Bell. Really? Then you think I like him, perhaps? Do you think I like him? I don't well know how that is. Like him? No, not absolutely: it is not decided: and yet I don't know, if I had a mind to humour myself, and to give way a little to inclination, there is something here in my heart that would be busy, I believe. The man has a softness of manner, a turn of wit, and does not want sentiment. Can I call it sentiment? Yes; I think I may. He has sentiment; and then he knows the manners, the usage of the world, and he points out the ridicule of things with so much humour!—

Mig. You'll be caught, madam, I see that. To be sure, my lord has a quality air, and can make himself agreeable. But what of that?

You know but very little of him. Is a man's character known in three or four weeks time? [MRS BELLMOUR *hums a tune.*]—Do, my dear madam, mind what I say: I am at times very considerate. I make my remarks, and I see very plainly—Lord, madam, what am I doing? I am talking to you for your own good, and you are all in the air, and no more mind me—no, no more than if I was nothing at all.

Mrs Bell. [*Continues humming a tune.*]—You talk wonderfully well upon the subject; but, as I know how the cards lie, and can play the best of the game; and as I have a song to amuse me, one is inclined to give musical nonsense the preference.

Mig. I assure you, madam, I am not one of those servants, that bargain for their mistress's inclinations: but you are going to take a leap in the dark. What does my lord Etheridge mean, with his chair always brought into the hall, and the curtains close about his ears? Why does not he come like himself, and not care who sees him? There's some mystery at the bottom, I'll be sworn there is; and so you'll find at last. Dear heart, madam, if you are determined not to listen, what signifies my living with you? At this rate, I am of no service to you.

Mrs Bell. There; I have conquered my song. —[*Runs to her glass.*]—How do I look to-day? The eyes do well enough, I think. And so, Mignionet, you imagine I shall play the fool, and marry my lord Etheridge?

Mig. You have it through the very heart of you: I see that.

Mrs Bell. Do you? I don't know what to say to it. Poor sir Brilliant Fashion! If I prefer his rival, what will become of him? I won't think about it.

Enter POMPEY.

Mrs Bell. What's the matter, Pompey?

Pom. A lady in a chair desires to know if your ladyship is at home.

Mrs Bell. Has the lady no name?

Pom. Yes; I fancy she has, madam; but she did not tell it.

Mrs Bell. How awkward! Well, shew the lady up stairs.

Mig. Had not you better receive her in the drawing-room, madam? I have not half done my business here?

Mrs Bell. Oh! You have done very well.—There will be less formality here. I dare say it is some intimate acquaintance, though that foolish boy does not recollect her name. Here she comes. I don't know her.

Enter MRS LOVEMORE.

Mrs Love. [*Disconcerted.*]—I beg pardon for this intrusion.

Mrs Bell. Pray walk in, madam. Mignionet, reach a chair.—[MRS LOVEMORE *crosses the stage, and they salute each other with an air of distant civility.*]

Mrs Love. I am afraid this visit from one who has not the honour of knowing you——

Mrs Bell. Oh, make no apology, madam.—Mignionet, you may withdraw.

[*Exit* MIGNIONET.

Mrs Love. It may appear extraordinary, that a stranger thus intrudes upon you; but a particular circumstance determined me to take this liberty. I hope you will excuse the freedom?

Mrs Bell. You do me honour, madam: pray, no excuses. A particular circumstance, you say?

Mrs Love. I shall appear, perhaps, very ridiculous, and, indeed, I am afraid I have done the most absurd thing! but a lady of your acquaintance——You know my lady Constant, madam?

Mrs Bell. Extremely well.

Mrs Love. She has given you such an amiable character for benevolence, and a certain elegant way of thinking, entirely your own, that I flatter myself, if it is in your power, you will be generous enough to afford me your assistance.

Mrs Bell. Lady Constant is very obliging.—Make a trial of me, madam, and if I can be of any use——

Mrs Love. I fear I shall ask you a strange question:—are you acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Lovemore?

Mrs Bell. Lovemore? No such name on my list. Lovemore? No: I recollect no such person. The circle of my acquaintance is small: I am almost a stranger in town.

Mrs Love. That makes an end, madam. I beg your pardon. I have given you an unnecessary trouble. [*Going.*

Mrs Bell. [*Aside.*]—Mighty odd this! Her manner is interesting. You have given me no trouble; but my curiosity is excited.—[*Takes her by the hand.*]—I beg you will keep your chair.—Pray be seated. What can this mean?—[*Aside.*]—Will you be so good as to inform me who the gentleman is?

Mrs Love. The story will be uninteresting to you, and, to me, it is painful. My grievances—[*Puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*]

Mrs Bell. [*Aside.*]—Her grief affects me.—[*Looks at her till she has recovered herself.*]—I would not importune too much——

Mrs Love. You have such an air of frankness and generosity, that I will open myself without reserve. I have the tenderest regard for Mr Lovemore: I have been married to him these two years. I admired his understanding, his sensibility, and his spirit. My heart was his; I loved him with unbounded passion. I thought the flame was mutual, and you may believe I was happy. But, of late, there is such a revolution in his temper! I know not what to make of it. I am doomed to be unhappy.

Mrs Bell. Perhaps not: you may still have much in your power.

Mrs Love. My power is at an end. Instead of the looks of affection, and the expressions of tenderness, with which he used to meet me, it is nothing now but cold, averted, superficial civility; while abroad, he runs on in a wild career of pleasure, and, to my deep affliction, has attached himself entirely to another object.

Mrs Bell. And if I had known Mr Lovemore, do you imagine that my advice or persuasion would avail you any thing?

Mrs Love. I had such a fancy. [*Aside.*] What can I think of her!

Mrs Bell. You are much mistaken. In these cases, friends may interpose; but what can they do? They recommend a wife to the good will, the honour, and generosity of her husband. But when a woman, who should be esteemed and loved, is recommended as an object of compassion, she is humbled indeed: it is all over with her. A wife should recommend herself by the graces of her person, and the variety of her talents. Men will prove false; and, if there is nothing in your complaint, but mere gallantry on his side, I protest, I do not see that your case is so very bad.

Mrs Love. Can it be worse, ma'am?

Mrs Bell. A great deal. If his affections, instead of being alienated, had been extinguished, what would be the consequence?—A downright, sullen, habitual insensibility. From that lethargy of affection, a man is not easily recalled. In all Love's bill of mortality, there is not a more fatal disorder. But this is not the case with Mr Lovemore: by your account, he still has sentiment; and, where there is sentiment, there is room to hope for an alteration. But where the heart has lost its feeling, you have the pain of finding yourself neglected; and for what? The man has grown stupid, and, to the warm beams of wit and beauty, as impenetrable as an ice-house.

Mrs Love. That is not my complaint. I have to do with one, who is too susceptible of impressions from every beautiful object that comes in his way.

Mrs Bell. Why, so much the better. A new idea strikes his fancy. He is inconstant; but, after wavering and fluttering, he may settle at last.

Mrs Love. How light she makes of it! she apologizes for him! [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. And, perhaps, the fault is on the woman's side—

Mrs Love. The virtue of my conduct, madam——

Mrs Bell. Oh! I would have laid my life you would be at that work. But virtue is not the question at present. I suppose virtue; that is always understood. The fault I mean, is the want of due attention to the art of pleasing. It is there that most women fail. In these times, virtue may be its own reward. Virtue alone cannot please the taste of the age. It is *la belle nature*, virtue embellished by the advantages of art, that men expect now-a-days. That is the whole affair: I would not make myself uneasy, ma'am.

Mrs Love. Not uneasy, when his indifference does not diminish my regard for him! Not uneasy, when the man I dote upon, no longer fixes his happiness at home!

Mrs Bell. Give me leave to speak my mind freely. I have observed, when the fiend jealousy is roused, that women lay out a wonderful deal of anxiety and vexation to no account; when, perhaps, if the truth were known, they should be angry with themselves instead of their husbands.

Mrs Love. Angry with myself, madam! Calumny can lay nothing to my charge.

Mrs Bell. There again, now! that is the folly of us all.

Mrs Love. And after being married so long, and behaving all the time with such an equality!

Mrs Bell. Ay, that equality is the rock so many split upon. The men will change. Excuse my freedom. They are so immersed in luxury, that they must have eternal variety in their happiness.

Mrs Love. She justifies him! [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. Your case may not be desperate: I would venture to lay a pot of coffee, that the person, who now rivals you in your husband's affections, does it without your good qualities, and even without your beauty, by the mere force of agreeable talents, and some skill in the art of pleasing.

Mrs Love. I am afraid that compliment——

Mrs Bell. If I judge right, you are entitled to it. Let me ask you: Do you know this formidable rival?

Mrs Love. There, I own, I am puzzled.

Mrs Bell. What sort of woman is she?

Mrs Love. Formidable indeed! She has been described to me as one of charming and rare accomplishments.

Mrs Bell. Never throw up the cards for all that. Take my advice, ma'am. You seem to have qualities that may dispute your husband's heart with any body; but the exertion of those amiable qualities, I fear, may be suppressed. Excuse my frankness. You should counteract your rival by the very arts which she employs against you. I know a lady now in your very situation: and what does she do? She consumes herself with unceasing jealousy; whereas, if she would exert but half the pains she uses in teasing herself, to vie with the person who has won her husband from her; to vie with her, I say, in the art of pleasing—for there it is a woman's pride should be piqued—Would she do that, take my word for it, victory would declare in her favour. You are not without attractions; give them their energy, and you conquer.

Mrs Love. Do you think so, ma'am?

Mrs Bell. Think so! I am sure of it. You

must exert yourself. It is the wife's business to bait the hook for her husband with variety. Virtue alone, by her own native charms, would do, if the men were perfect. But it is otherwise; and, since vice can assume allurements, why should not truth and innocence have additional ornaments also?

Mrs Love. I find sir Brilliant told me truth. [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. Give me leave, ma'am: I have been married, and am a little in the secret. To win a heart is easy; to keep it is the difficulty. After the fatal words 'for better, for worse,' women relax into indolence, and, while they are guilty of no infidelity, they think every thing safe. But they are mistaken: a great deal is wanting; an address, a vivacity, a desire to please; the agreeable contrast; the sense that pleases, the folly that charms—A favourite poet, Prior, has expressed it with delicacy.

'Above the fixed and settled rules
'Of vice and virtue in the schools,
'The better part should set before 'em
'A grace, a manner, a decorum.'

Mrs Love. But when the natural temper——

Mrs Bell. Oh! the natural temper must be forced. Home must be made a place of pleasure to the husband. How is that to be done? That equality, which you talk of, is a sameness that palls and wearies. A wife should throw infinite variety into her manner. She should, as it were, multiply herself, and be, as it were, sundry different women, on different occasions. The tender, the affectionate, the witty, the silent, all in their turns, all shifting the scene, and she succeeding to herself as quick as lightning. And this I take to be the whole mystery; the way to keep a man. But I beg your pardon. I go on too fast: you will think me the giddiest creature.

Mrs Love. Quite the reverse, ma'am; you are very obliging!

Mrs Bell. I have tired myself and you, too.—But pray, may I now inquire, who was so kind as to intimate that I am acquainted with Mr Lovemore?

Mrs Love. It was a mere mistake. I have given you a great deal of trouble. You will excuse my frankness: I had heard that his visits were frequent here.

Mrs Bell. His visits frequent here! My lady Constant could not tell you so?

Mrs Love. She told me quite the contrary. She knows your amiable qualities, and does you justice.

Mrs Bell. The accident is lucky! it has procured me the honour of your acquaintance. And I suppose you imagined that I had robbed you of Mr Lovemore's heart?—Scandal will be buzzing about. I can laugh at every thing of that sort. [*A rap at the door.*] Oh! Heavens! some troublesome visit. [*Rings a bell.*

Enter MIGNIONET.

Mrs Bell. I am not at home. Go, and give an answer.

Mig. It is lord Etheridge, ma'am: he is coming up stairs. The servants did not know you had changed your mind.

Mrs Bell. Was ever any thing so cross? Tell his lordship I have company; I am busy; I am not well; any thing; don't let him come in. Make haste, dispatch: I won't see him.

Mrs Love. I beg I may not hinder you: I shall take my leave.

Mrs Bell. By no means. Our conversation grows interesting. I positively will not see my lord.

Mrs Love. I can't agree to that. You must see his lordship. I can step into another room.

Mrs Bell. Will you be so good? You will find something to amuse you in that cabinet. [*Points to a door in the back scene.*] We must talk farther. My lord shan't stay long.

Mrs Love. Nay, but if you stand upon ceremony—

Mrs Bell. Very well: I'll contrive it. This is a lover of mine. A lover and a husband are the same thing. Perhaps it will divert you to hear how I manage him. I hear him on the stairs. Make haste: Mignionet, shew the way.

[MRS LOVE. *and* MIG. *go out at the back scene.*

Mrs Bell. Let me see how I look to receive him. [*Runs to her glass.*

Enter LOVEMORE, *with a star and garter, as* LORD ETHERIDGE.

Love. A heavenly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears,
Repairs her smiles——

Mrs Bell. Repairs her smiles, my lord! You are satirical this morning. Pray, my lord, are my features out of repair, like an old house in the country, that wants a tenant?

Love. Nay, now, you wrest my words from their visible intention. You can't suppose that I impute to such perfect beauty the least want of repair, whatever may be the case, ma'am, with regard to the want of a tenant?

Mrs Bell. Oh! then your opinion is, that I want a tenant? And perhaps you think I am going to put up a bill to signify to all passers-by, that here is a mansion to be let, inquire of the widow Bellmour? I like your notion; I don't think it would be a bad scheme. Shall I try it?

Love. A palace needs no such invitation. Its natural beauty attracts admiring eyes. But who can bid up to the price? The person who is able to do it——

Mrs Bell. Will be happy: I know that is what you are going to say. But he must do homage for it: and then I will let it to none but a single gentleman. Do you know any body whom these conditions will suit?

Love. Those conditions, ma'am——[*Aside.*] What the devil does she mean? I am not detected, I hope?—To be sure, ma'am, those conditions—And—none but single gentlemen will presume to———

Mrs Bell. And then it must be a lease for life. But that will never do; nobody will be troubled with it. I shall never get it off my hands; do you think I shall, my lord?

Love. There must be very little taste left, if you have not a number of bidders. You know the ambition of my heart; you know I am devoted to you, upon any terms, even though it were to be bought with life.

Mrs Bell. Heavens! what a dying swain you are! And does your lordship mean to be guilty of matrimony? Lord! what a question have I asked! To be sure, I am the giddiest creature. My lord, don't you think me a strange madcap?

Love. A vein of wit, like yours, thus springs at once from vivacity and sentiment, serves to exalt your beauty, and give animation to every charm.

Mrs Bel. Upon my word, you have said it finely! But you are in the right, my lord. Your pensive melancholy beauty is the most insipid thing in nature. And yet, we often see features without a mind; and the owner of them sits in the room with you, like a mere vegetable, for an hour together, till, at last, she is incited to the violent exertion of, 'Yes, sir'——'I fancy not, 'ma'am,' and then a matter of fact conversation! 'Miss Beverly is going to be married to Captain 'Shoulder-knot—My lord Mortgage has had an- 'other tumble at hazard—Sir Harry Wilding has 'lost his election——They say short aprons are 'coming into fashion.'

Love. Oh! a matter of fact conversation is insupportable.

Mrs Bel. But you meet with nothing else. All in great spirits about nothing, and not an idea among them. Go to Ranelagh, or to what public place you will, it is just the same. A lady comes up to you;—'How charmingly you look! '—But, my dear m'em, did you hear what hap- 'pened to us the other night? We were going 'home from the opera—you know my aunt Roly- 'Poly? it was her coach. There was she and 'lady Betty Fidget—What a sweet blonde! How 'do you do, my dear? [*Curtseying as to another 'going by.*] My lady Betty is quite recovered; 'we were all frightened about her; but doctor 'Snake-root was called in; no, not doctor Snake- 'root, Doctor Bolus; and so he altered the 'course of the medicines, and so my lady Betty 'is purely now.—Well, there was she, and my 'aunt, and sir George Bragwell—a pretty man 'sir George!—finest teeth in the world!—Your 'ladyship's most obedient—[*Curtseying.*] We ex- 'pected you last night, but you did not come.— 'He, he, he!—and so there was sir George and 'the rest of us; and so, turning the corner of 'Bond-street, the brute of a coachman—I hum- 'bly thank your grace [*Curtsies.*]——the brute 'of a coachman overturned us, and so my aunt 'Roly-Poly was frightened out of her wits; and 'lady Betty has had her nerves again. Only 'think! such accidents!—I am glad to see you 'look so well; *a l' honneur;*' he, he, he!

Love. Ho, ho! you paint to the life. I see her moving before me in all her airs.

Mrs Bel. With this conversation their whole stock is exhausted, and away they run to cards. Quadrille has murdered wit!

Love. Ay, and beauty, too. Cards are the worst enemies to a complexion: the small pox is not so bad. The passions throw themselves into every feature: I have seen the countenance of an angel changed, in a moment, to absolute deformity: the little loves and graces that sparkled in the eye, bloomed in the cheek, and smiled about the mouth, all wing their flight, and leave the face, which they before adorned, a prey to grief, to anger, malice, and fury, and the whole train of fretful passions.

Mrs Bel. And the language of the passions is sometimes heard upon those occasions.

Love. Very true, madam; and if, by chance, they do bridle and hold in a little, the struggle they undergo is the most ridiculous sight in nature. I have seen a huge oath quivering on the pale lip of a reigning toast for half an hour together, and an uplifted eye accusing the gods for the loss of an odd trick. And then, at last, the whole room in a babel of sounds. 'My lord, you 'flung away the game.—Sir George, why did not 'you rough the spade?—Captain Hazard, why 'did not you lead through the honours?—Madam, 'it was not the play—Pardon me, sir—but madam '—but sir—I would not play with you for straws; 'don't you know what Hoyle says?——If A and 'B are partners against C and D, and the game 'nine all, A and B have won three tricks, and 'C and D four tricks: C leads his suit, D puts 'up the king, then returns the suit; A passes, 'C puts up the queen, and B trumps it;' and so A and B, and C and D are bandied about; they attack, they defend, and all is jargon and confusion, wrangling, noise, and nonsense; and high life, and polite conversation.———Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs Bel. Ha! ha! the pencil of Hogarth could not do it better. And yet one is dragged to these places. One must play sometimes. We must let our friends pick our pockets now and then, or they drop our acquaintance. Do you ever play, my lord?

Love. Play, ma'am?——[*Aside.*] What does she mean? I must play the hypocrite to the end of the chapter.——Play?—Now and then, as you say, one must, to oblige, and from necessity;

but from taste, or inclination, no; I never touch a card.

Mrs Bel. Oh! very true; I forgot. You dedicate your time to the Muses; a downright rhyming peer. Do you know, my lord, that I am charmed with your song?

Love. Are you?

Mrs Bel. Absolutely; and I really think you would make an admirable Vauxhall poet.

Love. Nay, now you flatter me.

Mrs Bel. No, as I live; it is very pretty. And do you know that I can sing it already? Come, you shall hear how I murder it. I have no voice to-day, but you shall hear me. [*Sings.*

Attend, all ye fair, and I'll tell you the art,
To bind every fancy with ease in your chains;
To hold in soft fetters the conjugal heart,
And banish from Hymen his doubts and his pains.

When Juno was decked with the cestus of Love,
At first she was handsome; she charming became:
With skill the soft passions it taught her to move,
To kindle at once, and to keep up the flame.

'Tis this gives the eyes all their magic and fire,
The voice-melting accents; impassions the kiss;
Confers the sweet smile, that awakens desire,
And plants round the fair each incentive to bliss.

Thence flows the gay chat, more than reason that charms;
The eloquent blush, that can beauty improve;
The fond sigh, the fond vow, the soft touch that alarms;
The tender disdain, the renewal of love.

Ye fair, take the cestus, and practise its power:
The mind unaccomplished, mere features are vain;
With wit, with good humour, enliven each hour,
And the loves, and the graces, shall walk in your train.

Love. My poetry is infinitely obliged to you. It grows into sense as you sing it. Your voice, like the cestus of Venus, bestows a grace upon every thing.

Mrs Bel. Oh! fulsome; I sing horridly. [*Goes to the glass.*] How do I look?—Don't tell me, my lord: you are studying a compliment, but I am resolved to mortify you; I won't hear it.—— Well! have you thought of any thing? Let it pass; 'tis too late now. Pray, my lord, how came you to choose so grave a subject as connubial happiness?

Love. Close and particular that question! [*Aside.*

Mrs Bel. Juno! Hymen! doubts and pains! one would almost swear that you have a wife at home who sat for the picture.

Love. Madam, the—[*Embarrassed.*] The compliment—you are only laughing at me—the subject, from every day's experience—[*Aside.*] Does she suspect me?—the subject is common—Bachelor's wives, you know—ha! ha!—And when you inspire the thought; when you are the bright original, it is no wonder that the copy—

Mrs Bel. Horrid! going to harp on the old string. Odious solicitations! I hate all proposals. I am not in the humour. You must release me now: your visit is rather long. I have indulged you a great while. And, besides, were I to listen to your vows, what would become of poor sir Brilliant Fashion?

Love. Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Mrs Bel. Do you know him?

Love. I know whom you mean. I have seen him; but that's all. He lives with a strange set, and does not move in my sphere. If he is a friend of yours, I have no more to say.

Mrs Bel. Is there any thing to say against him?

Love. Nay, I have no knowledge of the gentleman. They who know him best, don't rate him high. A sort of current coin that passes in this town. You will do well to beware of counterfeits.

Mrs Bel. But this is very alarming———

Enter MIGNIONET, *in a violent hurry.*

Mign. My dear madam, I am frighted out of my senses. The poor lady——Where are the hartshorn drops?

Love. The lady! what lady?

Mign. Never stand asking what lady. She has fainted away all on a sudden: she is now in strong hysterics; give me the drops.

Mrs Bel. I must run to her assistance. Adieu, my lord. I shall be at home in the evening. Mignionet, step this way. Your lordship will excuse me: I shall expect to see you. Come, Mignionet; make haste, make haste.

[*Exit with* MIGNIONET.

Love. I hope the lady has not overheard me? What a villain am I to carry on this scheme against so much beauty, innocence, and merit! And to wear this badge of honour for the darkest purposes! And, then, my friend, sir Brilliant, will it be fair to supplant him? Prithee, be quiet, my dear conscience! none of your meddling!—don't interrupt a gentleman in his pleasures.—Don't you know, my good friend, that love has no respect for persons, but soars above all laws of honour and of friendship? No reflection; have her I must, and that quickly, too, or she will discover all. Besides, this is my wife's fault: why does she not make home agreeable? I am willing to be happy; I could be constant to her, but she is not formed for happiness.——

What the devil is Madam Fortune about now? [*Sir* BRILLIANT *sings within.*] Sir Brilliant, by all that's infamous! Confusion! no place to hide me? no escape! The door is locked. Mignionet, Mignionet, open the door.

Mig. [*Within.*] You must not come in here.

Love. What shall I do? This star, and this ribbon will bring me to disgrace. Away with this tell-tale evidence! [*Takes off the ribbon.*]—Go, thou blushing devil, and hide thyself for ever. [*Puts it in his pocket.*

Enter SIR BRILLIANT, *singing.*

Sir Bril. Mrs Bellmour, I have such a story for you. How! Lovemore?

Love. Your slave, sir Brilliant; your slave. [*Hiding the star with his hat.*

Sir Bril. I did not think you had been acquainted here.

Love. You are right. I came in quest of you. I saw the lady. I was drawn hither by mere curiosity. We have had some conversation; and I made it subservient to your purposes. I have been giving a great character of you.

Sir Bril. You are always at the service of your friends. But what's the matter? what are you fumbling about? [*Pulls the hat.*

Love. 'Sdeath! have a care: don't touch me. [*Puts his handkerchief to his breast.*

Sir Bril. What the devil is the matter?

Love. Oh! keep off—[*Aside.*] Here's a business. Taken in the old way: let me pass——I have had a fling at lord Etheridge: he will be out of favour with the widow: I have done you that good. Racks and torments, my old complaint! [*Wanting to pass him.*

Sir Bril What complaint? You had better sit down.

Love. No, no; air, the air. I must have a surgeon. A stroke of a tennis-ball! My lord Rackett's unlucky left-hand. Let me pass.—There is something forming here. [*Passes him.*] To be caught is the devil. [*Aside.*] Don't mention my name. You will counteract all I have said. Oh! torture, torture! I will explain to you another time. Sir Brilliant, yours. I have served your interest—Oh! there is certainly something forming. [*Exit.*

Sir Bril. What does all this mean? So, so, Mrs Lovemore's suspicions are well-founded.—The widow has her private visits, I see. Yes, yes; there is something forming here.

Enter MRS BELLMOUR.

So; here she comes. The whole shall be explained. I hope, madam, that I don't interrupt you with any piquet-friend.

Mrs Bell. You are always a torment: what brings you hither?

Sir Bril. There are times, madam, when a visit——

Mrs Bel. Is unseasonable, and yours is so now. How can you tease me?

Sir Bril. I thought as much. There are some things that may require to be discussed between us.

Mrs Bel. Reserve them all for another time. I can't hear you now. You must leave me.—There is a lady taken ill in the next room.

Sir Bril. And here has been a gentleman taken ill in this room.

Mrs Bell. How troublesome! you must be gone. Do you dispute my will and pleasure? Fly this moment!

Sir Bril. But, madam—Nay, if you insist upon it—— [*Goes.*

Mrs Bell. But, sir! I will be absolute: you must leave me. [*Puts him out.*] There, and now I'll make sure of the door.

Enter MRS LOVEMORE, *leaning on* MIGNIONET.

Mign. This way, madam: here is more air in this room.

Mrs Bell. How do you find yourself? Pray, sit down.

Mrs Love. My spirits were too weak. I could not support it any longer; such a scene of perfidy!

Mrs Bell. You astonish me! what perfidy?

Mrs Love. Perfidy of the blackest dye; I told you that you were acquainted with my husband?

Mrs Bel. Acquainted with your husband! [*Angrily.*

Mrs Love. A moment's patience—Yes, madam, you are acquainted with him. The base man, who went hence but now——

Mrs Bell. Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Mrs Love. No; your lord Etheridge, as he calls himself——

Mrs Bell. Lord Etheridge? What of him, pray?

Mrs Love. False, dissembling man! he is my husband, madam: not lord Etheridge, but plain Mr Lovemore; my Mr Lovemore.

Mrs Bel. And has he been base enough to assume a title to ensnare me to my undoing?

Mign. [*Going.*] Well, for certain, I believe the devil's in me: I always thought him a sly one. [*Exit.*

Mrs Love. To see him carrying on this dark design—to see the man whom I have ever esteemed and loved—the man whom I must still love—esteem him, I fear, I never can—to see him before my face with that artful treachery! it was too much for sensibility like mine; I felt the shock too severely, and I sunk under it.

Mrs Bel. I am ready to sink this moment with amazement! I saw him, for the first time, at old Mrs Loveit's. She introduced him to me. The appointment was of her own making.

Mrs Love. You know Mrs Loveit's character, I suppose?

Mrs Bell. The practised veteran! Could I

suspect that a woman, in her style of life, would lend herself to a vile stratagem against my honour? That she would join in a conspiracy against her own sex? Mr Lovemore shall never enter these doors again——I am obliged to you, madam, for this visit; to me a providential incident. I am sorry for your share in it. The discovery secures my peace and happiness: to you it is a fatal conviction, a proof unanswerable against the person to whom you are joined for life.

Mrs Love. After this discovery, it cannot be for life. I am resolved not to pass another day under his roof.

Mrs Bell. Hold, hold! no sudden resolutions. Consider a little: passion is a bad adviser.—This may take a turn for your advantage.

Mrs Love. That can never be: I am lost beyond redemption.

Mrs Bell. Don't decide too rashly. Come, come, the man, who has certain qualities, is worth thinking about, before one throws the hideous thing away for ever. Mr Lovemore is a traitor; but is not he still amiable? And, besides, you have heard his sentiments. That song points at something. Perhaps, you are a little to blame. He did not write upon such a subject, without a cause to suggest it. We will talk over this matter coolly. You have saved me, and I must return the obligation. You shall stay dinner with me.

Mrs Love. Excuse me. Mr Lovemore may possibly go home. He shall hear of his guilt, while the sense of it pierces here, and wounds me to the quick.

Mrs Bell. Now, there you are wrong: take my advice first. I will lay such a plan as may ensure him yours for ever. Come, come, you must not leave me yet. [*Takes her hand.*] Answer me one question: don't you still think he has qualities that do, in some sort, apologize for his vices?

Mrs Love. I don't know what to think of it: I hope he has.

Mrs Bell. Very well, then. I have lost a lover; you may gain one. Your conduct upon this occasion may reform him; and let me tell you, that the man, who has it in his power to atone for his faults, should not be entirely despised. Let the wife exert herself; let her try her powers of pleasing, and, take my word for it,

The wild gallant no more abroad will roam,
But find his loved variety at home.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An apartment in* LOVEMORE'S *house.* MR *and* MRS LOVEMORE *at table after dinner: servants taking things out of the room.*

Love. [*Filling a glass.*] I wonder you are not tired of the same eternal topic. [*Sipping his wine.*

Mrs Love. If I make it an eternal topic, it is for your own good, Mr Lovemore.

Love. I know I have your good wishes, and you have mine. All our absent friends, Mrs Lovemore. [*Drinks.*

Mrs Love. If you would but wish well to yourself, sir, I should be happy.——But, in the way you go on, your health must be ruined; day is night, and night day; your substance squandered; your constitution destroyed; and your family quite neglected.

Love. Family neglected! You see I dined at home, and this is my reward for it.

Mrs Love. You dined at home, sir, because something abroad has disconcerted you. You went, I suppose, after I saw you at Lady Constant's, to your old haunt, your friend, Mrs Loveit——

Love. Mrs Loveit! ha! ha! I dropt her acquaintance long ago. No, my love, I drove into the city, and spent the rest of the morning upon business. I had long accounts to settle with old Discount, the banker.

Mrs Love. And that, to be sure, engrossed all your time. Business must be minded. Did you find him at home?

Love. It was by his own appointment. I went to his house directly after I parted from you. I have been no where else. Matters of account always fatigue me.

Mrs Love. I would not be too inquisitive, sir.

Love. Oh, no; you never are. I staid at the banker's the rest of the time; and I came straight from his house to have the pleasure of dining with you.

[*Fills a glass of wine.*

Mrs Love. Were there any sincerity in that declaration, I should be happy. A tavern life has hitherto been your delight. I wonder what delight you can find in such an eternal round of gaming, riot, and dissipation. Will you answer me one question?

Love. With great pleasure—[*Aside.*]—if it is not inconvenient.

Mrs Love. Lay your hand on your heart, and tell me——Have I deserved this usage?

Love. My humble service to you, my love. [*Drinks.*

Mrs Love. I am sure I have never been deficient in any one point of the duty I owe you. You won my heart, and I gave it freely.

Love. [*going to sleep.*] It is very true.

Mrs Love. Your interest has been mine. I

have known no pleasure unconnected with your happiness. Diversions, show, and pomp, have had no allurements for me.

Love. [*Dropping asleep.*] Yes—you are right—just as you please——

Mrs Love. Had I been inclined to follow the example of other women, your fortune would have felt it before now. You might have been thousands out of pocket; but your interest has been the object of my attention; and your conenience——

Love. [*Turns his chair from her.*] You reason very——you reason admir—ably——admir—ably——al—ways—— al—ways——gay——and enter—entertaining—— [*Going to sleep.*

Mrs Love. Marriage is generally considered as an introduction to the great scene of the world. I thought it a retreat to less noisy and serener pleasures. What is called polite company [*He falls fast asleep.*] was not my taste. You was lavish in expence; I was, therefore, an economist. From the moment marriage made me yours, the pleasure arising from your company——There! fast asleep! Agreeable company indeed!—This is ever his way. [*She rises.*] Unfeeling man!——It is too plain that I am grown his aversion. Mr Lovemore! [*Looking at him.*] you little think what a scene this day has brought to light——And yet he hopes with falsehood to varnish and disguise his treachery. How mean the subterfuge! shall I rouse him now, and tax him with his guilt! My heart is too full: reproach will only tend to exasperate, and perhaps make him irreconcilable. The pride that can stoop to low and wretched artifice, but ill can brook detection. Let him rest for the present. The widow Bellmour's experiment may answer better—I will try it, at least—Oh! Mr Lovemore, you will break my heart!

[*Looks at him, and exit.*

Love. [*Talking in his sleep.*] I do listen—I am not asleep. [*Sleeps and nods.*] You are very right—always right—I am only thinking a little. No—no—no—[*Mutters indistinctly.*] It was not two o'clock—in bed—in bed by twelve—— Sir Bashful is an oaf—The widow Bellmour—[*Sleeps, and his head rolls about.*]—What's the matter? [*Waking.*] I beg your pardon; I was beginning to nod. What did you say, my dear? [*Leans on the table, without looking about.*] One cannot always, you know—[*Turns about.*] 'Sdeath! she is gone! Oh! fast asleep. This is ever the way when one dines at home. Let me shake it off. [*Rises.*] What's o'clock?—No amusement in this house; what shall I do? The widow?—I must not venture in that quarter. My evil genius, sir Brilliant, will be busy there. Is any body in the way? I must sally out. My dear Venus, favour your votary this afternoon.

——Your best arms employ,
All winged with pleasure, and all tipt with joy.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* SIR BASHFUL'S.

Enter LADY CONSTANT *and* FURNISH.

Lady Con. Who brought this letter?

Fur. A servant of Mrs Lovemore's: he waits an answer.

Lady Con. My compliments to Mrs Lovemore, and I shall wait upon her.

Fur. Yes, madam. [*Going.*

Lady Con. And hark ye, Furnish?—have the things been carried to sir Brilliant, as I ordered?

Fur. I have obeyed your ladyship's commands. The steward went himself. Mr Pounce, your ladyship knows, is a trusty body. You may depend upon his care.

Lady Con. Go, and send Mrs Lovemore her answer. She may depend upon my being with her in time. [*Exit* FURNISH.] What can Mrs. Lovemore want? [*Reads*]—'Ladyship's company 'to a card-party; but cards are the least part of 'my object. I have something of higher mo-'ment in view, and the presence of my friends is 'absolutely necessary.' There is some mystery in this. What does she mean? I shall go, and then the scene will clear up: those diamond buckles embarrass me more than Mrs Lovemore's unintelligible letter. Diamond buckles to me! From what quarter? Who could send them? Nobody but sir Brilliant. I am right in my conclusion: they came from him. Who could take the liberty but a person of his cast? A presuming man! But I have mortified his vanity. Before this time, he has found his diamonds thrown back upon his hands, with the disdain which such confidence deserves—But if I have made a mistake!—Oh! no; no danger. Has not sir Brilliant made overtures to me? Has not he declared himself? He sees sir Bashful's behaviour, and his vanity plumes itself upon that circumstance. To give me my revenge against a crazy and insufferable husband, he would fain induce me to ruin myself with a coxcomb. Besides, he heard the whole of sir Bashful's dispute about diamonds and trinkets: the thing is clear; it was sir Brilliant sent them; and, by that stratagem, he hopes to bribe me into compliance—That bait will never take; though here comes one, who, I am sure, deserves to be treated without a grain of ceremony.

Enter SIR BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Here she is. Now, let me see whether she will take any notice of the present I sent her. She has reason to be in good humour, I think—Your servant, madam.

Lady Con. Your address is polite, sir.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Still proud and obstinate!—Has any thing happened to disturb the harmony of your temper?

Lady Con. Considering what little discord you make, it is a wonder that my temper is not always in tune.

Sir Bash. If you never gave me cause, madam———

Lady Con. Oh! for mercy's sake, truce with altercation. I am tired out with the eternal violence of your temper. Those frequent starts of passion hurry me out of my senses: and those unaccountable whims, that hold such constant possession of you——

Sir Bash. Whims, madam?—Not to comply with you in every thing, is a whim, truly! Must I yield to the exorbitant demands of your extravagance? When you laid close siege to me for diamond baubles, and I know not what, was that a whim of mine? Did I take that fancy into my head without cause, and without sufficient foundation?

Lady Con. Well, we have exhausted the subject. Have not you told me a thousand times, that there is no living with me? I agree to it. And have not I returned the compliment? We have nothing new to say; and now, all that remains, is to let the lawyer reduce to writing our mutual opinions, and so we may part with the pleasure of giving each other a most woful character.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] The buckles have had no effect. Stubborn! she has received them, and won't own it.

Lady Con. A dash of your pen, sir, at the foot of certain articles now preparing, will make us both easy. [*Going.*

Sir Bash. If we don't live happily, it is your own fault.

Lady Con. That is very odd.

Sir Bash. If you would control your passion for play—

Lady Con. Quite threadbare!

Sir Bash. I have still a regard for you.

Lady Con. Worn-out to frippery!—I can't hear any more. The law will dress it up in new language for us, and that will end our differences. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. [*Alone.*] I must unburthen my heart: there is no time to be lost. I love her; I admire her; she inflames my tenderest passions, and raises such a conflict here in my very heart, I cannot any longer conceal the secret from her. I'll go and tell her all this moment.—But then, that meddling fiend, her maid, will be there: po! I can turn her out of the room: but then, the jade will suspect something. Her ladyship may be alone: I'll send to know where she is. Who is there? Sideboard—

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Go and tell your lady that——— [*Pauses.*

Side. Did your honour want me?

Sir Bash. No matter; it does not signify.—[*Aside.*] I shall never be able to tell her my mind: a glance of her eye, and my own confusion, will undo all.

Side. I thought your honour called.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*]—A thought comes across me; I'll write her a letter. Yes, yes, a letter will do the business. Sideboard, draw that table this way—Reach me a chair.

Side. There, your honour.

Sir Bash. Do you stay while I write a letter. You shall carry it for me. [*Sits down to write.*

Side. Yes, sir. I hope he has an intrigue upon his hands. A servant thrives under a master that has his private amusements. Love on, say I, if you are so given; it will bring grist to my mill.

Sir Bash. [*Writing.*] This will surprise her. Warm, passionate, and tender! and yet it does not come up to what I feel.

Side. What is he at?—I may as well read the news-paper. [*Takes it out of his pocket.*] What, in the name of wonder, is all this?——Ha, ha! [*Bursts into a loud laugh.*] I never heard the like of this before. Oh, ho, ho, ho!

Sir Bash. What does the scoundrel mean? [*Stares at him.*

Side. Ha, ha ha! I can't help laughing.

Sir Bash. Does the villain suspect me? [*Rises.*] Hark ye, sirrah, if ever I find that you dare listen at any door in my house—

Side. Sir!

Sir Bash. Confess the truth: have not you been listening to my conversation with Mr Lovemore this morning?

Side. Who, I, sir? I would not be guilty of such a thing: I never did the like in all my days.

Sir Bash. What was you laughing at?

Side. A foolish thing in the newspaper, sir, that's all. I'll read it to your honour. [*Reads.*] We hear that a new comedy is now in rehearsal, and will speedily be performed, entitled, 'The Amorous Husband; or, The Man in Love with his own Wife.'

Sir Bash And what do you see to laugh at?

Side. See, sir? I have lived in a great many families, and never heard of the like before.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] There, there, there!——I shall be the butt of my own servants.—Sirrah, leave the room. And let me never hear that you have the trick of listening in my house.

Side. No, sir—The Man in love with his own Wife! [*Exit laughing.*

Sir Bash. What does the varlet mean?—No matter—I have finished my letter, and it shall be sent this moment.——But then, if I should get into a comedy? Po! no more scruples. I'll seal it directly—Sideboard—

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. [*Sealing the letter.*] I have opened my heart to her. What do you bring your hat and stick for?

Side. To go out with your honour's letter.

Sir Bash. You have not far to go. Take this, and let nobody see you.

Side. I warrant me, your honour. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. I feel much lighter now. A load is taken off my heart.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. What do you come back for?

Side. A word or two, by way of direction, if you please, sir.

Sir Bash. Blockhead! Give it to me—[*Aside.*]—If I direct it, he finds me out. Go about your business: I have no occasion for you: leave the room.

Side. Very well, sir. Does he think to manage his own intrigues? If he takes my commission out of my hands, I shall give him warning. The vices of our masters are all the vails a poor servant has left. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. What must be done? Mr Lovemore could conduct this business for me. He is a man of address, and knows all the approaches to a woman's heart. That fellow Sideboard coming again? No, no; this is lucky. Mr Lovemore, I am glad to see you.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Love. A second visit, you see, in one day; entirely on the score of friendship.

Sir Bash. And I thank you for it; heartily thank you.

Love. I broke away from the company at the St Alban's, on purpose to attend you. Well, I have made your lady easier in her mind, have not I?

Sir Bash. We don't hit it at all, Mr Lovemore?

Love. No!

Sir Bash. I think she has been rather worse since you spoke to her.

Love. A good symptom that. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. She has received the diamond buckles. They were delivered to her maid, sealed up, and the man never staid to be asked a question. I saw them in her own hand; but not a syllable escaped her. She was not in the least softened; obstinate as a mule!

Love. The manner of conveying your presents was not well judged. Why did you not make me the bearer?

Sir Bash. I wish I had. She talks of parting; and so, to avoid coming to extremities, I have even thought of telling her the whole truth at once.

Love. How? Acquaint her with your passion?

Sir Bash. Ay, and trust to her honour. I could not venture to speak; I should blush, and faulter, and look silly; and so I have writ a letter to her. Here it is, signed and sealed, but not directed. I got into a puzzle about that. Servants, you know, are always putting their own construction upon things.

Love. No doubt: and then your secret flies all over the town.

Sir Bash. That's what alarmed me. You shall write the superscription, and send it to her.

Love. No; that won't do. Give her a letter under your hand! I'll speak to her for you: let me try how her pulse beats.

Sir Bash. But a letter may draw an answer from her, and then you know—[*Smiling at him.*]—I shall have it under her hand.

Love. I don't like this hurry: we had better take time to consider of it.

Sir Bash. No: I cannot defer the business of my heart a single moment. It burns like a fever here. Sit down, and write the direction; I'll step and send the servant. He shall carry it, as if it were a letter from yourself.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Side. Sir Brilliant Fashion is below, sir.

Love. What brings him? He will only interrupt us. Go, and talk to him, sir Bashful; hear what he has to say; amuse him; any thing, rather than let him come up.

Sir Bash. I am gone: he shan't molest you. [*Exit with* SIDEBOARD.

Love. Fly! make haste; and don't let him know that I am here. A lucky accident this! I have gained time by it. All matters were in a right train, and he himself levelling the road for me, and now this letter blows me up into the air at once. Some unlucky planet rules to-day.—First, the widow Bellmour; a hair-breadth escape I had of it, and now almost ruined here! What, in the name of wonder, has he writ to her? Friendship and wafer, by your leave. But, will that be delicate? Po! honour has always a great deal to preach upon these occasions; but then, the business of my love! Very true; the passions need but say a word, and their business is done. —[*Opens the letter, and reads.*]—This must never reach her. I'll write a letter from myself.—[*Sits down, writes, and starts up.*]—I hear him coming: no; all's safe.—[*Writes.*]—This will do: vastly well. Her husband's inhumanity! Ay, mention that. The diamonds may be a present from me: yes, I'll venture it—There, there; that will do—Long adored—ay—sweetest revenge.—Ay—eternal admirer——Lovemore. Now, now, let me see it. Admirable! this will do the business. [*Seals the letter.*

Enter SIR BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Well, have you sent it?

Love. Not yet: I am writing the direction.

Sir Bash. And where is that blockhead? Sideboard!

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Numskull! Why don't you wait? Mr Lovemore wants you.

Love. Step and deliver this to your lady, and, if she pleases, I will wait upon her.

Sir Bash. Charming!—Take it up stairs directly.

Sele. Up stairs, sir? My lady is in the next room.

Sir Bash. Take it to her; make haste; begone! [*Exit* SELEBOARD.] I hope this will succeed: I shall be for ever obliged to you, and so will her ladyship.

Love. I hope she will, and I shall be proud to serve her.

Sir Bash. You are very good. She won't prove ungrateful, I dare answer for her. I should like to see how she receives the letter. The door is conveniently open. I will have a peep. Ay, there; there she sits.

Love. Where, sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Hush! no noise. There, do you see her? She has the letter in her hand——This is a critical moment: I am all over in a tremble.

Love. Silence! not a word. She opens it.—[*Aside.*] Now, my dear Cupid, befriend me now, and your altar shall smoke with incense.

Sir Bash. She colours.

Love. I like that rising blush: a soft and tender token.

Sir Bash. She turns pale.

Love. The natural working of the passions.

Sir Bash. And now she reddens again. What is she at now? There, she has torn the letter in two: I am a lost, an undone man! [*Walks away.*

Love. She has flung it away with indignation: I am undone, too.

[*Aside, and walks away from the door.*

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore, you see what it is all come to.

Love. I am sorry to see so haughty a spirit.

Sir Bash. An arrogant, ungrateful woman, to make such a return to so kind a letter!

Love. Ay, so kind a letter!

Sir Bash. Did you ever see such an insolent scorn?

Love. I never was so disappointed in all my life.

Sir Bash. A letter full of the tenderest protestations!

Love. Yes; an unreserved declaration of love!

Sir Bash. Made with the greatest frankness; throwing myself at her very feet.

Love. Did she once smile? was there the faintest gleam of approbation in her countenance?

Sir Bash. She repaid it all with scorn, with pride, contempt, and insolence. I cannot bear this; despised, spurned, and treated like a puppy.

Love. There it stings—like a puppy, indeed!

Sir Bash. Is there a thing in nature so mortifying to the pride of man, as to find one's self rejected and despised by a fine woman, who is conscious of her power, and triumphs in her cruelty?

Love. It is the most damnable circumstance!

Sir Bash. My dear Mr Lovemore, I am obliged to you for taking this matter so much to heart.

Love. I take it more to heart than you are aware of.

Sir Bash. This is mortifying; enough to make one ashamed all the rest of one's life.

Love. I did not expect this sullen ill-humour.

Sir Bash. Did you ever know so obstinate, so uncomplying a temper?

Enter SIR BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, I forgot to tell you—

Love. He again! he haunts me up and down, as Vice did the devil, with a dagger of lath, in the old comedy. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Hey! what's the matter? You seem both out of humour: what does this mean? Have you quarrelled?

Sir Bash. No, sir, no quarrel:—Why would my booby servant let him in again? [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Strike me stupid, but you look very queer upon it! Lovemore is borrowing money, I suppose. Sir Bashful is driving a hard bargain, and you can't agree about the premium. Sir Bashful, let my friend Lovemore have the money.

Sir Bash. Money!—what does he mean?

Sir Bril. Both out of humour, I see: well, as you will. You have no reason to be in harmony with yourselves; my stars shine with a kinder aspect. Here, here, behold a treasury of love! I came back on purpose to shew it to you. [*Takes a shagreen case out of his pocket.*] See what a present I have received: a magnificent pair of diamond buckles, by all that's amiable!

Love. How?

Sir Bash. [*Walking up to him.*] A pair of diamond buckles!

Sir Bril. How such a present should be sent to me, is more than I can explain at present. Perhaps my friend, Lovemore, gained some intelligence in the quarter where I surprised him to-day, on a visit which I little suspected.

Love. That was to serve you: I know nothing of this business.

Sir Bril. The pain in your side, I hope, is better?

Love. Po! this is only to distract your attention, sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. So I suppose. And was this a present to you?

Sir Bril. A present, sir. The consequence of having some tolerable phrase, a person, and a due degree of attention to the service of the ladies. Don't you envy me, sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. I can't but say I do. [*Turns to* LOVEMORE.] My buckles, by all that's false in woman!

Love. Take no notice. [*Walks aside.*] Has he supplanted me here, too, as well as with the widow?

Sir Bril. What's the matter with you both?—Burning with envy!

Sir Bash. And I suppose an elegant epistle, or

a well-penned billet-doux, accompanied this token of the lady's affection?

Sir Bril. That would have been an agreeable addition, but it is still to come. Too many favours at once might overwhelm a body. A country-looking fellow, as my people tell me, left this, curiously sealed up, at my house: he would not say from whence it came: I should know that in time, was all they could get from him; and I am now panting to learn from whence this mighty success has attended me. Sir Bashful, I came, saw, and conquered. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Bash. But may not this be from some lady, who imagines that you sent it, and therefore chuses to reject your present?

Sir Bril. Oh, no; that cannot be the case. A little knowledge of the world would soon convince you, that ladies do not usually reject presents from the man who has the good fortune to please by his manner, his taste for dress, and a certain *je ne sçai quoi* in his person and conversation.

Sir Bash. So I believe. [*Walks aside.*] What say you to this, Mr Lovemore?

Love. She would not have torn a letter from him.

Sir Bril. No, sir Bashful; a present from me would not have been returned back upon my hands.

Sir Bash. I dare say not. [*To* LOVE.] I suppose she will give him my three hundred pounds into the bargain.

Love. After this, I shall wonder at nothing.

Sir Bril. What mortified countenances they both put on! [*Looks at them, and laughs.*

Sir Bash. [*Walking up to* SIR BRIL.] And I suppose you expect to have this lady?

Sir Bril. No doubt of it. This is the forerunner, I think. Hey, Lovemore?—Sir Bashful, this it is to be in luck. Ha, ha!

[*Laughs at them both.*

Love. and Sir Bash. [*Both forcing a laugh.*] Ha, ha!

Sir Bril. You both seem strangely piqued.—Lovemore, what makes you so uneasy?

Love. You flatter yourself, and you wrong me—I—I— [*Walks away.*

Sir Bash. He is a true friend: he is uneasy on my account. [*Aside, and looking at* LOVE.

Sir Bril. And, sir Bashful, something has dashed your spirits. Do you repine at my success?

Sir Bash. I can't but say I do, sir.

Sir Bril. Oh! very well; you are not disposed to be good company. *A l'honneur*, gentlemen: finish your money matters. Lovemore, where do you spend the evening?

Love. A good evening to you, sir Brilliant: I am engaged. Business with sir Bashful, you see———

Sir Bril. Well, don't let me be of inconvenience to you. Fare ye well, gentlemen. Thou dear pledge of love [*Looking at the buckles.*], thus let me clasp thee to my heart.—Sir Bashful, your servant. [*Exit* SIR BRIL.

Sir Bash. What think you now, Mr Lovemore?

Love. All unaccountable, sir.

Sir Bash. By all that's false, I am gulled, cheated, and imposed upon! I am deceived, and dubbed a rank cuckold! It is too clear: she has given him the buckles, and, I suppose, my bank-notes have taken the same course. Diamond buckles, and three hundred pounds, for sir Brilliant! A reward for his merit!

Love. He is the favourite, and I have been working for him all this time! [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. I now see through all her artifices. My resolution is fixed. If I can but get ocular demonstration of her guilt; if I can but get the means of proving to the whole world that she is vile enough to cuckold me, I shall then be happy

Love. Why, that will be some consolation!

Sir Bash. So it will: kind Heaven, grant me that at least! make it plain that she dishonours me, and I am amply revenged! Hark! I hear her coming. She shall know all I think, and all I feel. I have done with her for ever.

Love. [*Aside.*] Let me fly the impending storm. If I stay, detection and disgrace pursue me. Sir Bashful, I am sorry to see matters take this turn. I have done all in my power; and, since there is no room to hope for success, I take my leave, and wish you a good night.

Sir Bash. No, no; you shall not leave me in this distress. You shall hear me tell her her own, and be a witness of our separation.

[*Holding him.*

Love. Excuse me: after what has passed, I shall never be able to endure the sight of her.—Fare you well; I must be gone; good night, sir Bashful. [*Struggling to go.*

Sir Bash. You are my best friend: I cannot part with you. [*Stands between him and the door.*] Stay and hear what she has to say for herself: you will see what a turn she will give to the business.

Love. [*Aside.*] What turn shall I give it?——'onfusion! here she comes: I must weather the storm.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

Lady Con. After this behaviour, Mr Lovemore, I am surprised, sir, that you can think of staying a moment longer in this house.

Love. Madam, I——'sdeath! I have no invention to assist me at a pinch. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Mr Lovemore is my friend, madam, and I desire he will stay in my house as long as he pleases. Hey, Lovemore!

[*Looks at him, and smiles.*

Love. [*Aside.*] All must out, I fear.

Lady Con. Your friend, sir Bashful! And do you authorise him to take this unbecoming liber-

ty? Have you given him permission to send me a letter, so extravagant in the very terms of it?

Love. [*Aside.*] Ay, now 'tis coming, and impudence itself has not a word to say.

Sir Bash. I desired him to send that letter, madam.

Love. Sir Bashful desired me, madam.

[*Bowing respectfully.*

Sir Bash. I desired him.

Love. All at his request, madam.

Lady Con. And am I to be made your sport? I wonder, Mr Lovemore, that you would condescend to make yourself a party in so poor a plot. Do you presume upon a trifling mark of civility, which you persuaded me to accept of this morning? Do you come, disguised under a mask of friendship, to help this gentleman in his design against my honour, and my happiness?

Love. [*Aside.*] Fairly caught, and nothing can bring me off——

Sir Bash. A mask of friendship! He is a true friend, madam: he sees how ill I am treated; and, let me tell you, there is not a word of truth in that letter.

Love. Not a syllable of truth, madam. [*Aside.*] This will do: his own nonsense will save me.

Sir Bash. It was all done to try you, madam.

Love. Nothing more, madam: merely to try you.

Sir Bash. By way of experiment only: just to see how you would behave upon it.

Love. Nothing else was intended; all to try you, madam.

Lady Con. You have been both notably employed. The exploit is worthy of you. Your snare is spread for a woman; and if you had succeeded, the fame of so bright an action would add mightily to two such illustrious characters.

Sir Bash. A snare spread for her! Mark that, Mr Lovemore: she calls it ensnaring!

Love. Ensnared to her own good. [*To* SIR BASHFUL.] He has pleaded admirably for me.

[*Aside.*

Lady Con. As to you, sir Bashful, I have long ago ceased to wonder at your conduct: you have lost the power of surprising me; but when Mr Lovemore becomes an accomplice in so mean a plot——

Sir Bash. I am in no plot, madam; and nobody wants to ensnare you; do we, Lovemore?

Love. Sir Bashful knows that no harm was intended.

Sir Bash. Yes, I am in the secret, and my friend Lovemore meant no harm.

Love. If the letter had succeeded, sir Bashful knows there would have been no ill consequence.

Sir Bash. No harm in nature; but I now see how things are; and since your ladyship will listen to nothing for your own good, it is too plain, from all that has passed between us, that our tempers are by no means fitted for each other, and I am ready to part whenever you please:—nay, I will part.

Lady Con. And that is the only point in which we can agree, sir.

Sir Bash. Had the letter been sent from another quarter, it would have met with a better reception: we know where your smiles are bestowed.

Lady Con. Deal in calumny, sir; give free scope to malice; I disdain your insinuations.

Sir Bash. The fact is too clear, and reproaches are now too late. This is the last of our conversing together; and you may take this by the way, you are not to believe one syllable of that letter.

Love. There is not a syllable of it deserves the least credit, madam.

Sir Bash. It was all a mere joke, madam: was not it, Lovemore? And as to your being a fine woman, and as to any passion that any body has conceived for you, there was no such thing; you can witness for me, Lovemore: can't you?

Lady Con. Oh! you are witnesses for one another.

Love. Sir Bashful knows the fairness of my intentions, and I know his. [*Aside.*] He has acquitted me better than I expected; thanks to his absurdity.

Lady Con. Go on, and aggravate your ill usage, gentlemen.

Sir Bash. It was all a bam, madam; a scene we thought proper to act. Let us laugh at her.

[*Goes up to* LOVEMORE.

Love. With all my heart——[*Aside.*] A silly blockhead! I can't help laughing at him.

[*Laughing heartily.*

Sir Bash. [*Laughing with him.*] Ha, ha, ha!—all a bam; nothing else; a contrivance to make sport for ourselves—hey, Lovemore?

Lady Con. This usage is insupportable. I shall not stay for an explanation. Two such worthy confederates!—Is my chair ready there? You may depend, sir, that this is the last time you will see me in this house. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. Agreed; a bargain; with all my heart. Lovemore, I have managed this well.

Love. Charmingly managed! I did not think you had so much spirit.

Sir Bash. I have found her out. The intrigue is too plain. She and sir Brilliant are both detected.

Love. I never suspected that sir Brilliant was the happy man. I wish I had succeeded, had it been only to mortify his vanity.

Sir Bash. And so do I: I wish it too, but never own the letter; deny it to the last.

Love. You may depend upon my secrecy.

Sir Bash. I am for ever obliged to you. A foolish woman! how she stands in her own light!

Love. Truly, I think she does. But since I have no interest with her ladyship, I shall now

sound a retreat, and leave matters to your own discretion. Success attend you! [*Going.*

Sir Bash. You must not forsake me in this distress.

Love. Had your lady proved tractable, I should not have cared how long I had staid. But since things are come to this pass, I shall now go and see what kind of reception I am to meet with from Mrs Lovemore.

Sir Bash. Don't let her know that you have a regard for her.

Love. Oh! no; I see the consequence.—[*Aside.*] Well off this time; and, madam Fortune, if I trust you again, you shall play me what prank you please. Sir Bashful, yours. [*Going.*

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you. And, hark ye, if I can serve you with your lady——

Love. I am much obliged to you: but I shall endeavour to go on, without giving you the trouble of assisting me. And, do you hear? assure my lady Constant, that I meant nothing but to serve your interest. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. Rely upon my management. I can acquit you.—My lady Constant! lady Constant!—Let me chase her from my thoughts! Can I do it? Rage, fury, love—no more of love! I am glad she tore the letter. Odso! yonder it lies. It is only torn in two, and she may still piece the fragments together. I'll pick up the letter this moment: it shall never appear in evidence against me. As to sir Brilliant, his motions shall be watched; I know how to proceed with madam, and, if I can but prove the fact, every body will say that I am ill used by her. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at* MR LOVEMORE'S.

Enter MRS LOVEMORE, *elegantly dressed;* MUSLIN *following her.*

Mus. WHY, to be sure, madam, it is so for certain, and you are very much in the right of it.

Mrs Love. I fancy I am: I see the folly of my former conduct. I am determined never to let my spirits sink into a melancholy state again.

Mus. Why, that's the very thing, madam; the very thing I have been always preaching up to you. Did not I always say, see company, madam, take your pleasure, and never break your heart for any man? This is what I always said.

Mrs Love. And you have said enough: spare yourself the trouble now.

Mus. I always said so. And what did the world say? Heavens bless her for a sweet woman! and a plague go with him, for an inhuman, barbarous, bloody—murdering brute.

Mrs Love. Well, truce with your impertinence; your tongue runs on at such a rate—

Mus. Nay, don't be angry: they did say so indeed. But, dear heart, how every body will be overjoyed when they find you have plucked up a little! As for me, it gives me new life, to have so much company in the house, and such a racketting at the door with coaches and chairs, enough to hurry a body out of one's wits. Lard! this is another thing; and you look quite like another thing, madam; and that dress quite becomes you. I suppose, madam, you will never wear your negligee again. It is not fit for you indeed, madam. It might pass very well with some folks, madam; but the like of you——

Mrs Love. Will you never have done? Go and see who is coming up stairs.

Enter MRS BELLMOUR.

Mrs Bellmour, I revive at the sight of you. Muslin, do you step, and do as I ordered you.

Mus. What the deuce can she be at now? [*Exit.*

Mrs Bell. You see I am punctual to my time.——Well, I admire your dress of all things. It's mighty pretty.

Mrs Love. I am glad you like it. But, under all this appearance of gaiety, I have at the bottom but an aching heart.

Mrs Bell. Be ruled by me, and I'll answer for the event. Why really, now you look just as you should do.—Why neglect so fine a figure?

Mrs Love. You are so obliging!

Mrs Bell. And so true——What was beautiful before, is now heightened by the additional ornaments of dress; and if you will but animate and inspire the whole with those graces of the mind, which I am sure you possess, the impression cannot fail of being effectual upon all beholders: even upon the depraved mind of Mr Lovemore——You have not seen him since, have you?

Mrs Love. He dined at home, but was soon upon the wing to his usual haunts.

Mrs Bell. If he does but come home time enough, depend upon it my plot will take. And have you got together a good deal of company?

Mrs Love. Yes, a tolerable party.

Mrs Bell. That's right: shew him that you will consult your own pleasure.

Mrs Love. Apropos, as soon as I came home, I received a letter from sir Brilliant, in a style of warmth and tenderness, that would astonish you. He begs to see me again, and has something particular to communicate. I left it in my dressing-room; you shall see it by and by: I took your advice, and sent him word he might come. He

lure brought him hither immediately: he makes no doubt of his success with me.

Mrs Bell. Well! two such friends as sir Brilliant and Mr Lovemore, I believe, never existed!

Mrs Love. Their falsehood to each other is unparallelled. I left sir Brilliant at the card-table: as soon as he can disengage himself, he will quit his company in pursuit of me. I forgot to tell you, my lady Constant is here.

Mrs Bell. Is she?

Mrs Love. She is, and has been making the strangest discovery: Mr Lovemore has had a design there too!

Mrs Bell. Oh! I don't doubt him; but the more proof we have, the better.

Mrs Love. There is sufficient proof: you must know, madam—[*A rap at the door.*]—As I live and breathe, I believe that is Mr Lovemore!

Mrs Bell. If it is, every thing goes on as I could wish.

Mrs Love. I hear his voice; it is he! How my heart beats!

Mrs Bell. Courage, and the day's our own. He must not see me yet: where shall I run?

Mrs Love. In there, madam. Make haste; I hear his step on the stairs.

Mrs Bell. Success attend you! I am gone.

[*Exit.*

Mrs Love. I am frightened out of my senses. What the event may be I fear to think; but I must go through with it.

Enter LOVEMORE.

You are welcome home, sir.

Love. Mrs Lovemore, your servant. [*Without looking at her.*]

Mrs Love. It is somewhat rare to see you at home so early.

Love. I said I should come home, did not I? I always like to be as good as my word—What could the widow mean by this usage? to make an appointment, and break it thus abruptly.

[*Aside.*

Mrs Love. He seems to muse upon it. [*Aside.*

Love. [*Aside.*] She does not mean to do so treacherous a thing as to jilt me? Oh, Lord! I am wonderfully tired.

[*Yawns, and sinks into an armed chair.*

Mrs Love. Are you indisposed, my dear?

Love. No, my love; I thank you. I am very well—a little fatigued only, with jolting over the stones all the way into the city this morning. I have paid a few visits this afternoon—Confoundedly tired——Where's William?

Mrs Love. Do you want any thing?

Love. Only my cap and slippers. I am not in spirits, I think. [*Yawns.*

Mrs Love. You are never in spirits at home, Mr Lovemore.

Love. I beg your pardon. I never am any where more cheerful. [*Stretching his arms.*] I wish I may die if I an't very happy at home——very [*Yawns.*] very happy!

Mrs Love. I can hear otherwise. I am informed that Mr Lovemore is the promoter of mirth and good humour wherever he goes.

Love. Oh! no; you over-rate me; upon my soul, you do.

Mrs Love. I can hear, sir, that no person's company is so acceptable to the ladies; that your wit inspires every thing: you have your compliment for one, your smile for another, a whisper for a third, and so on, sir: you divide your favours, and are every where, but at home, all whim, vivacity, and spirit.

Love. Ho! ho! [*Laughing.*] how can you talk so? I swear I can't help laughing at the fancy. All whim, vivacity, and spirit! I shall burst my sides. How can you banter one so?—I divide my favours, too!——Oh, Heavens! I can't stand this raillery. Such a description of me!—I that am rather saturnine, of a serious cast, and inclined to be pensive! I can't help laughing at the oddity of the conceit—— Oh Lord! Oh Lord! [*Laughs.*

Mrs Love. Just as you please, sir. I see that I am ever to be treated with indifference. [*Walks across the stage.*]

Love. [*Rises, and walks a contrary way.*] I can't put this widow Bellmour out of my head.

[*Aside.*

Mrs Love. If I had done any thing to provoke this usage, this cold, determined contempt—

[*Walking.*

Love. I wish I had done with that business entirely; but my desires are kindled, and must be satisfied. [*Aside.*

[*They walk for some time silently by each other.*]

Mrs Love. What part of my conduct gives you offence, Mr Lovemore?

Love. Still harping upon that ungrateful string!—but prithee don't set me a laughing again——Offence! nothing gives me offence, child!—you know I am very fond—[*Yawns, and walks.*]—I like you of all things, and think you a most admirable wife—prudent, managing—careless of your own person, and very attentive to mine—not much addicted to pleasure—grave, retired, and domestic; you govern your house, pay the tradesmen's bills, [*Yawns.*] scold the servants, and love your husband:—upon my soul, a very good wife!—as good a sort of a wife [*Yawns.*] as a body might wish to have—Where's William? I must go to bed.

Mrs Love. To bed so early! Had not you better join the company?

Love. I shan't go out to-night.

Mrs Love. But I mean the company in the dining-room.

Love. Company in the dining-room!

[*Stares at her.*

Mrs Love. Yes: I invited them to a rout.

Love. A rout in my house!—and you dressed out, too!—What is all this?

Mrs Love. You have no objection, I hope?

Love. Objection!—No, I like company, you know, of all things; I'll go and join them: who are they all?

Mrs Love. You know them all; and there's your friend, Sir Brilliant.

Love. Is he there? I shall be glad to see him. But, pray, how comes all this about?

Mrs Love. I intend to see company often.

Love. Do you?

Mrs Love. Ay; and not look tamely on, while you revel luxuriously in a course of pleasure. I shall pursue my own plan of diversion.

Love. Do so, madam: the change in your temper will not be disagreeable.

Mrs Love. And so I shall, sir, I assure you. Adieu to melancholy, and welcome pleasure, wit, and gaiety. [*She walks about, and sings.*

Love. What the devil has come over her? And what in the name of wonder does all this mean?

Mrs Love. Mean, sir!—It means, it means—how can you ask me what it means?—Well, to be sure, the sobriety of that question!—Do you think a woman of spirit can have leisure to tell her meaning, when she is all air, alertness, rapture, and enjoyment?

Love. She is mad!—stark mad!

Mrs Love. You're mistaken, sir—not mad, but in spirits, that's all. Am I too flighty for you?—Perhaps I am: you are of a saturnine disposition, inclined to think a little or so. Well, don't let me interrupt you; don't let me be of any inconvenience. That would be the impolitest thing; a married couple to be interfering and encroaching on each other's pleasures! Oh, hideous! it would be Gothic to the last degree. Ha, ha, ha!

Love. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Ha, ha!—Madam, you—ha, ha! you are perfectly right.

Mrs Love. Nay, but I don't like that laugh now: I positively don't like it. Can't you laugh out, as you were used to do? For my part, I'm determined to do nothing else all the rest of my life.

Love. This is the most astonishing thing! Madam, I don't rightly comprehend—

Mrs Love. Oh Lud! oh Lud!—with that important face! Well, but come! what don't you comprehend?

Love. There is something in this treatment that I don't so well——

Mrs Love. Oh! are you there, sir! How quickly they, who have no sensibility for the peace and happiness of others, can feel for themselves, Mr Lovemore!—But that's a grave reflection, and I hate reflection.

Love. What has she got into her head? This sudden change, Mrs Lovemore, let me tell you——

Mrs Love. Nay, don't be frightened: there is no harm in innocent mirth, I hope: never look so grave upon it. I assure you, sir, that though, on your part, you seem determined to offer constant indignities to your wife, and though the laws of retaliation would in some sort exculpate her, if, when provoked to the utmost, exasperated beyond all enduring, she should, in her turn, make him know what it is to receive an injury in the tenderest point—

Love. Madam! [*Angrily.*

Mrs Love Well, well; don't be alarmed. I shan't retaliate: my own honour will secure you there; you may depend upon it.—Will you come and play a game at cards? Well, do as you like; you won't come? No, no, I see you won't—What say you to a bit of supper with us? Nor that neither?—Follow your inclinations: it is not material what a body eats, you know; the company expects me; adieu, Mr Lovemore, yours, yours. [*Exit singing.*

Love. This is a frolic I never saw her in before!—Laugh all the rest of my life!—laws of retaliation!—an injury in the tenderest point!—the company expects me—adieu! yours, yours!—[*Mimicking her.*] What the devil is all this? Some of her female friends have been tampering with her. So, so: I must begin to look a little sharp after madam. I'll go this moment into the card-room, and watch whom she whispers with, whom she ogles with, and every circumstance that can lead to— [*Going.*

Enter MUSLIN, *in a hurry.*

Mus. Madam, madam—here's your letter; I would not for all the world that my master——

Love. What, is she mad, too? What's the matter, woman?

Mus. Nothing, sir—nothing: I wanted a word with my lady; that's all, sir.

Love. You would not for the world that your master—What was you going to say?—what paper's that?

Mus. Paper, sir!

Love. Paper, sir! Let me see it.

Mus. Lord, sir! how can you ask a body for such a thing? It's a letter to me, sir—a letter from the country; a letter from my sister, sir. She bids me to buy her a *shiver de frize* cap, and a sixteenth in the lottery; and tells me of a number she dreamt of, that's all, sir: I'll put it up.

Love. Let me look at it. Give it me this moment. [*Reads.*] 'To Mrs Lovemore!'—Brilliant Fashion. This is a letter from the country, is it?

Mus. That, sir—that is—no, sir—no;—that's not sister's letter.—If you will give me that back, sir, I'll shew you the right one.

Love. Where did you get this?

Mus. Sir!

Love. Where did you get it?—Tell me truth.

Mus. Dear heart, you fright a body so—in the parlour, sir—I found it there.

Love. Very well!—leave the room.

Mus. The devil fetch it, I was never so out in my politics in all my days. [*Exit* MUS.

Love. A pretty epistle truly! [*Reads.*] 'When 'you command me, my dearest Mrs Lovemore, 'never to touch again upon the subject of love, 'you command an impossibility. You excite the 'flame, and forbid it to burn.' Permit me once 'more to throw myself on my knees, and implore 'your compassion.'——Compassion, with a vengeance on him!——'Think you see me now, with 'tender, melting, supplicating eyes, languishing at 'your feet.'——Very well, sir——'Can you find 'it in your heart to persist in cruelty?—Grant 'me but access to you once more, and, in addi'tion to what I already said this morning, I will 'urge such motives.'—Urge motives, will ye?—'as will convince you, that you should no longer 'hesitate, in gratitude, to reward him, who here 'makes a vow of eternal constancy and love.

BRILLIANT FASHION.'

So, so, so! your very humble servant, sir Brilliant Fashion!—This is your friendship for me, is it?—You are mighty kind, indeed, sir—but I thank you as much as if you had really done me the favour: and, Mrs Lovemore, I'm your humble servant, too. She intends to laugh all the rest of her life! This letter will change her note. Yonder she comes along the gallery, and sir Brilliant in full chase of her. They come this way. Could I but detect them both now! I'll step aside, and who knows but the devil may tempt them to their undoing. A polite husband I am: there's the coast clear for you, madam. [*Exit.*

Enter MRS LOVEMORE *and* SIR BRILLIANT.

Mrs Love. I have already told you my mind, sir Brilliant. Your civility is odious; your compliments fulsome; and your solicitations insulting.——I must make use of harsh language, sir: you provoke it.

Sir Bril. Not retiring to solitude and discontent again, I hope, madam! Have a care, my dear Mrs Lovemore, of a relapse.

Mrs Love. No danger, sir: don't be too solicitous about me. Why leave the company? Let me intreat you to return, sir.

Sir Bril. By Heaven, there is more rapture in being one moment *vis-a-vis* with you, than in the company of a whole drawing-room of beauties. Round you are melting pleasures, tender transports, youthful loves, and blooming graces, all unfelt, neglected, and despised, by a tasteless, cold, unimpassioned husband, while they might be all so much better employed to the purposes of ecstacy and bliss.

Mrs Love. I am amazed, sir, at this liberty.—What action of my life has authorized this assurance!——I desire, sir, you will desist. Were I not afraid of the ill consequences that might follow, I should not hesitate a moment to acquaint Mr Lovemore with your whole behaviour.

Sir Bril. She won't tell her husband!——A charming creature, and blessings on her for so convenient a hint! She yields, by all my hopes! —What shall I say to overwhelm her senses in a flood of nonsense? [*Aside.*

Go, my heart's envoys; tender sighs, make haste—
Still drink delicious poisons from the eye—
Raptures and paradise
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be pressed.
[*Forcing her all this time.*

Enter MR LOVEMORE.

Love. Hell and distraction! this is too much.

Sir Bril. What the devil's the matter now? [*Kneels down to buckle his shoe.*] This confounded buckle is always plaguing me. Lovemore! I rejoice to see thee. [*Looking at each other.*

Love. And have you the confidence to look me in the face?

Sir Bril. I was telling your lady here of the most whimsical adventure——

Love. Don't add the meanness of falsehood to the black attempt of invading the happiness of your friend. I did imagine, sir, from the long intercourse that has subsisted between us, that you might have had delicacy enough, feeling enough, honour enough, sir, not to meditate an injury like this.

Sir Bril. Ay, it's all over, I am detected. [*Aside.*] Mr Lovemore, I feel that I have been wrong, and will not attempt a vindication of myself. We have been friends hitherto, and, if begging your pardon for this rashness will any ways atone——

Love. No, sir; nothing can atone. The provocation you have given me would justify my drawing upon you this instant, did not that lady, and this roof, protect you.

Sir Bril. Harsh language to a friend——

Love. Friend, sir Brilliant!

Sir Bril. If you will but hear me——

Love. Sir, I insist; I won't hear a word.

Sir Bril. I declare upon my honour——

Love. Honour! for shame, sir Brilliant! honour and friendship are sacred words, and you profane them both.

Sir Bril. If imploring forgiveness of that lady—

Love. That lady!—I desire you will never speak to that lady.

Sir Bril. Can you command a moment's patience?

Love. Sir, I am out of all patience: this must be settled between us: I have done for the present.

Enter SIR BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Did not I hear loud words among you? I certainly did. What are you quarrelling about?

Love. Read that, sir Bashful. [*Gives him* SIR

BRILLIANT's *letter.*] Read that, and judge if I have not cause—[SIR BASHFUL *reads to himself.*

Sir Bril. Hear but what I have to say—

Love. No, sir, no; we shall find a fitter time. As for you, madam, I am satisfied with your conduct. I was, indeed, a little alarmed, but I have been a witness of your behaviour, and I am above harbouring low suspicions.

Sir Bash. Upon my word, Mr Lovemore, this is carrying the jest too far.

Love. It is the basest action a gentleman can be guilty of; and, to a person who never injured him, still more criminal.

Sir Bash. Why, so I think. Sir Brilliant, [*To him, aside.*] here, take this letter, and read it to him—his own letter to my wife.

Sir Bril. Let me see it— [*Takes the letter.*

Sir Bash. 'Tis indeed, as you say, the vilest action a gentleman can be guilty of.

Love. An unparalleled breach of friendship.

Sir Bril. Not altogether so unparalleled: I believe it will not be found without a precedent—as, for example:— [*Reads.*

'To my LADY CONSTANT'———

'Why should I conceal, my dear madam, that 'your charms have awakened my tenderest pas-'sion?'

Love. Confusion!—my letter— [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. [Reading.] 'I long have loved you, 'long adored. Could I but flatter myself'—

[LOVEMORE *walks about uneasy;* SIR BRILLIANT *follows him.*]

Sir Bash. There, Mr Lovemore, the basest treachery!

Sir Bril. [Reads.] 'Could I but flatter myself with the least kind return.'

Love. Confusion! let me seize the letter out of his hand. [*Snatches it from him.*

Sir Bash. An unparalleled breach of friendship, Mr Lovemore.

Love. All a forgery, sir; all a forgery.

Sir Bash. That I deny; it is the very identical letter my lady threw away with such indignation. She tore it in two, and I have pieced it together.

Love. A mere contrivance to varnish his guilt.

Sir Bril. Ha, ha! my dear Lovemore, we know one another. Have not you been at the same work with the widow Bellmour?

Love. The widow Bellmour!—If I spoke to her, it was to serve you, sir.

Sir Bril. Are you sure of that?

Love. Po! I won't stay a moment longer among ye. I'll go into another room to avoid ye all. I know little or nothing of the widow Bellmour, sir. [*Opens the door.*

Enter MRS BELLMOUR.

Hell and destruction!——what fiend is conjured up here? Zoons! let me make my escape out of the house. [*Runs to the opposite door.*

Mrs Love. I'll secure this pass: you must not go, my dear.

Love. 'Sdeath, madam, give me way.

Mrs Love. Nay, don't be in such a hurry: I want to introduce an acquaintance of mine to you.

Love. I desire, madam———

Mrs Bel. My lord, my lord Etheridge; I am heartily glad to see your lordship.

[*Taking hold of him.*

Mrs Love. Do, my dear, let me introduce this lady to you.

Love. Here's the devil and all to do! [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. My lord, this is the most fortunate encounter.

Love. I wish I was fifty miles off.—— [*Aside.*

Mrs Love. Mrs Bellmour, give me leave to introduce Mr Lovemore to you.

[*Turning him to her.*

Mrs Bell. No, my dear madam, let me introduce lord Etheridge to you. [*Pulling him.*] My lord—

Sir Bril. In the name of wonder, what is all this?

Sir Bash. This is another of his intrigues blown up.

Mrs Love. My dear madam, you are mistaken: this is my husband.

Mrs Bell. Pardon me, madam; 'tis my lord Etheridge.

Mrs Love. My dear, how can you be so ill-bred in your own house?—Mrs Bellmour—this is Mr Lovemore.

Love. Are you going to toss me in a blanket, madam?—call up the rest of your people, if you are.

Mrs Bell. Pshaw! prithee now, my lord, leave off your humours. Mrs Lovemore, this is my lord Etheridge, a lover of mine, who has made proposals of marriage to me.

Love. Confusion! let me get rid of these two furies. [*Breaks away from them.*

Sir Bash. He has been tampering with her, too, has he?

Mrs Bell. [*Follows him.*] My lord, I say! my Lord Etheridge! won't your lordship know me?

Love. This is the most damnable accident! [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. I hope your lordship has not forgot your appointment at my house this evening?

Love. I deserve all this. [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. Pray, my lord, what have I done, that you treat me with this coldness? Come, come, you shall have a wife: I will take compassion on you.

Love. Damnation! I can't stand it. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Murder will out: murder will out.

Mrs Bel. Come, cheer up, my lord: what the deuce, your dress is altered! what's become of the star and ribband? And so the gay, the florid, the *magnifique* lord Etheridge, dwindles down into plain Mr Lovemore, the marr'ed man! Mr Lovemore, your most obedient, very humble servant,

Love. I can't bear to feel myself in so ridiculous a circumstance. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. He has been passing himself for a lord, has he?

Mrs Bell. I beg my compliments to your friend Mrs Loveit: I am much obliged to you both for your very honourable designs.

[*Curtseying to him.*

Love. I was never so ashamed in all my life!

Sir Bril. So, so, so, all his pains were to hide the star from me. This discovery is a perfect cordial to my dejected spirits.

Mrs Bel. Mrs Lovemore, I cannot sufficiently acknowledge the providence that directed you to pay me a visit, though I was wholly unknown to you; and I shall henceforth consider you as my deliverer.

Love. So! it was she that fainted away in the closet, and be damned to her jealousy! [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. By all that's whimsical, an odd sort of an adventure this! My lord, [*Advances to him.*] my lord, my lord Etheridge, as the man says in the play, 'Your lordship is right welcome 'back to Denmark.'

Love. Now he comes upon me.—Oh! I'm in a fine situation! [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. My lord, I hope that ugly pain in your lordship's side is abated.

Love. Absurd, and ridiculous. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. There is nothing forming there, I hope, my lord?

Love. I shall come to an explanation with you, sir.

Sir Bril. The tennis-ball from lord Racket's unlucky left hand.

Love. No more at present, sir Brilliant. I leave you now to yourselves, and—[*Goes to the door in the back scene.*]—'sdeath, another fiend! I am beset by them.

Enter LADY CONSTANT.

No way to escape?

[*Attempts both stage doors, and is prevented.*

Lady Con. Mr Lovemore, it is the luckiest thing in the world, that you are come home.

Love. Ay; it is all over—all must come to light.

Lady Con. I have lost every rubber; quite broke; four by honours against me every time. Do, Mr Lovemore, lend me another hundred.

Love. I would give an hundred pounds you were all in Lapland. [*Aside.*

Lady Con. Mrs Lovemore, let me tell you, you are married to the falsest man; he has deceived me strangely.

Mrs Love. I begin to feel for him, and to pity his uneasiness.

Mrs Bell. Never talk of pity; let him be probed to the quick.

Sir Bash. The case is pretty plain, I think, now, sir Brilliant?

Sir Bril. Pretty plain, upon my soul! Ha, ha!

Love. I'll turn the tables upon sir Bashful, for all this—[*Takes* SIR BASHFUL'S *letter out of his pocket.*]—where is the mighty harm now in this letter?

Sir Bash. Where's the harm?

Love. [*Reads.*] 'I cannot, my dearest life, any 'longer behold'——

Sir Bash. Shame and confusion! I am undone! [*Aside.*

Love. Hear this, sir Bashful—'The manifold 'vexations, of which, through a false prejudice, I 'am myself the occasion.'

Lady Con. What is all this?

Sir Bash. I am a lost man! [*Aside.*

Love. Mind, sir Bashful.—'I am therefore resolved, after many conflicts with myself, to 'throw off the mask, and frankly own a passion, 'which the fear of falling into ridicule, has, in 'appearance, suppressed.'

Sir Bash. 'Sdeath! I'll hear no more of it.

[*Snatches at the letter.*

Love. No, sir; I resign it here, where it was directed; and, with it, these notes which sir Bashful gave me for your use.

Lady Con. It is his hand, sure enough.

Love. Yes, madam, and those are his sentiments, which he explained to me more at large.

Lady Con. [*Reads.*] 'Accept the presents 'which I myself have sent you; money, attend-'ance, equipage, and every thing else you shall 'command; and, in return, I shall only entreat 'you to conceal from the world that you have 'raised a flame in this heart, which will ever 'show me,

Your admirer,
And your truly affectionate husband,
BASHFUL CONSTANT.'

All. Ha, ha!——

Sir Bril. So, so, so! he has been in love with his own wife all this time, has he? Sir Bashful, will you go and see the new comedy with me!

Sir Bash. I shall blush through the world all the rest of my life. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Lovemore, don't you think it a base thing to invade the happiness of a friend? or to do him a clandestine wrong? or to injure him with the woman he loves?

Love. To cut the matter short with you, sir, we have been traitors to each other; a couple of unprincipled, unreflecting profligates.

Sir Bril. Profligates?

Love. Ay! both! we are pretty fellows, indeed!

Mrs Bell. I am glad to find you are awakened to a sense of your error.

Love. I am, madam; and frank enough to own it. I am above attempting to disguise my feelings, when I am conscious they are on the side of truth and honour. With the sincerest remorse, I ask your pardon. I should ask pardon of my lady Constant, too; but the fact is, sir Bashful threw the whole affair in my way; and, when a

husband will be ashamed of loving a valuable woman, he must not be surprised, if other people take her case into consideration, and love her for him.

Sir Bril. Why, faith, that does, in some sort, make his apology.

Sir Bash. Sir Bashful! sir Bashful! thou art ruined. [*Aside.*

Mrs Bell. Well, sir, upon certain terms, I don't know but I may sign and seal your pardon.

Love. Terms! What terms?

Mrs Bell. That you make due expiation of your guilt to that lady. [*Pointing to* MRS LOVE.

Love. That lady, madam! That lady has no reason to complain.

Mrs Love. No reason to complain, Mr Lovemore?

Love. No, madam, none; for, whatever may have been my imprudencies, they have had their source in your conduct.

Mrs Love. In my conduct, sir?

Love. In your conduct:—I here declare before this company, and I am above misrepresenting the matter; I here declare, that no man in England could be better inclined to domestic happiness, if you, madam, on your part, had been willing to make home agreeable.

Mrs Love. There, I confess, he touches me. [*Aside.*

Love. You could take pains enough before marriage; you could put forth all your charms; practise all your arts, and make your features please by rule; for ever changing; running an eternal round of variety; and all this to win my affections: but when you had won them, you did not think them worth your keeping; never dressed, pensive, silent, melancholy; and the only entertainment in my house, was the dear pleasure of a dull conjugal *tête-à-tête;* and all this insipidity, because you think the sole merit of a wife consists in her virtue: a fine way of amusing a husband, truly!

Sir Bril. Upon my soul, and so it is——— [*Laughing.*

Mrs Love. Sir, I must own there is too much truth in what you say. This lady has opened my eyes, and convinced me there was a mistake in my former conduct.

Love. Come, come; you need say no more. I forgive you; I forgive.

Mrs Love. Forgive! I like that air of confidence, when you know that, on my side, it is, at worst, an error in judgment; whereas, on yours—

Mrs Bell. Po! po! never stand disputing: you know each other's faults and virtues; you have nothing to do but to mend the former, and enjoy the latter. There, there; kiss and friends. There, Mrs Lovemore, take your reclaimed libertine to your arms.

Love. 'Tis in your power, madam, to make a reclaimed libertine of me indeed.

Mrs Love. From this moment it shall be our mutual study to please each other.

Love. A match, with all my heart. I shall, hereafter, be ashamed only of my follies, but never ashamed of owning that I sincerely love you.

Sir Bash. Shan't you be ashamed?

Love. Never, sir.

Sir Bash. And will you keep me in countenance?

Love. I will.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. I now forgive you all. My lady Constant, I own the letter; I own the sentiments of it [*Embraces her.*]; and, from this moment, I take you to my heart.——Lovemore, zookers! you have made a man of me. Sir Brilliant, come; produce the buckles.

Lady Con. If you hold in this humour, sir Bashful, our quarrels are at an end.

Sir Bril. And now, I suppose, I must make restitution here——

[*Gives* LADY CONSTANT *the buckles.*

Sir Bash. Ay, ay; make restitution. Lovemore! this is the consequence of his having some tolerable phrase, and a person, Mr Lovemore! ha, ha!

Sir Bril. Why, I own the laugh is against me. With all my heart; I am glad to see my friends happy at last. Lovemore, may I presume to hope for pardon at that lady's hands?

[*Points to* MRS LOVEMORE.

Love. My dear confederate in vice, your pardon is granted. Two sad libertines we have been. But come, give us your hand: we have used each other scurvily: for the future, we will endeavour to atone for the errors of our past misconduct.

Sir Bril. Agreed; we will, henceforward, behave like men, who have not forgot the obligations of truth and honour.

Love. And now, I congratulate the whole company, that this business has had so happy a tendency to convince each of us of our folly.

Mrs Bell. Pray, sir, don't draw me into a share of your folly.

Love. Come, come, my dear madam, you are not without your share of it. This will teach you, for the future, to be content with one lover at a time, without listening to a fellow you know nothing of, because he assumes a title, and spreads a fair report of himself.

Mrs Bell. The reproof is just; I grant it.

Love. Come, let us join the company cheerfully, keep our own secrets, and not make ourselves the town-talk.

Sir Bash. Ay, ay; let us keep the secret.

Love. What, returning to your fears again? you will put me out of countenance, sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. I have done.

Love. When your conduct is fair and upright, never be afraid of ridicule. Real honour, and generous affection, may bid defiance to all the small wits in the kingdom. In my opinion, were

the business of this day to go abroad into the world, it might prove a very useful lesson: the men would see how their passions may carry them into the danger of wounding the bosom of a friend: and the ladies would learn, that, after the marriage rites are performed, they ought not to suffer their powers of pleasing to languish away, but should still remember to sacrifice to the graces.

To win a man, when all your pains succeed,
The WAY TO KEEP HIM, is a task indeed.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

ALL IN THE WRONG.

BY

MURPHY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR JOHN RESTLESS, *jealous of his wife.*
BEVERLEY, *attached to* BELINDA.
SIR WILLIAM BELLMONT.
YOUNG BELLMONT, *his son.*
BLANDFORD, *father to* BELINDA.
ROBERT, *servant to* SIR JOHN.
BRUSH, *servant to* BEVERLEY.

WOMEN.

LADY RESTLESS, *wife to* SIR JOHN.
BELINDA, *attached to* BEVERLEY.
CLARISSA, *attached to* YOUNG BELLMONT.
TATTLE, *maid to* LADY RESTLESS.
TIPPET, *maid to* BELINDA.
MARMALET, *a waiting woman.*

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Park.*

Enter SIR JOHN RESTLESS *and* ROBERT, *from a house in the side scene.*

Sir John. SIR John Restless! sir John Restless! thou hast played the fool with a vengeance! What devil whispered thee to marry such a woman?——Robert, you have been a faithful servant, and I value you. Did your lady go out at this door here into the Park, or did she go out at the street-door?

Rob. This door, sir.

Sir John. Robert, I will never live in a house again that has two doors to it.

Rob. Sir!

Sir John. I will give warning to my landlord instantly. The eyes of Argus are not sufficient to watch the motions of a wife, where there is a street-door, and a back-door, to favour her escapes.

Rob. Upon my word, sir, I wish—you will pardon my boldness, sir—I wish you would shake off this uneasiness that preys upon your spirits. It grieves me to the heart—it does, indeed, sir, to see you in this way: banish your suspicions: you have conceived some strange aversion, I am afraid, to my lady, sir?

Sir John. No, Robert; no aversion: in spite of me, I dote upon her still.

Rob. Then, why will you not think generously, sir, of the person you love? My lady, I dare be sworn———

Sir John. Is false to me. That embitters my whole life. I love her, and she repays me with ingratitude, with perfidy, with falsehood, with—

Rob. I dare be sworn, sir, she is a woman of honour.

Sir John. Robert, I have considered you as a friend in my house: don't you betray me, too: don't attempt to justify her.

Rob. Dear sir, if you will but give me leave: you have been an indulgent master to me, and I am only concerned for your welfare. You married my lady for love, and I have heard you so warm in her praise: why will you go back from those sentiments?

Sir John. Yes, I married her for love—Oh! love! love! what mischief dost thou not occa-

sion in this world? Yes, Robert, I married her for love. When first I saw her, I was not so much struck with her beauty, as with that air of an ingenuous mind that appeared in her countenance; her features did not so much charm me with their symmetry, as that expression of sweetness, that smile, that indicated affability, modesty, and compliance. But, honest Robert, I was deceived: I was not a month married, when I saw her practising those very smiles at her glass: I saw through the artifice; plainly saw there was nothing natural in her manner, but all forced, all studied, put on with her head-dress. I was alarmed; I resolved to watch her from that moment, and I have seen such things!

Rob. Upon my word, sir, I believe you wrong her, and wrong yourself: you build on groundless surmises; you make yourself unhappy, and my lady, too; and, by being constantly uneasy, and never shewing her the least love, you'll forgive me, sir—you fill her mind with strange suspicions, and so the mischief is done.

Sir John. Suspicions, Robert?

Rob. Yes, sir; strange suspicions! My lady finds herself treated with no degree of tenderness; she infers that your inclinations are fixed elsewhere, and so she is become—you will pardon my blunt honesty—she is become downright jealous—as jealous as yourself, sir.

Sir John. Oh! Robert, you are little read in the arts of women; you little know the intricacies of their conduct; the mazes through which they walk, shifting, turning, winding, running into devious paths, but tending all through a labyrinth into the temple of Venus. You cannot see, that all her pretences to suspect me of infidelity, are merely a counter-plot to cover her own loose designs. It is but a gauze covering, though; it is seen through, and only serves to shew her guilt the more.

Rob. Upon my word, sir John, I cannot see—

Sir John. No, Robert; I know you cannot.—Her suspicions of me all make against her; they are female stratagems; and yet, it is but too true, that she still is near my heart. Oh! Robert, Robert! When I have watched her at a play or elsewhere; when I have counted her oglings, and her whisperings, her stolen glances, and her artful leer, with the cunning of her sex, she has pretended to be as watchful of me: dissembling, false, deceitful woman!

Rob. And yet, I dare assure you——

Sir John. No more; I am not to be deceived; I know her thoroughly, and now—now—has not she escaped out of my house, even now?

Rob. But with no bad design.

Sir John. I am the best judge of that: which way did she go?

Rob. Across the Park, sir; that way, towards the Horse Guards.

Sir John. Towards the Horse Guards! There—there—there, the thing is evident: you may go in, Robert.

Rob. Indeed, sir, I——

Sir John. Go in, I say; go in.

Rob. There is no persuading him to his own good. [*Exit* ROB.

Sir John. Gone towards the Horse Guards! My head aches; my forehead burns; I am cutting my horns. Gone towards the Horse Guards! I'll pursue her thither; if I find her, the time, the place, all will inform against her. Sir John! Sir John! you were a madman to marry such a woman. [*Exit.*

Enter BEVERLEY *and* BELLMONT, *at opposite sides.*

Bev. Ha! My dear Bellmont? A fellow sufferer in love is a companion well met.

Bel. Beverley, I rejoice to see you.

Bev. Well! I suppose the same cause has brought us both into the Park: both come to sigh our amorous vows in the friendly gloom of yonder walk. Belinda keeps a perpetual war of love and grief, and hope and fear in my heart: and let me see—[*Lays his hand on* BELLMONT'S *breast.*]—how fares all here? I fancy my sister is a little busy with you?

Bel. Busy! She makes a perfect riot there.—Not one wink the whole night. Oh! Clarissa, her form so animated! Her eyes so——

Bev. Prithee! truce; I have not leisure to attend to her praise: a sister's praise, too! the greatest merit I could ever see in Clarissa is, that she loves you freely and sincerely.

Bel. And, to be even with you, sir, your Belinda! upon my soul, notwithstanding all your lavish praises, her highest perfection, in my mind, is her sensibility to the merit of my friend.

Bev. Oh, Bellmont! Such a girl! But tell me honestly, now, do you think she has ever betrayed the least regard for me?

Bel. How can you, who have such convincing proofs, how can you ask such a question? That uneasiness of yours, that inquietude of mind—

Bev. Prithee, don't fix that character upon me.

Bel. It is your character, my dear Beverley: instead of enjoying the object before you, you are ever looking back to something past, or conjecturing about something to come, and are your own self-tormentor.

Bev. No, no, no: don't be so severe: I hate the very notion of such a temper: the thing is, when a man loves tenderly, as I do, solicitude and anxiety are natural; and, when Belinda's father opposes my warmest wishes——

Bel. Why, yes; the good Mr Blandford is willing to give her in marriage to me.

Bev. The senseless old dotard!

Bel. Thank you for the compliment! And my father, the wise sir William Bellmont——

Bev. Is a tyrannical, positive, headstrong——

Bel. There again I thank you. But, in short, the old couple, Belinda's father and mine, have both agreed upon the match. They insist upon compliance from their children; so that, according to their wise heads, I am to be married off-hand to Belinda, and you and your sister, poor Clarissa, are to be left to shift for yourselves.

Bev. Racks and torments!

Bel. Racks and torments! Seas of milk and ships of amber, man! We are sailing to our wished for harbour, in spite of their machinations. I have settled the whole affair with Clarissa.

Bev. Have you?

Bel. I have; and to-morrow morning makes me possessor of her charms.

Bev. My dear boy, give us your hand: and then, thou dear rogue, and then Belinda's mine! Loll-toll-loll.

Bel. Well, may you be in raptures, sir; for here, here, here they both come.

Enter BELINDA *and* CLARISSA.

Bev. Grace was in all her steps; heaven in her eye; in every gesture dignity and love.

Belin. A poetical reception, truly! But cannot your passion inspire you to a composition of your own, Mr Beverley?

Bev. It inspires me with sentiments, madam, which I cannot find words to express. Suckling, Waller, Landsdown, and all our dealers in love-verses, give but a faint image of a heart touched like mine.

Belin. Poor gentleman! What a terrible taking you are in! But, if the sonneteers cannot give an image of you, sir, have you had recourse to a painter, as you promised me?

Bev. I have, Belinda, and here—here is the humble portrait of your adorer.

Belin. [*Takes the picture.*]—Well! there is a likeness; but, after all, there is a better painter than this gentleman, whoever he be.

Bev. A better! Now she is discontented!—[*Aside.*]—Where, madam, can a better be found? If money can purchase him———

Belin. Oh! sir, when he draws for money, he never succeeds. But, when pure inclination prompts him, then his colouring is warm indeed. He gives a portrait that endears the original.

Bev. Such an artist is worth the Indies!

Belin. You need not go so far to seek him: he has done your business already. The limner I mean, is a certain little blind god, called Love, and he has stamped such an impression of you here———

Bev. Madam, your most obedient: and I can tell you, that the very same gentleman has been at work for you too.

Bel. [*Who had been talking apart with* CLARISSA.]—Oh! he has had a world of business upon his hands, for we two have been agreeing what havock he has made with us.

Cla. Yes; but we are but in a kind of fool's paradise here: all our schemes are but mere castle-building, which your father, Mr Bellmont, and, my dear Belinda—yours, too, are most obstinately determined to destroy.

Bel. Why, as you say, they are determined that I shall have the honour of Belinda's hand, in the country-dance of matrimony.

Belin. Without considering that I may like another partner better.

Bev. And without considering that I, forlorn as I am, and my sister, there, who is as well inclined to a matrimonial game of romps as any girl in Christendom, must both of us sit down, and bind our brows with willow, in spite of our strongest inclinations to mingle in the groupe.

Belin. But we have planned our own happiness, and, with a little resolution, we shall be successful in the end, I warrant you. Clarissa, let us take a turn this way, and leave that love-sick pair to themselves: they are only fit company for each other, and we may find wherewithal to entertain ourselves.

Cla. Let us try: turn this way.

Bel. Are you going to leave us, Clarissa?

Cla. Only just sauntering into this side-walk: we sha'nt lose one another.

Belin. You are such a tender couple! you are not tired, I see, of saying pretty soft things to each other. Well, well! take your own way.

Cla. And, if I guess right, you are glad to be left together?

Belin. Who, I?

Cla. Yes, you; the coy Belinda!

Belin. Not I truly: let us walk together.

Cla. No, no; by no means: you shall be indulged. Adieu! we shall be within call.

[*Exeunt* BEL. *and* CLA.

Bev. My sister is generously in love with Bellmont: I wish Belinda would act as openly towards me. [*Aside.*

Belin. Well, sir! Thoughtful! I'll call Mr Bellmont back, if that is the case.

Bev. She will call him back.

[*Aside.*

Belin. Am I to entertain you, or you me?

Bev. Madam!

Belin. Madam!—ha, ha! why, you look as if you were frightened: are you afraid of being left alone with me!

Bev. Oh! Belinda, you know that is the happiness of my life—but——

Belin. But what, sir?

Bev. Have I done any thing to offend you?

Belin. To offend me?

Bev. I should have been of the party last night; I own I should; it was a sufficient inducement to me that you was to be there: it was my fault, and you, I see, are piqued at it.

Belin. I piqued!

Bev. I see you are; and the company perceived it last night. I have heard it all: in mere resentment you directed all your discourse to Mr Bellmont.

Belin. If I did, it was merely accidental.

Bev. No, it was deliberately done: forgive my rash folly in refusing the invitation: I meant no manner of harm.

Belin. Who imagines you did, sir?———

Bev. I beg your pardon, Belinda: you take offence too lightly.

Belin. Ha, ha! what have you taken into your head now? This uneasiness is of your own making: I have taken nothing ill, sir.

Bev. You could not but take it ill; but by all that's amiable about you, I meant not to incur your displeasure: forgive that abrupt answer I sent: I should have made a handsomer apology.

Belin. Apology! you was engaged, was not you?

Bev. I said so; I own it, and beg your pardon——

Belin. Beg my pardon! for what? Ha, ha!

Bev. I only meant ——

Belin. Ha, ha! can you think I see any thing in your message to be offended at, sir?

Bev. I was wrong: I beg your pardon. Where you were concerned, I own I should have expressed myself with more delicacy, than those hasty words——I am engaged, and can't wait upon you to-night. I should have told you that my heart was with you, though necessity dragged me another way: this omission you resented. I could learn, since, what spirits you were in the the whole evening, though I enjoyed nothing in your absence. I could hear the sallies of your wit, the sprightliness of your conversation, and on whom your eyes were fixed the whole night.

Belin. They were fixed upon Mr Bellmont, you think?

Bev. Ay! and fixed with delight upon him, negociating the business of love before the whole company.

Belin. Upon my word, sir, whoever is your author, you are misinformed. You alarm me with these fancies, and you know I have often told you, that you are of too refining a temper: you create for yourself imaginary misunderstandings, and then are ever entering into explanations. But this watching for intelligence, from the spies and misrepresenters of conversation, betrays strong symptoms of jealousy. I would not be married to a jealous man for the world.

Bev. Now she's seeking occasion to break off. [*Aside.*]—Jealousy, madam, can never get admission into my breast. I am of too generous a temper: a certain delicacy I own I have; I value the opinion of my friends, and, when there are circumstances of a doubtful aspect, I am glad to set things in their true light. And if I do so with others, surely with you, on whom my happiness depends, to desire a favourable interpretation of my words and actions cannot be improper.

Belin. But these little humours may grow up, and gather into the fixed disease of jealousy at last. [LADY RESTLESS *crosses the stage, and rings a bell at the door.*] And there now—there goes a lady who is a victim to her own fretful imagination.

Bev. Who is the lady, pray?

Belin. My lady Restless. Walk this way, and I will give you her whole character. I am not acquainted with her ladyship, but I have heard much of her. This way.

[*Exeunt* BELINDA *and* BEVERLEY.

Lady Rest. [*Ringing at the door.*] What do these servants mean? There is something going forward here. I will be let in, or I will know the reason why. [*Rings again.*] But, in the mean time, sir John can let any body he pleases out at the street-door: I'll run up the steps here, and observe. [*Exit.*

TATTLE *opens the door*, MARMALET *follows her.*

Tat. Who rung this bell? I don't see any body; and yet I am sure the bell rung. Well, Mrs Marmalet, you will be going, I see?

Mar. Yes, Mrs Tattle; I am obliged to leave you. I'll step across the Park, and I shall soon reach Grosvenor-Square. When shall I see you at our house?

Tat. Heaven knows when I shall be able to get out: my lady leads us all such lives! I wish I had such another place as you have of it.

Mar. I have nothing to complain of.

Tat. No, that you have not: when shall I get such a gown as that you have on, by my lady? She will never fling off such a thing, and give it to a poor servant! Worry, worry, worry herself, and every body else, too.

Re-enter LADY RESTLESS.

Lady Rest. No; there is nobody stirring that way. What do I see? A hussy coming out of my house!

Mar. Well, I must be gone, Mrs Tattle; fare you well.

Lady Rest. She is dizened out; too! why did not you open the door, Tattle, when I rung?

Tat. I came as soon as possible, madam.

Lady Rest. Who have you with you here? What is your business, mistress?

[*To* MARMALET.

Mar. My business, madam?

Lady Rest. In confusion, too! The case is plain. You come here after sir John, I suppose?

Mar. I come after sir John, madam?

Lady Rest. Guilt in her face! Yes, after sir John: and, Tattle, you are in the plot aginst me; you were favouring her escape, were you?

Tat. I favour her escape, madam! What occasion for that? This is Mrs Marmalet, madam:

an acquaintance of mine, madam; as good a kind of body as any at all.

Lady Rest. Oh! very fine, mistress! you bring your creatures after the vile man, do you?

Mar. I assure you, madam, I am a very honest girl.

Lady Rest. Oh! I dare say so. Where did you get that gown?

Mar. La, madam! I came by it honestly; my lady Conquest gave it to me. I live with my lady Conquest, madam.

Lady Rest. What a complexion she has!—How long have you lived in London?

Mar. Three years, madam.

Lady Rest. In London three years with that complexion! it can't be: perhaps, she is painted: all these creatures paint. You are all so many painted dolls. [*Rubs her face with a white handkerchief.*] No, it does not come off. So, Mrs Tattle, you bring fresh country girls here to my house, do you?

Tat. Upon my credit, madam———

Lady Rest. Don't tell me! I see through this affair. Go you about your business, mistress, and let me never see you about my doors again: go, go your ways.

Mar. Lord, madam! I shan't trouble your house. Mrs Tattle, a good-day. Here's a deal to-do, indeed! I have as good a house as hers to go to, whatever she may think of herself.

[*Exit.*

Lady Rest. There, there, there! see there! she goes off in a huff! the way with them all.—Ay! I see how it is, Tattle: you false, ungrateful—that gown was never given her by a woman; she had that from sir John. Where is sir John?

Tat. Sir John an't at home, madam.

Lady Rest. Where is he? Where is he gone? When did he go out?

Tat. I really don't know, madam.

Lady Rest. Tattle, I know you fib, now. But I'll sift this to the bottom. I'll write to my lady Conquest to know the truth about that girl, that was here but now.

Tat. You will find I told you truth, madam.

Lady Rest. Very well, Mrs Pert. I'll go, and write this moment. Send Robert, to give me an account of his master. Sir John, sir John, you will distract me. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter BELINDA *and* BEVERLEY.

Belin. Ay! but that quickness, that extreme sensibility, is what I am afraid of. I positively would not have a jealous husband for the world.

Bev. By Heaven! no earthly circumstance shall ever make me think injuriously of you. Jealousy! ha, ha, ha! it is the most ridiculous passion! ha, ha!

Belin. You may laugh, sir; but I know your over refining temper too well; and I absolutely will have it in our marriage articles, that I must not be plagued with your suspicions.

Bev. I subscribe, madam.

Belin. I will have no inquiries where I am going to visit: no following me from place to place: and if we should chance to meet, and you should perceive a man of wit, or a pretty fellow, speaking to me, I will not have you fidgetting about on your chair, knitting your brow, and looking at your watch—'My dear, is it not time 'to go home? my love, the coach is waiting:'—and, then, if you are prevailed upon to stay, I will not have you converse with a 'Yes, sir,' and a 'No, sir,' for the rest of the evening, and then wrangle with me in the carriage all the way home, and not be commonly civil to me for the rest of the night. I, positively, will have none of this.

Bev. Agreed, madam; agreed——

Belin. And you shan't tell me you are going out of town, and then steal privately to the play, or to Ranelagh, merely to be a spy upon me. I positively will admit no curiosity about my letters. If you were to open a letter of mine, I should never forgive you. I do verily believe, if you were to open my letters, I should hate you.

Bev. I subscribe to every thing you can ask. You shall have what female friends you please; lose your money to whom you please; dance with what beau you please; ride out with whom you please; go to what china-shop you please; and, in short, do what you please, without my attempting to bribe your footmen, or your maid, for secret intelligence.

Belin. Oh, lud! Oh, lud! that is the very strain of jealousy. Deliver me! there is my father yonder, and sir William Bellmont with him. Fly this instant! fly, Mr Beverly, down that walk; any where.

Bev. You promise, then——

Belin. Don't talk to me now: what would you be at? I am yours, and only yours, unalterably so. Fly! begone! leave me this moment.

Bev. I obey: I am gone. [*Exit.*

Belin. Now, they are putting their wise heads together to thwart all my schemes of happiness: but love, imperious love, will have it otherwise.

Enter MR BLANDFORD *and* SIR WILLIAM BELLMONT.

Bland. Sir William, since we have agreed upon every thing——

Sir Wil. Why yes, Mr Blandford, I think every thing is settled.

Bland. Why, then, we have only to acquaint the young people with our intentions, and so conclude the affair without delay.

Sir Wil. That is all, sir.

Bland. As to my girl, I don't mind her com-

sense about Beverley: she must do as I will have her.

Sir Wil. And my son, too; he must follow my directions. As to his telling me of his love for Clarissa, it is all a joke with me. Children must do as their parents will have them.

Bland. Ay, so they must; and so they shall. Hey! here is my daughter. So, Belinda! Well, my girl, sir William and I have agreed, and you are to prepare for marriage; that's all.

Belin. With Mr Beverley, sir?

Bland. Mr Beverley!

Belin. You know you encouraged him yourself, sir.

Bland. Well, well! I have changed my mind on that head: my friend, sir William, here, offers you his son. Do as I advise you: have a care, Belinda, how you disobey my commands.

Belin. But, sir——

Bland. But, madam! I must, and will be obeyed. You don't like him, you say: but I like him, and that's sufficient for you.

Sir Wil. And so it is, Mr Blandford. If my son pretended to have a will of his own, I should let him know to the contrary.

Belin. And can you, sir William, against our inclination, force us both?

Bland. Hold your tongue, Belinda; don't provoke me. What makes you from home? Go your ways back directly, and settle your mind.—I tell you, once for all, I will have my own way. Come, sir William, we will step to the lawyer's chambers. Go home, Belinda, and be observant of my commands. Come, sir William. What did you say? [*To* BELINDA.] You mutiny, do you? Don't provoke me. You know, Belinda, I am an odd sort of man, when provoked. Look ye here: mind what I say; I won't reason with you about the matter; my power is absolute, and, if you offer to rebel, you shall have no husband at all with my consent. I'll cut you off with a shilling; I'll see you starve; beg an alms; live miserable; die wretched: in short, suffer any calamity without the least compassion from me. If I find you an undutiful girl, I cast you off for ever. So there's one word for all.

[*Exit*: SIR WILLIAM *follows him.*

Belin. What will become of me? his inhumanity overcomes me quite—I can never consent: the very sight of this picture is enough to forbid it. Oh! Beverley, you are master of my heart. I'll go this instant—and—Heavens! I can scarce move. I am ready to faint.

Enter SIR JOHN.

Sir John. No tidings of her far or near.

Belin. How I tremble! I shall fall—no help?

Sir John. What do I see! a young lady in distress!

Belin. Oh!

[*Faints in his arms, and drops the picture.*

Sir John. She is fallen into a fit. Would my servants were in the way!

LADY RESTLESS, *at her window.*

Lady Rest. Where can this barbarous man be gone to?—How! under my very window!

Sir John. How cold she is! quite cold——

[*Lay his hand to her cheek.*

Lady Rest. How familiar he is with her!

Sir John. And yet she looks beautiful still.

Lady Rest. Does she so?

Sir John. Her eyes open——how lovely they look!

Lady Rest. Traitor!

Sir John. Her cheek begins to colour. Well, young lady, how fare you now, my dear?

Lady Rest. My dear, too!

Belin. Heavens! where am I?——

Sir John. Repose yourself awhile, or will you step into my house?

Lady Rest. No, truly, shan't she. Vile man! but I will spoil your sport. I will come down to you directly, and flash confusion in your face.

[*Exit from above.*

Sir John. Where do you live, madam?

Belin. In Queen's-square, sir, by the side of the Park.

Sir John. I will wait upon you: trust yourself with me. You look much better, now.—— Lean on my arm. There, there, I will conduct you. [*Exeunt.*

Enter LADY RESTLESS.

Lady Rest. Now, I'll make one among ye.—How! Fled! Gone! Which way? Is not that he, yonder? No—he went into my house, I dare say, as I came down stairs. Tattle, Tattle! Robert! Will nobody answer?

Enter TATTLE.

Where is sir John?

Tat. La! Madam, how should I know?

Lady Rest. Did not he go in this moment?

Tat. No, madam.

Lady Rest. To be sure you will say so. I'll follow him through the world, or I'll find him out. So, so—what is here? This is her picture, I suppose? I will make sure of this, at least: this will discover her to me, though she has escaped now. Cruel, false, deceitful man! [*Exit.*

Tat. Poor lady! I believe her head is turned, for my part. Well! I am determined I'll look out for another place, that's a sure thing I will.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—SIR JOHN'S *house.*

Enter SIR JOHN *and* ROBERT.

Sir John. ROBERT, where is your lady?

Rob. In her own room, sir.

Sir John. Any body with her?

Rob. I cannot say, sir: my lady is not well.

Sir John. Not well! Fatigued with rioting about this town, I suppose. How long has she been at home?

Rob. About an hour, sir.

Sir John. About an hour! Very well, Robert, you may retire.—[*Exit* ROBERT.]—Now will I question her closely. So—so—so—she comes, leaning on her maid: finely dissembled! finely dissembled! but this pretended illness shall not shelter her from my strict inquiry. Soft a moment! If I could overhear what passes between them, it might lead to the truth. I'll work by stratagem. The hypocrite! How she acts her part! [*Exit.*

Enter LADY RESTLESS *and* TATTLE.

Tat. How are you now, Madam?

Lady Rest. Somewhat better, Tattle. Reach that chair. Tattle, tell me honestly, does that girl live with lady Conquest?

Tat. She does, madam, upon my veracity.

Lady Rest. Very well! You will be obstinate, I see; but I shall know the truth presently. I shall have an answer from her ladyship, and then all will come out.

Tat. You will hear nothing, madam, but what I have told you already.

Lady Rest. Tattle, Tattle, I took you up in the country, in hopes gratitude would make you my friend. But you are as bad as the rest of them. Conceal all you know: it is of very little consequence. I now see through the whole affair. Though it is the picture of a man, yet I am not to be deceived: I understand it all. This is some former gallant. The creature gave this to sir John, as a proof that she had no affection for any one but himself. What art he must have had to induce her to this! I have found him out at last.

SIR JOHN, *peeping in.*

Sir John. What does she say?

Lady Rest. I have seen enough to convince me what kind of man he is. The fate of us poor women is hard: we all wish for husbands, and they are the torment of our lives.

Tat. There is too much truth in what you say, madam.

Sir John. You join her, do you, Mrs Iniquity?

Lady Rest. What a pity it is, Tattle, that poor women should be under severer restraints than the men are!

Sir John. You repine for want of freedom, do you?

Lady Rest. Cruel laws of wedlock! The tyrant husband may triumph in his infidelity. He may securely trample upon all laws of decency and order: it redounds to his credit; gives him a fashionable air of vice, while a poor woman is obliged to submit to his cruelty. She remains tied to him for life, even though she has reason to entertain a mortal hatred for him.

Sir John. Oh! Very well argued, madam!

Lady Rest. What a pity it is, Tattle, that we cannot change our husbands, as we do our earrings, or our gloves!

Sir John. There is a woman of spirit!

Lady Rest. Tattle! Will you own the truth to me about that girl?

Tat. I really have told you the truth, madam.

Lady Rest. You won't discover, I see: very well! You may go down stairs.

Tat. I assure your ladyship——

Lady Rest. Go down stairs.

Tat. Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

Lady Rest. Would I had never seen my husband's face!

Sir John. I am even with you: I have as good wishes for you, I assure you.

Lady Rest. This picture here—Oh, the base man!

Sir John. The picture of her gallant, I suppose.

Lady Rest. This is really a handsome picture: what a charming countenance! It is perfumed, I fancy: the scent is agreeable.

Sir John. The jade! how eagerly she kisses it!

Lady Rest. Why had I not such a dear, dear man, instead of the brute, the monster——

Sir John. Monster! She does not mince the matter: plain downright English! I must contain my rage, and steal upon her meditations—So—so—so—

Enters on tiptoe.

Lady Rest. There is no falsehood in this look.

Sir John. [*Looking over her shoulder.*]—Oh! What a handsome dog she has chosen for herself!

Lady Rest. With you I could be for ever happy!

Sir John. You could, could you?

[*Snatches the picture.*

Lady Rest. [*Screams out.*]—Mercy on me!—Oh! is it you, sir?

Sir John. Now, madam! now, false one, have I caught you?

Lady Rest. You are come home at last, I find, sir.

Sir John. My lady Restless! My lady Restless! What can you say for yourself now?

Lady Rest. What can I say for myself, sir John?

Sir John. Ay, madam! this picture——

Lady Rest. Yes, sir, that picture!

Sir John. Will be evidence———

Lady Rest. Of your shame, sir John.

Sir John. Of my shame! 'Tis very true what she says: yes, madam, it will be an evidence of my shame: I feel that but too sensibly. But, on your part———

Lady Rest. You own it then, do you?

Sir John. Own it! I must own it, madam; though confusion cover me, I must own it: it is what you have deserved at my hands.

Lady Rest. I deserve it, sir John! Find excuses if you will. Cruel, cruel man! To make me this return at last. I cannot bear it. Oh! oh!—[*Cries.*]—Such black injustice!

Sir John. You may weep; but your tears are lost: they fall without effect. I now renounce you for ever. This picture will justify me to the wide world; it will shew what a base woman you have been.

Lady Rest. What does the man mean?

Sir John. The picture of your gallant, madam! The darling of your amorous hours, who gratifies your luxurious appetites abroad, and——

Lady Rest. Scurrilous wretch! Oh! sir, you are at your old stratagem, I find: recrimination, you think, will serve your turn.

Sir John. It is a pity, you know, madam, that a woman should be tied to a man for life, even though she has a mortal hatred for him.

Lady Rest. Artful hypocrite!

Sir John. That she cannot change her husband as she does her ear-rings or her gloves.

Lady Rest. Sir John, this is your old device: this won't avail you.

Sir John. Had the original of this fallen to your lot, you could kiss the picture for ever.—You can gloat upon it, madam; glue your very lips to it.

Lady Rest. Shallow artifice!

Sir John. With him you could be for ever happy.

Lady Rest. This is all in vain, sir John.

Sir John. Had such a dear, dear man fallen to your lot, instead of the brute, the monster—Am I a monster? I am; and you have made me so. The world shall know your infamy.

Lady Rest. Oh! Brave it out, sir; brave it out to the last; harmless, innocent man! You have nothing to blush for; nothing to be ashamed of; you have no intrigues, no private amours abroad. I have not seen any thing, not I.

Sir John. Madam, I have seen, and I now see, your paramour.

Lady Rest. That air of confidence will be of great use to you, sir. You have no convenient to meet you under my very window, to loll softly in your arms!

Sir John. Hey! how!

Lady Rest. Her arm thrown carelessly round your neck! Your hand tenderly applied to her cheek.

Sir John. 'Sdeath! that's unlucky—she will turn it against me! [*Aside.*

Lady Rest. You are in confusion, are you, sir? But why should you? You meant no harm—— 'You are safe with me, my dear—Will you step into my house, my love?' Yes, sir, you would fain bring her into my very house.

Sir John. My lady Restless, this evasion is mean and paltry. You beheld a young lady in distress.

Lady Rest. I know it; and you, tender-hearted man, could caress her out of mere compassion: you could gaze wantonly out of charity; from pure benevolence of disposition, you could convey her to some convenient dwelling. Oh! sir John, sir John!

Sir John. Madam, this well-acted passion—

Lady Rest. Don't imagine she has escaped me, sir.

Sir John. You may talk and rave, madam; but, depend upon it, I shall spare no pains to do myself justice on this occasion. Nor will I rest till———

Lady Rest. Oh! fy upon you, sir John: these artifices———

Sir John. Nor will I rest, madam, until I have found, by means of this instrument, here, in my hand, who your darling is. I will go about it straight. Ungrateful, treacherous woman! [*Exit* SIR JOHN.

Lady Rest. Yes; go, under that pretext, in pursuit of your licentious pleasures. This ever has been his scheme to cloak his wicked practices: abandoned man! to face me down, too, after what my eyes so plainly beheld! I wish I could wring that secret out of Tattle. I'll step to my own room directly, and try, by menaces, by wheedling, by fair means, by foul means, by every means, to wrest it from her. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Park.*

Enter SIR JOHN *and* ROBERT.

Sir John. Come hither, Robert. Look at this picture.

Rob. Yes, sir.

Sir John. Let me watch his countenance. Well! well! dost thou know it, Robert?

Rob. 'Tis a mighty handsome picture, sir.

Sir John. A handsome picture!—— [*Aside.*

Rob. The finest lady in the land need not desire a handsomer man, sir.

Sir John. How well he knows the purposes of it!—Well! well! honest Robert, tell me: well—who is it?—tell me?

Rob. Sir!

Sir John. You know whose picture it is: I know you do. Well! well! who—who—who is it?

Rob. Upon my word, sir, it is more than I can tell.

Sir John. Not know! I am convinced you do. So, own the truth: don't be a villain; don't.

Rob. As I am an honest man, sir———

Sir John. Be an honest man, then, and tell me. Did you never see such a smooth-faced, fiery-eyed, warm-complexioned, taper young fellow here about my house?

Rob. Never, sir.

Sir John. Not with my wife!—to drink chocolate of a morning, tea of an evening? Come, honest Robert, I'll give you a lease of a good farm. What say you? A lease for your life—well! well! —you may take your wife's life into the bargain. Well!

Rob. Believe me, sir John, I never saw——

Sir John. I'll add your child's life. Come, speak out—your own life, your wife's life, and your child's! now! now! a lease for three lives! Now, Robert!

Rob. As I hope for mercy, I never saw any such a gentleman!

Sir John. Robert, Robert, you are bribed by my wife.

Rob. No; as I am a sinner, sir.

Sir John. And the worst of sinners you will be, if you are a confederate in this plot against my peace and honour. Reflect on that, Robert.

Enter a Footman.

Foot. Pray, does not sir John Restless live somewhere hereabout?

Sir John. He does, friend; what is your business with him?

Foot. My business is with his lady.

Sir John. I guessed as much. [*Aside.*

Foot. I have a letter here for my lady Restless, sir.

Sir John. A letter for my lady!—from whom, pray?

Foot. From my lord Conquest.

Sir John. My lord Conquest! very well, friend: you may give the letter to me. I am sir John Restless: that is my house. Let me have the letter: I will take care of it.

Foot. I was ordered to deliver it into my lady's own hand.

Sir John. The devil you was! I must have the letter. I'll buy it of the rascal. [*Aside.*] Here, take this for your trouble, friend, [*Gives him money.*] and I'll take care of the letter.

Foot. I humbly thank your honour. [*Exit.*

Sir John. Now, now, now; let me see what this is. Now, my lady Restless; now false one, now. [*Reads.*]

'Madam,

'My lady Conquest being gone into the coun-'try for a few days, I have judged it proper to 'send a speedy answer to yours, and to assure 'you, for your peace of mind, that you need not 'entertain the least suspicion of Marmalet, my 'lady's woman. She has lived some years in my 'family, and I know her by experience to be an 'honest, trusty girl, incapable of making mis-'chief between your ladyship and sir John.

'I have the honour to be,

'Madam, your very humble servant,

'CONQUEST.'

So, so; so!—Marmalet is a trusty girl! one that will not make mischief between man and wife! that is to say, she will discover nothing against my lady Restless! for her peace of mind, he lets madam know all this, too! She may go on boldly now; my lady Conquest is gone into the country, Marmalet is trusty, and my lord has given her the most speedy notice. Very well! very well! proofs thicken upon proofs. Shall I go directly and challenge his lordship?——No—no—that won't do. Watch him closely, that will do better. If I could have a word in private with the maid—Robert, Robert, come hither! Step to my lord Conquest's—but with caution proceed—inquire there for Marmalet, the maid.

Rob. I know her, sir.

Sir John. He knows her! [*Aside.*

Rob. She visits our Tattle, sir.

Sir John. Visits our Tattle!—it is a plain case. [*Aside.*] Inquire for that girl, but with caution: tell her to meet me privately; unknown to any body; in the dusk of the evening; in the Bird-Cage Walk, yonder.

Rob. I will, sir.

Sir John. And don't let Tattle see her. Tattle has engaged her in her mistress's interest. I see how it is. Don't let any of my servants see her: go directly, Robert. Now shall I judge what regard you have for me. But, hark ye: come hither! a word with you. Should it be known that this girl converses with me: should my lady have the least item of it, they will be upon their guard. Let her come wrapped up in darkness: concealed from every observer, with a mask on. Ay, let it be with a mask.

Rob. A mask, sir John? Won't that make her be remarked the more!

Sir John. No, no; let her come masked; I will make every thing sure. Robert, bring this about for me, and I am your friend for ever.

Rob. I will do my endeavour, sir. [*Exit* ROB.

Sir John. I'll now take a turn round the Park, and try if I can find the minion this picture belongs to. [*Exit* SIR JOHN.

Enter BEVERLEY *and* BELMONT.

Bev. Yes; they had almost surprised us: but

at sight of her father, Belinda gave the word, and away I darted down towards the canal.

Bel. Was sir William with him?

Bev. Yes; they had been plotting our ruin. But we shall out-officer them, it is to be hoped.

Bel. Yes; and it is also to be feared that we shall not.

Bev. Hey! you alarm me: no new mine sprung?

Bel. Nothing but the old story. Our wise fathers are determined. At the turning of yonder corner, they came both full tilt upon Clarissa and me.

Bev. Well; and how! what passed?

Bel. Why, they were scarcely civil to your sister. Sir William fixed his surly eye upon me for some time: at last he began: 'You will run 'counter to my will, I see: you will be ever dang-'ling after that girl: but Mr Blandford and I have 'agreed upon the match:' and, then, he peremptorily commanded me to take my leave of Clarissa, and fix my heart upon your Belinda.

Bev. And did you so?

Bel. And did you so? How can you ask such a question? Sir, says I, I must see the lady home: and all I marched, arm in arm, with her, my father bawling after me, and I bowing to him, 'Sir, 'your humble servant, I wish you a good morn-'ing, sir.'—He continued calling out: I kissed my hand to him: and so, we made our escape.

Bev. And where have you left Clarissa?

Bel. At home; at your house.

Bev. Well! and do you both continue in the same mind? is to-morrow to be your wedding-day?

Bel. Now are you conjuring up a thousand horrid fancies to torment yourself. But don't be alarmed, my dear Beverley. I shall leave you your Belinda, and content myself with the honour of being your brother-in-law.

Bev. Sir, the honour will be to me—But uneasy!—ha, ha!——no——no——I am not uneasy, nor shall I ever be so again.

Bel. Keep that resolution, if you can. Do you dine with us at the club?

Bev. With all my heart: I'll attend you.

Bel. That's right: let us turn towards the Mall, and saunter there till dinner.

Bev. No; I can't go that way yet. I must inquire how Belinda does, and what her father said to her. I have not seen her since we parted in the morning.

Bel. And now, according to custom, you will make her an apology for leaving her, when there was an absolute necessity for it, and you'll fall to an explanation of circumstances, that require no explanation at all, and refine upon things, and torment yourself and her into the bargain.

Bev. Nay, if you begin with your raillery, I am off: your servant; *a Pharaoh*. [*Exit* BEV.

Bel. [*Alone.*] Poor Beverley! Though a handsome fellow, and of agreeable talents, he has such a strange diffidence in himself, and such a solicitude to please, that he is every moment of his life most ingeniously elaborating his own uneasiness.

Enter SIR JOHN.

Sir John. Not yet, not yet; nobody like it as yet. Ha! who is that hovering about my house?—— If that should be he now!——I'll examine him nearer——Pray, sir—what the devil shall I say?——Pray, sir——

Bel. Sir!

Sir John. I beg pardon for troubling you, sir; but, pray what o'clock is it by your watch?

Bel. By my watch, sir!—I'll let you know in a moment.

Sir John. Let me examine him now——

[*Looks at him, and then at the picture.*

Bel. Egad, I am afraid my watch is not right: it must be later. [*Looking at his watch.*

Sir John. It is not like him.

[*Comparing the picture.*

Bel. It does not go, I am afraid.

[*Puts it to his ear.*

Sir John. The eye——no!

Bel. Why, sir, by my watch it wants a quarter of three.

Sir John. It is not he: and yet—no—no—no—I am still to seek.

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. Bellmont! Another word with you.

Sir John. Here comes another; they are all swarming about my house.

Bev. I have seen her; I have seen Belinda, my boy: she will be with Clarissa in the Park immediately after dinner, you rogue.

Sir John. I want to see his face; this may be the original.

Bev. Her father has been rating her in his usual manner; but your marriage with my sister will settle every thing.

Sir John. I'll walk round him. [*Sings.*] Loll, toll, loll!—[*Looks at him.*]—ha! it has his air. [*Sings.*] Loll, toll, loll,—and it has his eye! Loll toll, loll,—— [*Walks to and fro.*

Bev. Prithee, Bellmont, don't be such a dangling lover, but consummate at once, for the sake of your friend.

Sir John. It has his nose, for all the world.

Bel. Do you spirit your sister up to keep her resolution, and to-morrow puts you out of all pain.

Sir John. Loll, toll, loll!—it has his complexion; the same glowing, hot, amorous complexion.

[*Sings, and looks uneasy.*

Bev. Who is this gentleman?

Bel. An odd fellow he seems to be.

Sir John. Loll, toll, loll—it has his shoulders. Loll, toll, loll—Ay, and I fancy the mole upon the cheek, too. I wish I could view him nearer: loll, toll, loll!

Bel. He seems mad, I think. Where are his keepers?

Sir John. Begging your pardon, sir——Pray [*Looking at the picture.*]—Pray, sir, can you tell whether we shall have a Spanish war?

Bev. Not I truly, sir. [*To* BELLMONT.] Here is a politician out of his senses.

Bel. He has been talking to me, too: he is too well dressed for a poet.

Bev. Not, if he has had a good subscription.

Sir John. He has the mole, sure enough. [*Aside.*

Bev. Let us step this way, to avoid this impertinent blockhead.

Sir John. Ay! he wants to sneak off. Guilt! guilt! conscious guilt! I'll make sure of him. Pray, sir,—I beg your pardon—Is not your name Wildair?

Bev. No, sir, Beverly, at your service.

Sir John. Have you no relation of that name?

Bev None.

Sir John. You are very like a gentleman of that name——a friend of mine, whose picture I have here——Will you give me leave just to——

[*Compares him with the picture.*

Bev. An odd adventure this, Bellmont!

Bel. Very odd, indeed.

Bev. Do you find any likeness, sir?

Sir John. Your head a little more that way, if you please. Ay, ay! it is he. Yes, a plain case; this is my man, or rather,—this is my wife's man.

Bev. Did you ever know any thing so whimsical?

Bel. Never———ha, ha, ha!

Sir John. They are both laughing at me. Ay! and I shall be laughed at by the whole town, pointed at, hooted at, and gazed at!

Bev. What do I see? 'Sdeath, the setting of that picture is like what I gave to Belinda. Distraction! if it is the same———

[*Drawing near him.*

Sir John. He makes his approach, and means, I suppose, to snatch it out of my hand. But I'll prevent him, and so into my pocket it goes. There, lie safe there!

Bev. Confusion! he puts it up in a hurry. Will you be so good, sir, as to favour me with a——

Sir John. Sir, I wish you a good day.

Bev. With a sight of that picture for a moment?

Sir John. The picture, sir——Po!——a mere daub.

Bev. A motive of curiosity, sir——

Sir John. It is not worth your seeing. I wish you a good day.

Bev. I shall take it as a favour.

Sir John. A paltry thing. I have not a moment to spare; my family is waiting dinner. Sir, I wish you a good morning.

[*Runs into his house.*

Bev. Death and fire! Bellmont, my picture!

Bel. Oh! no—no such thing.

Bev. But I am sure of it. If Belinda——

Bel. What, relapsing into suspicion again!

Bev. Sir, I have reason to suspect. She slights me, disdains me, treats me with contempt.

Bel. But I tell you, that unhappy temper of yours—Prithee, man, leave teasing yourself, and let us adjourn to dinner.

Bev. No, sir; I shan't dine at all. I am not well.

Bel. Ridiculous! how can you be so absurd? I'll bett you twenty pounds, that is not your picture.

Bev. Done; I take it.

Bel. With all my heart; and I'll tell you more; if it be yours, I will give you leave to be as jealous of her as you please. Come, now let us adjourn.

Bev. I attend you. In the evening we shall know the truth. If it be that I gave Belinda, she is false, and I am miserable. [*Exeunt.*

SIR JOHN. [*Peeping after them.*]

Sir John. There he goes! there he goes! the destroyer of my peace and happiness!——I'll follow him, and make sure that he has given me the right name; and then, my lady Restless, the mine is sprung, and I have done with you for ever. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The former Scene continues.*

Enter BELINDA *and* CLARISSA.

Belin. But have you really fixed every thing, Clarissa?

Cla. Positively, and to-morrow morning makes me his.

Belin. To-morrow morning!

Cla. Yes, to-morrow morning, I release Mr Bellmont from his fetters, and resign my person to him.

Belin. Why, that is what we poor women, after all the victories of our charms, all the triumphs of our beauty, and all the murders of our eyes, must come to at last.

Cla. Well, and in that we but imitate the men. Don't we read of their conquering whole kingdoms, and then submitting, at last, to be governed by the vanquished?

Belin. Very true, Clarissa; and I don't know but you are a heroine equal in fame to any of them, nay, superior: for your scheme, I take it, is not to unpeople the world.

Cla. Prithee, don't talk so wildly. To tell you the truth, now that I have settled the affair, I begin to be alarmed at what I have done.

Belin. Oh! dear, dear affectation!

Cla. Actually now, positively, I am terrified to death.

Belin. To be sure:—our sex must play its tricks, and summon up all its fantastic train of doubts and fears. But courage, my dear; don't be frightened; for the same sex within that heart of yours will urge you on, and never let you be at rest, till you have procured yourself a tyrant for life.

Cla. A tyrant, Belinda! I think more generously of Mr Bellmont, than to imagine he will usurp to himself an ill use of his power.

Belin. To deal candidly, I am of your opinion. But tell me now, am not I a very good girl, to resign such a man to you?

Cla. Why, indeed, I must confess the obligation.

Belin. Ay! but to resign him for one whose temper does not promise that I shall live under so mild a government?

Cla. How do you mean?

Belin. Why, Mr Beverley's strange caprices, suspicions, and unaccountable whimsies, are enough to alarm one upon the brink of matrimony.

Cla. Well, I vow I cann't help thinking, Belinda, that you are a little subject to vain surmises and suspicions yourself.

Belin. Now you are an incorrigible girl. You know I am of a temper too [illegible], too open—

Cla. I grant all that; but by this constant repetition of the same doubts, I should not wonder to see you most heartily jealous of him in the end.

Belin. Jealous!—Oh Heavens!—jealous indeed!

Cla. Well, I say no more. As to my brother, here he comes, and let him speak for himself.

Enter BEVERLEY *and* BELLMONT.

Bel. Well argued, sir: you will have it your own way, and I give up the point. Ladies, your most obedient. I hope we have not transgressed our time?

Belin. Not in the least; you are both very exact. True as the dial to the sun.

Bev. [*In a peevish manner.*] Although it be not shone upon.

Belin. Although it be not shone upon, Mr Beverley! why with that dejected air, pray, sir?

Bel. There again now! you two are going to commence wrangling lovers once more. Apropos, Belinda——now, Beverley, you shall see——be so good, madam, as to let me see this gentleman's picture.

Belin. His picture! what can you want it for? You shall have it. [*Searching her pocket.*

Bel. Now, Beverley, do you confess how wrong you have been?

Bev. Why, I begin to see my mistake. Say not a word to her: she'll never forgive me, if you discover my infirmity. [*Apart.*

Belin. It is not in that pocket: it must be here. [*Searches.*

Bel. You have been sad company, on account of this strange suspicion.

Bev. I own it; let it drop; say no more. [*Aside.*

Belin. Well, I protest and vow—Where can it be? Come, gentlemen, this is some trick of yours: you have it among ye. Mr Bellmont, Mr Beverley, pray return it to me.

Bev. No, madam, it is no trick of ours. [*Angrily.*

Belin. As I live and breathe, I have not got it!

Bev. What think you now, Bellmont?

Bel. She'll find it presently, man; don't shew your humours: be upon your guard; you'll undo yourself else. Clarissa, shall you and I saunter down this walk?

Cla. My brother seems out of humour: what is the matter now?

Bel. I'll tell you presently: let us step this way. [*Exit with* CLARISSA.

Belin. Well, I declare, I don't know what is come of this odious picture.

Bev. This odious picture! how she expresses it!

Belin. You may look grave, sir, but I have it not.

Bev. I know you have not, madam; and though you may imagine——

Belin. Imagine! what do you mean?—Imagine what?

Bev. Don't imagine that I am to be led blindfold as you please.

Belin. Heavens! with what gravity that was said!

Bev. I am not to be deceived; I can see all around me.

Belin. You can?

Bev. I can, madam.

Belin. Well, and how do you like your prospect?

Bev. Oh! you may think to pass it off in raillery: but that picture I have this day seen in the hands of another; in the hands of the very gentleman to whom you gave it.

Belin. To whom I gave it?—have a care, sir; this is another symptom of your jealous temper.

Bev. But I tell you, madam, I saw it in his hand.

Belin. Who is the gentleman? What's his name?

Bev. His name, madam?—'sdeath! I forgot that circumstance. Though I don't know his name, madam, I know his person, and that is sufficient.

Belin. Go on, sir; you are making yourself very ridiculous in this matter—Ha, ha!——

Bev. You may laugh, madam; but it is no laughing matter, that let me assure you.

Belin. Oh! brave—follow your own notions. I gave it away: I have scorned your present. Ha, ha! Poor Mr Beverley!

Bev. I don't doubt you, madam: I believe you did give it away.

Belin. Mighty well, sir; think so, if you please. I shall leave you to your own imagination: it will find wherewithal to entertain you. Ha, ha! The self-tormenting Beverley! Yonder I see Clarissa and Mr Bellmont. I will join them this instant. Your servant, sir. Amuse yourself with your own fancies—Ha, ha! [*Exit.*

Bev. Plague and distraction! I cannot tell what to make of this. She carries it off with an air of confidence. And yet, if that be my picture, which I saw this morning, then it is plain I am only laughed at by her. The dupe of her caprice! I cannot bear it.

Enter BELINDA, CLARISSA, *and* BELLMONT.

Belin. Observe him now. Let us walk by him, without taking any notice. Let us talk of any thing rather than be silent. What a charming evening!

Cla. And how gay the Park looks!—mind the gentleman!

Belin. Take no notice; I beg you won't. Suppose we were to shew ourselves in the Mall, Clarissa, and walk our charms there, as the French express it?

Bel. Ha, ha!—Beverley!—what, fixed in contemplation!

Bev. Sir, I beg—I choose to be alone, sir.

Bel. Belin. and *Cla.* Ha, ha, ha!

Bev. Pshaw! impertinent. [*Aside.*

Belin. Oh! for Heaven's sake, let us indulge the gentleman. Let us leave him to himself, and his ill-humours. This way, this way. You shall go home, and have your tea with me. Mr Beverley, [*She kisses her hand to him at some distance, and laughs at him.*] your servant, sir: I wish you a good evening. A l'honneur. [*Exeunt.*

Bev. Distraction! you may retire. Your servant, madam. Racks and torment! this is too much. If she has parted with the picture; if she has given it away—but she may only have lent it, or she may have lost it. But, even that, even that is an injury to me. Why should she not be more careful of it? I will know the bottom of it. That's the house the gentleman went into. I'll wait on him directly: but they are watching me. I'll walk another way, to elude their observation. Ay, ay, you may laugh, madam, but I shall find out all your artifices. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment at* SIR JOHN'S.

Enter LADY RESTLESS, *meeting* ROBERT.

Lady Rest. Where are you going, sir?

Rob. To my master's room, madam, to leave these clothes there.

Lady Rest. Stay, sir; stay a moment. [*Searches the pockets.*] Where are his letters?

Rob. Letters, my lady! I know of no letters: I never touch his pockets.

Lady Rest. I guessed you would say so. You are sir John's agent; the conductor of his schemes.

Rob. I, madam?

Lady Rest. You, sir, you are his secretary for love-affairs.

Rob. I collect his rents, my lady, and——

Lady Rest. Oh! sir, I am not to be deceived; I know you are my enemy.

Rob. Enemy, my lady! I am sure, as far as a poor servant dare, I am a friend to both.

Lady Rest. Then, tell me honestly; have not you conveyed his letters out of my way?

Rob. Indeed, madam, not I.

Lady Rest. Then he has done it himself.—— Artful man! I never can find a line after him. Where did you go for him this morning?

Rob. This morning?

Lady Rest. Ay, this morning. I know he sent you somewhere. Where was it?

Rob. Upon my word, my lady——

Lady Rest. Very well, sir: I see how it is.—— You are all bent against me. I shall never be at rest till every servant in this house is of my own choosing. Is Tattle come home, yet?

Rob. No, madam.

Lady Rest. Where can she be gadding?—— Hark! I hear a rap the door. This is sir John,

I suppose. Stay, let me listen. I don't know that voice. Who can it be? Some of his libertine company, I suppose.

Rob. My lady, if you will believe me———

Lady Rest. Hold your tongue, man: let me hear. You want to hinder me, do you?

Rob. Indeed, madam——

Lady Rest. Hold your tongue, I say; won't you hold your tongue? Go about your business, sir, go about your business. What does he say? [*Listening.*] I can't hear a word. Who is below there?

Enter TATTLE, *with a capuchin on.*

Lady Rest. So, Mrs Tattle, who is that at the door?

Tat. A gentleman, madam, speaking to William.

Lady Rest. And where have you been, mistress? How dare you go out, without my leave?

Tat. Dear my lady, don't be angry with me. I was so terrified about what happened in the morning, and your ladyship was in such a perilous taking about it, that I went to desire Mrs Marmalet would justify herself and me.

Lady Rest. Oh! very well, Mrs Busy-Body. You have been there, have you? You have been to frame a story among yourselves, have you, and to hinder me from discovering? But I'll go to my lady Conquest myself. I have had no answer to my letter, and 'tis you have occasioned it. Thanks to your meddling!

Tat. Dear my lady, if you will but give me leave: I have been doing you the greatest piece of service. I believe, in my conscience, there is something in what you suspect about sir John.

Lady Rest. Do you? why? how?

Tat. I have seen Mrs Marmalet, and I have made such a discovery!

Lady Rest. Have you, Tattle? Well! What? speak, tell me; what is it?

Tat. Robert has been there, madam, with a message from sir John, who wants to see her in the evening; and he has desired———

Lady Rest. Blessings on you, Tattle: well; go on: tell me all.

Enter a Servant.

What do you want, sir? Who called you? Go about your business.

Ser. Madam, there is a gentleman wants to speak with sir John about a picture.

Lady Rest. I had forgot me. It was he rapped at the door, I suppose?

Ser. Yes, madam!

Lady Rest. About a picture! This may lead to some further discovery. Desire the gentleman to step up stairs. [*Exit Servant.*] And so, Tattle, Robert has been there?

Tat. Yes, madam.

Lady Rest. And sir John wants to speak with Marmalet in the evening, and has desired—Oh! the base man! what has he desired? Now he is discovered. What has he desired?

Tat. He has desired, madam—the poor girl does not know what to make of it—She is very sober and discreet, I assure you, madam—he has desired, madam, in the dusk of the evening, that Mrs Marmalet will come, and——

Lady Rest. How unlucky this is? The gentleman is coming. I have a mind not to see him: and yet I will, too. Tattle, do you step to my room; as soon as he goes, I will come to you, and hear all in private. [*Exit* TATTLE.] In the dusk of the evening he desires to see her: abandoned wretch!

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. Madam——— [*Bows.*

Lady Rest. Pray, walk in, sir.

[*Curtsies.*

Bev. I wanted a word with sir John Restless, madam.

Lady Rest. About a picture?

Bev. Yes, madam, a picture I had given to a lady; and, however insignificant in itself, it is to me of the highest consequence, as it may conduce to the explanation of an affair, in which the happiness of my life is concerned.

Lady Rest. The lady is young?

Bev. She is.

Lady Rest. And handsome?

Bev. In the highest degree; my heart is devoted to her; and I have reason to suspect, that a present from me is not of so much value as I could wish. To be plain, madam, I imagine she has given the picture away.

Lady Rest. As I guessed: my suspicions are just.

Bev. Your suspicions, madam! Did you suspect it was given to sir John Restless?

Lady Rest. What I know of the matter shall be no secret to you. Pray, sir, have you spoke to the lady on this subject?

Bev. I have, but she knows nothing of the matter; she has lost it, she has mislaid it, she can give no account of it.

Lady Rest. She has given it to sir John, sir, to shew him how little she regards it.

Bev. Given it to him?

Lady Rest. Given it to him, sir!

Bev. Then, I have no further doubt.

Lady Rest. Of what?

Bev. Madam, I would not hurt your peace of mind; I would not give you an impression of sir John, that may affect his character.

Lady Rest. Oh! sir, stand upon no ceremony with him; an injurious, false, licentious man!

Bev. Is that his character?

Lady Rest. Notoriously: he has made me miserable; false to his marriage vows, and warm in the pursuit of his pleasures abroad! I have not deserved it of him. Oh! sir John! sir John! [*Cries.*

Bev. She weeps; the case is plain, and I am undone.

Lady Rest. Pray, sir, what is the lady's name?

Bev. Belinda Blandford.

Lady Rest. Belinda Blandford! So far I have discovered. [*Aside.*

Bev. Pray, madam, have you ever seen her?

Lady Rest. Seen her, sir! yes, I have seen too much of her.

Bev. You alarm me, madam! You have seen nothing improper, I hope?

Lady Rest. I don't know what you call improper. But, pray, what ought one to think of a young lady thrown familiarly into a gentleman's arms?

Bev. In his arms, madam! sir John's arms!

Lady Rest. In sir John's! in open day; in the Park; under my very window; most familiarly, wantonly reclining in his very arms.

Bev. Oh, Heavens!

Lady Rest. He clasping her with equal freedom round the waist!

Bev. False, false Belinda!

Lady Rest. Both interchanging fond, mutual glances.

Bev. Oh, madam! the whole is come to light, and I thank you for the discovery, though I am ruined by it. But give me leave: is all this certain?

Lady Rest. There can be no doubt, sir; these eyes beheld their amorous meeting.

Bev. Saw it yourself?

Lady Rest. Yes, all, all, sir. Sir John, I know, is capable of any thing, and you know what to think of Belinda, as you call her.

Bev. I now know what to think: I have long had reason to suspect.

Lady Rest. You have, sir? Then, the whole affair is plain enough.

Bev. It is so. I meant an honourable connection with her;——but———

Lady Rest. But you see, sir!

Bev. Yes, I see, madam———you are sure sir John has the picture?

Lady Rest. Sure, sir! it is your own picture. I had it in my hands but a moment, and he flew with ardour, with impetuosity, like a fury flew to it, and recovered it from me. What could be the meaning of all that violence?

Bev. The meaning is too plain.

Lady Rest. And, then, sir, when charged and pressed home with his guilt, most hypocritically, he pretended to believe it the portrait of some favourite of mine. But you know, sir, how false that insinuation is.

Bev. Oh, madam! I can justify you—Ha, ha! that is but a poor evasion, and confirms me the more in my opinion. I return you many thanks, madam, and humbly take my leave.

Lady Rest. Sir, I am glad you thought it prudent to speak to me about this affair. If any other circumstances come to your knowledge, I shall take it as a favour if you will acquaint me with them; for, indeed, sir, I am very unhappy.

Bev. I am in gratitude bound to you, and my best services you shall ever command. Madam, your most obedient. Oh, Belinda! Belinda! [*Exit.*

Lady Rest. Now, sir John, how will you be able to confront these stubborn facts? You are now seen through all your disguises; detected in your true colours. Tattle within here has fresh proofs against you; and your man Robert, and the whole house. I must hear Tattle's story this very moment. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Park.*

Enter SIR JOHN.

Sir John. Yes, yes; he told me his name honestly enough. Beverley is his name; and my lady Restless, now your gallant, your paramour is known. What do I see? By all my wrongs, the very man again, coming out of my house before my face!

BEVERLEY *and* ROBERT *come out of the house.*

Bev. There, friend, there is something for your trouble.

Rob. I thank your honour.

Sir John. He bribes my servant, too; and the fellow takes it! Both in their trade—both in their trade!

Bev. Could I have suspected her of such treachery? As I could wish: I take that to be sir John Restless.

Sir John. This is he to whom I have so many obligations. [*Aside.*

Bev. Well encountered: your servant, sir.

Sir John. My servant, sir! I rather take it you are my lady's servant.

Bev. You, if I don't mistake, sir John, are a pretty general servant of the ladies. Pray, sir, have not you a picture of mine in your pocket?

Sir John. That, I suppose, you have heard from my good lady within there?

Bev. Yes, sir; and I have heard a great deal more from my lady.

Sir John. I don't in the least doubt it.

Bev. Sir, I do not mean to work myself up into any choler about such a trifling bauble. Since the lady has thought proper to give it you——

Sir John. Do her justice, pray; she did not give it; so far she was true to you. I took it from her, sir.

Bev. Took it from her! That shews he is upon easy terms. [*Aside.*] It is of no consequence to me; I despise it, and you are welcome to make what use you will of it. This I will only say, that you have made me miserable.

Sir John. What, I have interrupted your happiness?

Bev. You have.

Sir John. And, no doubt, you think it cruel of me so to do?

Bev. Call it by what name you will: you have ruined me with the woman I doted on to distraction.

Sir John. A candid declaration! And so, sir, you doted on her, and never reflected that you were doing me the least injury?

Bev. Injury!—I promise you, sir, I will never injure you again, and so you may set your mind at peace. I here declare, I never will hold farther intercourse with her.

Sir John. Oh! that is too late for me. I have now done with her myself. You are very welcome to the lady, sir! you may take her home with you as soon as you please. I forswear her; and so I shall tell my lady this moment. [*Going.*

Bev. That will make her ladyship happy, no doubt.

Sir John. Yes, I dare say you know it will.

Bev. She told me as much, sir.

Sir John. She did!—why, then, you may depend I shall keep my word, and my lady may depend upon it, too. And that, I suppose, will make you both happy, sir?

Bev. My happiness is past recalling: I disdain all further connection with the lady.

Sir John. Ay, you are tired of her?

Bev. I loath her, detest her, hate her, as much as I ever loved her.

Sir John. And so do I, too, I assure you. And so I shall tell my lady this very instant. Your servant, sir. If I can find proof sufficient, you shall hear of me, I promise you. [*Exit* SIR JOHN.

Bev. I see how it is: she has been connected with him, till she has palled his very appetite. Sdeath, I'll seek her this moment, upbraid her with her falsehood, and then—by heavens! I shall do it with regret. I feel a string at my heart-string: but, were I to be torn piece-meal, this shall be our last interview!

Enter BELINDA, CLARISSA, *and* BELMONT.

Belin. Mass-a-day! poor soul! see where he takes his melancholy walk! Did not I tell you, Clarissa, that the stricken deer could not quit this place?

Cla. And did not I tell you, Belinda, that you could not keep away from the pursuit?

Bel. Pray, madam, do you want to be in at the death, or do you mean to bring the poor thing to life again?

Belin. I! what do you mean? You brought me this way.

Cla. Well! if that is the case, we had as good go home, for I want my tea.

Belin. Do! pray do: it is not six o'clock.

Bel. and Cla. Ha, ha!

Belin. What do ye laugh at?

Cla. At you, my dear: why, 'tis past seven. Oh! Belinda, you are the stricken deer, I find.

Belin. Who, I? Not I, truly; I———

Cla. My dear Belinda, I know you. Come, we will do the good-natured thing by you, and leave you to yourselves. Success attend you. Come, Mr Belmont. [*Exeunt.*

Belin. Thyrsis, a youth of the inspired train,
Fair Sacharissa loved, but loved in vain.

Bev. Po! po! [*Looking peevishly at her.*

Belin. Won't you know me, sir?

Bev. Yes, madam, I know you: it is but too true, that I know you.

Belin. Still gloomy and discontented! Come, come, under pain of my displeasure, brighten up this moment.

Bev. Silly, idle, ridiculous!

Belin. Take care of what you are about. When I proclaim a pardon, you had better embrace it, than reduce yourself to the necessity of sighing, vowing, protesting, writing to me, following me up and down, kneeling at my feet, imploring forgiveness——

Bev. Madam, you will never again see me humbled to that low degree.

Belin. Upon my word! ha, ha, ha!

Bev. Oh! you may laugh, madam: you have too long imposed upon my fond, easy credulity. But the witchery of your charms is over.

Belin. Very well, sir! and you are your own man again?

Bev. I am, madam; and you may be your own woman again, or any body's woman, or every body's.

Belin. You grow rude, sir!

Bev. It is time to wave all ceremony, and to tell you plainly, that your falsehood———

Belin. My falsehood, sir!

Bev. Your falsehood!——I know the whole story. I loved you once, Belinda; tenderly loved you, and, by Heaven, I swear it, it is with sorrow, that I can no longer adore you. It is with anguish, that I now bid you an everlasting farewell! [*Going.*

Belin. Explain, sir: what action of my life?

Bev. Your prudence forsook you at last. It was too glaring; too manifest in open day.

Belin. Too manifest in open day! Mr Beverley, I shall hate you.

Bev. All circumstances inform against you: my picture given away!

Belin. Insolent, provoking, wrong-headed man!—I'll confirm him in his error, to torment him as he deserves. [*Aside.*] Well, sir, what if I chose to give it away? I am mistress of my own actions, am I not?

Bev. I know that, madam: I know that; and I am not uneasy, madam.

Belin. So it seems—ha, ha!—why do you sigh, poor man?

Bev. Sigh, madam! I disdain it.

Belin. I am glad of it; now, that is so manly! but pray, watch yourself well, hold a guard upon all your passions, otherwise they will make a fool of you again.

Bev. And do you take care you don't expose yourself again. Lolling familiarly in a gentleman's arms—

Belin. How?

Bev. Here, in the Park; in open day.

Belin. What can this mean?

Bev. He inviting you to his house!

Belin. Oh! I understand him now; when I fainted, all this was. I'll encourage his notion, to be revenged of his waspish temper. [*Aside.*] Well, sir, and what then?

Bev. What then?

Belin. Ha, ha! poor Mr Beverley! why should you be in a piteous taking, because I, in the gaiety of my heart, give away a picture I set no value on, or walk with a gentleman I do set a value on, or lean on his arm, or make the man happy, by letting him draw on my glove?

Bev. Or draw off your glove, madam?

Belin. Ay, or draw it off?

Bev. Yes, or—or—or take any other liberties?

Belin. Very true.

Bev. You may make light of it, madam, but—

Belin. Why, yes, a generous temper always makes light of the favours it confers.

Bev. And some generous tempers will make light of any thing to gratify their inclinations. Madam, I have done: I abjure you, eternally abjure you. [*Going.*

Belin. Bon voyage!

Bev. Don't imagine that you will see me again.

Belin. Adieu.——Well, what, coming again? Why do you linger so? [*Repeats affectedly,*

Thus, o'er the dying lamp, th' unsteady flame
Hangs quivering to a point!

Bev. With what an air she carries it! I have but this one thing more to tell you: by Heaven I loved you, to excess I loved you! such is my weakness, I shall never quite forget you. I shall be glad, if, hereafter, I hear of your happiness, and, if I can, no dishonour shall befall you.

Belin. Ha, ha!—Well, my obliging, generous Don Quixotte, go and fight windmills, and castles in the air, and a thousand phantoms of your own creation, for your Dulcinea's sake! ha, ha, ha!

Bev. Confusion! Take notice, madam, that this is the last time of my troubling you.

Belin. I shall expect you to-morrow morning.

Bev. No, never; by Heaven, never!

Belin. Exactly at ten; your usual hour.

Bev. May I perish at your feet, if ever again—

Belin. Oh, brave! but remember ten; kneeling, beseeching, imploring, your hand upon your heart—'Belinda, won't you forgive me?'

Bev. Damnation!——I have done: I here bid you an eternal adieu!—farewell for ever!

[*Exit* BEV.

Belin. I shall wait breakfast for you. Ha, ha! poor Beverley! he cannot command his temper. But, in spite of all his faults, I love him still. What the poet says of great wits, may be applied to all jealous lovers:

——To madness sure they're near allied;
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An apartment in* BEVERLEY'S *house.*

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. So, Belinda, I have escaped your snares: I have recovered my freedom. And yet, if she had not proved false, what a treasure of love and happiness had I in store! her beauty—po!—no more of her beauty: it is external, superficial, the mere result of features and complexion. A deceitful syren, to draw the unwary into a dream of happiness, and then wake him into wonder at the storms and tempests that gather round him! I have done with her; I'll think no more of her. Oh, Belinda, Belinda!

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. Please your honour——

Bev. She, that in every part of life seemed so amiable.

Brush. Sir——

Bev. Under so fair a mask to wear such loose designs!

Brush. What is he musing upon?—Sir——

Bev. I have done with her for ever; ay, for ever. [*Hums a tune.*]—I swear for ever—[*Sings.*] ——Are you there, Brush?

Brush. Yes, your honour: here is a letter.

Bev. So unforeseen, so unexpected a discovery!—Well, well, well!——What did you say, Brush?

Brush. A letter for your honour, sir.

Bev. Give it to me another time. [*Walks about.*] I'll not make myself uneasy about her.

Brush. I fancy your honour will be glad to have it now?

Bev. What did you say?

Brush. It is a letter from Madam Belinda, sir.

Bev. Belinda! I won't read it: take it away.

Brush. Hey, which way is the wind now? Some quarrel, I suppose: but the falling out of lovers—Must I take it away, sir?

Bev. I have done with her for ever.

Brush. Have done with Madam Belinda, sir?

Bev. Oh, Brush, she is——but I will not proclaim her shame. No; let me still be tender of her. I will see her no more, Brush, that is all; hear from her no more: she will not wind herself about my heart again. I'll go out of town directly: order my chaise to the door.

Brush. Had not you better defer it, till to-morrow morning, sir? Perhaps, then———

Bev. No, no; directly; do as I bid you.

Brush. Consider, sir, if your mind should change, the trouble of coming back post-haste—

Bev. No, never, I say never: what! to her, who could smile on me, on him, on a thousand? No; she shall know that I am a man, and no longer the dupe of her artifice.

Brush. But, sir, you know, that one solitary tear, which, after miserably chafing for it half an hour together, she will painfully distil from the corner of her eye, will extinguish all this rage, and then———

Bev. Po, po! You know nothing of the matter. Go and order the chaise directly.

Brush. Yes, sir. I suppose a couple of shirts will be sufficient, sir? You will hardly stay them out.

Bev. Pack up all, sir. I shall stay in the country a whole month, if it be necessary.

Brush. An entire month, sir?

Bev. I am resolved, fixed, and determined; and so do as I have ordered you.—[*Exit* BRUSH.]—So shall I disentangle myself from her entirely, so shall I forget the fondness my foolish heart had conceived for her. I hate her, loath her, pity her, am sorry for her, and love her still. I must expel this weakness: I will think no more of her: and yet—Brush, Brush! I may as well see her letter, too: only to try what her cunning can suggest.

Enter BRUSH.

You may as well leave the letter, Brush.

Brush. Yes, sir; I thought as much. [*Exit.*

Bev. Now, what varnish will she put upon the matter?—[*Reads.*]—'The false gaiety of my 'heart, through which my dear Beverley might 'have read my real anguish, at our last meeting, 'has now subsided. If you will come to me, I 'will not laugh at your inquietude of temper, 'but will clear all your doubts, and shew you 'how much I am, my dearest Beverley, unalter-'ably yours.

'BELINDA BLANDFORD.'

Pshaw! Po! Satisfy my doubts! I have no doubts; I am convinced. These arts prevail no more. Ha, ha!—[*Laughs peevishly.*]—'My dear 'Beverly,'—[*Reads, and tears the letter by degrees.*]—'Real anguish'—ha, ha!—[*Tears another piece.*]—'Inquietude of temper'—[*Another piece.*]—'clear all your doubts'—Po, po, po! ha, ha, ha! damnation! I'll think no more of her—[*Tears another bit.*]—Ha, ha!—'Dearest Bever-'ley'——ha, ha! artful woman!—'unalterably 'yours'——false, false, false!——[*Tears another piece.*]—I'll not make myself uneasy about her. Perfidy, treachery, and ingratitude!—[*Fixes his eye, looks uneasy, and tears the letter in a violent passion.*]

Enter CLARISSA *and* BELLMONT.

Cla. So, brother.

Bel. Beverley!

Bev. Sister, your servant; Mr Bellmont, yours.

Cla. You seem melancholy, brother?

Bev. No, not I. I am in very good spirits.

Cla. Ha, ha! My dear brother, that is seen through: you are now upon the rack.

Bev. What, about a woman, a false, ungrateful woman!

Bel. Whom you still admire.

Cla. To whom you'll be upon your knees in five minutes.

Bev. You are mistaken: I am going out of town.

Bel. But you will take your leave?

Bev. I have done that, once for all.

Cla. Has not she writ to you?

Bev. She has; and there—there you see the effect of her letter. You will see, that I shall maintain a proper firmness on the occasion.

Bel. My dear Beverley, have done with this mockery: you but deceive yourself.

Bev. You want to deceive me, sir: but it is in vain. What! plead for treachery, for falsehood, for deceit!

Cla. No, sir; but for my friend, my lovely friend; for Belinda, for truth, for innocence.

Bev. You don't know all the circumstances.

Cla. But we do know all the circumstances; and, my dear brother, you have behaved very ill.

Bev. Heaven knows, I have not; and yet, Heaven knows, I should be glad to be convinced I have.

Cla. I will be your friend, and give you a hint. We women are soft and compassionate in our nature; go to her without delay, fall at her feet, beg her pardon, drop a tear or two, and all will be well again.

Bev. Do you come to make sport of me? may contempt and beggary attend me; may all the calamities of life befall me; may shame, confusion, and disquiet of heart for ever sting me, if I hold further intercourse with her; if I do not put her from my thoughts for ever! Did you leave her at home?

Cla. We did.

Bev. Well, let her stay there: it is of no consequence to me. How did she bear what passed between us?

Cla. Like a sweet girl, as she is: she behaved like an angel: I shall love her better than ever for her good humour.

Bev. Oh! I don't doubt her good humour.—She has smiles at command, Let her smile, or not smile, 'tis all alike to me. Did she say any thing?

Cla. She told us the whole story, and told it in tears, too.

Bev. Ay! Them she can command, too! But I have no curiosity about her. Was she in tears?

Cla. She was; and wept bitterly. How could you, brother, behave so rashly to so amiable a girl? Have you a pleasure in being the cause of her uneasiness?

Bev. I the cause? You wrong me; by Heaven you wrong me! my lady Restless was the cause. She told me such things; she planted daggers in my very heart.

Cla. You planted daggers in Belinda's heart. And it was barbarous. What, because a lady has not strength enough to bear up against a father, who is resolved to give her away to another, and because she faints out of excessive tenderness for you, and in that distress meets accidental relief from sir John Restless, at his own door———

Bev. How!

Cla. And because my lady Restless sees this out of her window, and has a perverse talent of misinterpreting appearances into realities, to her own disadvantage; you must, therefore, fill your head with ungenerous suspicions? Oh! For shame, brother! how could you?

Bev. But, is all this true? Is it really the case?

Bel. How can you doubt it? You know Belinda too well: it is the case, man.

Bev. I should be glad to find it so.

Cla. Well! I tell you it is so. How could you think otherwise? You know she has the best heart in the world, and is so nice of honour, that she scorns all falsehood and dissimulation.

Bel. Ha, ha! my dear Beverley, you have done the absurdest thing!

Bev. Why, if what you say can be made to appear—but, then, she'll never forgive my past behaviour.

Cla. Po! You talk, as if you were wholly unlettered in the tempers of women. My dear brother, you know, you men can do what you please with us, when you have once gained an interest in our hearts. Go to her, I say, go to her, and make your peace.

Bev. May I depend upon what you say?

Cla. You may.

Bev. Then I'll fly to her this instant, humble myself to her, and promise, by all my future life, to atone for this brutal injury.

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. The chaise is at the door, sir.

Bev. You may put up again; I shan't go out of town.

Brush. No, sir!

Bev. No—ha, ha! You may put up, and let me have the chariot directly.

Brush. Yes, sir; I knew it would come to this. [*Exit* BRUSH.

Bev. But do you think she will forgive me?

Cla. She will: love will plead your cause.

Bev. My dear sister, I am for ever obliged to you; and, Bellmont, I thank you, too. How could I wrong her so? I shall behold her once again. Is the chariot ready? I cannot help laughing at my own rashness. I won't stay for it; I am on the wing, my dear Belinda, to implore forgiveness. And so she fainted away in the Park, and my lady Restless saw sir John afford relief? Ha, ha, ha! Whimsical enough.—Ha, ha, ha! What a strange construction her crazy temper put upon it? Ha, ha! How could the woman be so foolish? My dear Belinda, I will fly to you this moment—ha, ha!—[*Going, returns.*]—Sir John shall give me back the picture, and, on my knees, I will once more present it to her.

Cla. So, so! you are come to yourself, I find.

Bel. I knew it would be so.

Bev. She shall have the picture. I'll find sir John directly: and then—ha, ha! how could I be such a madman! ha, ha!—sister, your servant, Bellmont, yours. Ha, ha! what a piece of work has that foolish lady Restless made for us all?

[*Exit singing.*

Cla. Let us follow him: I must be present at their reconciliation. [*Exit with* BELLMONT.

SCENE II.—*An apartment at* BELINDA'S.

Enter BELINDA

Belin. This rash, unaccountable man! how could he entertain such a suspicion! ungrateful Beverley! he almost deserves I should never see him again.—Tippet! I shan't be easy, till I hear from him. Tippet!

Enter TIPPET.

Is the servant returned from Mr Beverley's?

Tip. Not yet, madam.

Belin. I wonder what keeps him. I am upon thorns till I see the dear, ungenerous man, and explain every thing to him. Oh, Mr Beverley! how could you treat me so? But I was partly to blame; my lady Restless inflamed his mind, and I should not have trifled with his passion. Is the other servant returned from sir John Restless?

Tip. He is, madam.

Belin. And what answer?

Tip. Sir John will wait upon you himself, madam, directly.

Belin. Very well! I must get him to set every thing in its true light, and justify my conduct to Mr Beverley. And yet, the uncertainty of Beverley's temper alarms me strangely. His eternal suspicions! but there is nothing in that: my future conduct, my regard for him, will cure that disease, and then——

Tip. I dare be sworn it will, madam.

Belin. Yes, I think it will: when he knows

me better, he will learn to think generously of me. On my part, I think I can be sure he will meet with nothing but open, unsuspecting love.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir John Restless, madam.

Belin. Shew him in. Tippet, do you leave the room.

Enter SIR JOHN.

Sir John. In compliance with your commands, madam——

Belin. I am obliged to you, sir, for the trouble you have been pleased to give yourself. A particular circumstance has happened in your family, to my utter disquiet.

Sir John. Madam, there have happened things in my family, to my utter disquiet, too.

Belin. I am sorry for that, sir. I have been made quite unhappy, and must beg, as it is in your power, that you will be kind enough to remove the cause of my uneasiness.

Sir John. Whatever I can do, you may command.

Belin. Sir, I thank you, and must tell you, that your lady has done me the most irreparable injury.

Sir John. She has done the same to me. My injuries are irreparable, too. But how has she injured you, madam?

Belin. She has ruined me, sir, with the man I love to distraction.

Sir John. Now, here something else will come to light. [*Aside.*]—How, how has she done that, madam?

Belin. She has entirely drawn off his affections from me.

Sir John. And fixed them upon herself, I suppose?

Belin. I don't say that, sir.

Sir John. But I dare say it; and I believe it.

Belin. Pardon me, sir, I don't charge the lady with any thing of that kind. But she has unaccountably taken it into her head to be jealous of me.

Sir John. Jealous of you!

Belin. Her ladyship saw the little offices of civility I received from you this morning; she misunderstood every thing, it seems, and has told the gentleman, with whom I was engaged in a treaty of marriage, that improper freedoms have passed between us.

Sir John. Artifice! artifice! her usual policy, madam, to cover her own libertine ways.

Belin. I don't mean to say any thing harsh of the lady. But you know what foundation there is for this, and I hope will do me justice.

Sir John. Oh! madam, to the world, to the wide world I'll justify you. I will wait upon the gentleman. Who is he, madam? what's his name?

Belin. Beverley, sir.

Sir John. Beverley!

Belin. Yes, sir; you seem surprised. Do you know him, sir?

Sir John. Yes, yes, I know him; and he shall know me: my resentment he shall feel; he shall be answerable to me.

Belin. Answerable to you!

Sir John. To me, madam. I told you at first this was her scheme to shelter herself; and he, I suppose, is combined with her to give this turn to the affair, and to charge me with infidelity. But you, madam, can witness for me.

Belin. I can, sir: but can Mr Beverley be capable of a dishonourable action?

Sir John. That point is clear enough. He has injured me in the highest degree, destroyed my happiness.

Belin. How, sir! are you sure of this?

Sir John. He has given her his picture; I caught her with her eyes rivetted to it; I heard her admiration, her praises of it; her wishes, that she had been married to such a man. I saw her print a thousand kisses on it; and, in the very fact, I wrested it out of her hand.

Belin. If I imagined him capable of what you say, I should scarcely be willing to join myself to him for life. Quarrel with me about his picture, and at the same time give it to another!

Sir John. Lady Restless had the picture. Without doubt, you must be very happy with a man of his gallantry.

Belin. Happy, sir! I should be miserable; distracted; I should break my heart. But do you think you have sufficient proof?

Sir John. I have seen him coming out of my house since, clandestinely, shunning every observant eye, with the characters of guilt in his face; and all the discourse I had with him, served only to convince me the more.

Belin. Abandoned wretch! was this the love he professed for me? Sir, I have only to hope you will vindicate me in this matter. I commend myself to your honour, and I thank you for this favour.

Sir John. Our evidences will mutually speak for each other, and confound their dark designs. Madam, I take my leave.

Belin. Sir, your most obedient.

Sir John. The gentleman shall feel my indignation.

Belin. You cannot treat him too severely.

Sir John. I will expose him, I promise you. Madam, your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Belin. Oh! Mr Beverley, could I have imagined this? False! false man! and yet, how shall I forget him? but I will make an effort, though it pierce me to the quick. I will tear him from my heart. This moment I will write to him, and forbid him to see me more. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Park.*

Enter SIR JOHN.

Sir John. If I can procure sufficient evidence, I shall bring the matter to a divorce, and make an example of them all. Would Marmalet were come! this is her time to a moment. If I can worm the secret out of her—Is not that she, yonder?—Not quite daylight enough to distinguish: but I think I perceive a person masked. Hist! hist!—Mrs Marmalet—she comes this way: it is she. Mrs Marmalet, your servant.

Enter a Person masked.

You are very good, Mrs Marmalet———

Mask. Bless my heart, I am scared out of my senses!

Sir John. What's the matter, pray? what's the matter?

Mask. Oh, sir! I tremble like a leaf. I was accosted in a rude manner by some gentleman yonder; I can't stay here, let us go into your house, sir; I beg you will.

Sir John. My house? Would not any other house do as well?

Mask. Oh! no, sir: not for the world.

Sir John. Why, my wife is not at home, and so I think I may venture: not but I had rather it were elsewhere.

Mask. Indeed, sir John, I am frightened out of my senses. You will do me a favour, if you will take me into the house.

Sir John. Say no more: it shall be so. Robert!———

Rob. Is that sir John? [*Opening the door.*

Sir John. Your lady is not at home, Robert, is she?

Rob. No, sir.

Sir John. Then do you go in, and take care that nobody see Mrs Marmalet with me. Come, I'll shew you the way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—SIR JOHN'S *house.*

Enter TATTLE, *and* BEVERLEY.

Tat. [*As she enters.*] Ay, poor lady! she is unfortunate, indeed; and, poor gentleman! he is as jealous as my lady to the full. There has been a deal to do about the picture you mention, sir.

Bev. That will be explained presently: I'll wait till he comes home. I can't possibly go, without speaking to him.

Tat. Indeed, you had better not stay, sir. You don't consider the mischief your being in the house may occasion.

Bev. Mischief! how do you mean?

Tat. Lord, sir! I would not have you stay for the world: I would not indeed. You can call again in an hour, sir, and you'll certainly find him at home then. Bless my heart, sir!—I fancy that's his voice. Do, dear sir! you'll be the ruin of my lady, if he sees you here, sir, waiting in his house: he'll be persuaded you come after my lady; the world will never beat it out of his head.

Bev. But I shall give him to understand——

Tat. He won't understand any thing. Oh lud! oh lud! he's coming up: I'll run and look. [*Exit.*

Bev. What a flurry the woman is in! a foolish jade! I must speak with him now.

Tat. [*Entering.*] It is he, as I am alive, sir! and there is a woman in a mask with him.

Bev. A woman in a mask! Zoons, if that should be Belinda! my mind misgives me strangely! [*Aside.*

Tat. Do, dear sir: you look like a good-natured gentleman; let me hide you out of the way, sir. You would not be the destruction of a poor servant.

Bev. A mask coming home with him! I must know who that is. I won't leave the house without knowing. If I could conceal myself—have you any private place, Mrs Tattle?

Tat. That is the very thing I mean, sir. Let me conceal you in that closet, till he passes through this room. He never stays long here. It won't take you two minutes. Do, sweet sir, I'll down on my knees to you.

Bev. I must know who it is. Come, dispose of me as you will. If this should be Belinda! [*Exit.*

Tat. Heavens bless you, sir, for this goodness! I'll lock the door, to make sure work of it. I was never so frightened in my life. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR JOHN, *and a person masked.*

Sir John. Mrs Marmalet, I am obliged to you for this favour. I wanted a word or two with you.

Mask. So Robert informed me, sir.

Sir John Did he tell you my business?

Mask. No, sir.

Sir John. Look ye, then: if you will gratify me in what I shall ask, you may command any thing. Now you may be uncovered.

Mask. La! sir—I hear a noise: I am afraid somebody's coming: I shall be seen.

Sir John. Hush! no: there's nobody. If you will indulge me on this occasion, I am yours for ever. Here, here is a purse of money for you.

Mask. But if this should come to the knowledge of your lady, I am ruined and undone.

Sir John. No, no: I'll take care of you.

Mask. Will you, sir?

Sir John. I will. But come; let me remove this from your face.

Mask. But somebody may come.

Sir John. I'll lock the door. There, now, we are safe.

Mask. But in a little time you'll make up all quarrels with your lady; and I shall be ruined.

Sir John. No, no; never fear; I shall never be reconciled to her: I hate her; I detest her.

Lady Rest. Do you so, sir? [*Unmasking.*] Now, sir John, what can you say now, sir?

Sir John. My lady Restless! Confusion! what shall I say?

Lady Rest. Oh, sir John! sir John! what evasion have you now, sir? Can you deny your guilt any longer?

Sir John. This is unlucky! That villain Robert has betrayed me. I can't explain myself to her now. Try what soothing will do.———My lady Restless, if you will but have patience, this matter shall be explained.

Lady Rest. Explained, sir?

Sir John. Yes, my dear, explained; and——

Lady Rest. My dear, too!—the assurance of you!

Sir John. I say, my dear; for I still regard you; and this was all done to—to—cure you of your jealousy; all done to cure you of your jealousy.

Lady Rest. A fine way you have taken!

Sir John. Yes, yes; and so you will see presently: all to convince you how groundless your suspicions are; and then we shall live very happy together.

Lady Rest. Ay!

Sir John. I have no further suspicions of you. I see my error, and I want you to see your's. Ha, ha!—I have no suspicions——That will put her off her guard. [*Aside.*] My dear, compose your spirits, and———

Lady Rest. And do you think to deny every thing, even in the face of conviction? Base, base man! I'll go this moment and write to my brother.

Sir John. Now, you talk wildly. This is all raving: you make yourself very ridiculous. You do, indeed. I had settled all this on purpose, and contrived that it should come to your ears, and then I knew you would do just as you have done; and——then——I—I resolved to do just as I have done; only to hint to you, that listeners seldom hear any good of themselves, and to shew you how wrong it is to be too suspicious, my dear: was it not well done?—ha, ha, ha!

Lady Rest. And do you laugh at me too, sir? Make me your sport? I'll go and get pen and ink this moment.

Sir John. Oh! do so, madam; do so—ha, ha! you'll only expose yourself: go and write, madam—ha, ha, ha!

Lady Rest. I will, sir. [*Going.*] This door is locked. This won't succeed, sir. I suppose you have the key? Ay, I'll lay my life you have, and some one or other of your creatures is locked in there.

Sir John. There, again! This is of a piece with all your vain surmises. Ha, ha! you are mighty silly; indeed you are.

Lady Rest. I will search that closet. I am determined I will.

Sir John. Do so, madam; do so. Ha, ha! I can't but laugh at her.

Lady Rest. I'll have the door broke open, if you won't give me the key.

Sir John. Ha, ha, ha!——How you expose yourself!

Lady Rest. Will you give me the key, sir?

Sir John. Ha, ha, ha! it is too ridiculous!

Lady Rest. Mighty well, sir. Tattle!—who waits there? I will find out all your artifices. Tattle, I say!

Sir John. Tol de rol lol!—ha, ha, ha!—a silly woman.

Enter TATTLE.

Lady Rest. Do you know any thing of the key of that closet, Tattle!

Tat. The key, madam? I have it, madam.

Lady Rest. Give it to me.

Tat. That is, I have it not, madam. Don't have it, madam; don't ask for it. [*Aside to her.*

Lady Rest. Don't ask for it! but I will have it.—Give me the key this instant.

Sir John. How, is she not willing to give it? There is something in this, then. Give the key this moment, you jade; give it to me.

Lady Rest. You sha'nt have it, sir. What, you want to hinder me! give the key to me.

Tat. Dear heart, I have lost it, madam.—Better not have it, madam. [*Aside.*

Sir John. Give it me this moment, I say.

Lady Rest. If you don't let me have it, it is as much as your place is worth.

Tat. The devil is in it! there it is, then. Let me make my escape. [*Exit.*

Lady Rest. Now, sir, we shall see; now, now.

Sir John. Ay, now search, if you will. [*Laughing at her.*

Lady Rest. [*Unlocking the door.*] You shall be found out, I promise you—Oh! [*Screams out.*

Sir John. What is the matter, now?

Lady Rest. Heavens! what have we here?

Sir John. Oh! there is somebody there, then!

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. Madam——— [*Bows to her.*

Sir John. By all that's false, here he is again!

Lady Rest. What, in the name of wonder, brings you here, sir?

Sir John. Oh, madam, you know his business, and I know his business, and the gentleman knows his business. There he is, madam; there is the gentleman waiting for you; true to his appointment, you see.—Sir, your humble servant. My lady Restless, your humble servant. Now, write to your brother; do. I should be glad to know what you can say now. Now, now; is the case plain now?

Lady Rest. I am in amaze! I don't know what to make of this.

Bev. Sir, however odd this may appear——

Sir John. Ay, now settle it between yourselves: give it what turn you will, sir; she will confirm it. You need not be afraid, sir; you will agree in your story; she is quick of invention, and I dare say you are pretty quick, too.

Bev. Sir, I must beg you will put no forced construction upon this matter.

Sir John. And you beg the same, madam, don't you?

Bev. Sir, I beg to be heard. My business here is to desire you will return me the picture which you have in your possession. It is now become dear to me, sir.

Sir John. I dare say it is.

Bev. And must be returned.

Sir John. It is of equal value to me. It shall rise in evidence against you both.

Lady Rest. Evidence against me? Explain yourself. How did you get in here? What's your business? What brought you hither? What's your errand?

Sir John. Ay, sir, speak; how did you get in here? What's your business? What brought you hither? What's your errand?

Bev. Vexation! I am beset by them both at once.

Lady Rest. Speak, sir; explain.

Sir John. Ay, sir, explain.

Bev. Sir, if you will give me leave, I will satisfy you entirely. I assure you, sir, and you, too, madam, that the liberty I have taken with your closet is entirely owing to your maid, Tattle.

Sir John. The jade! I don't doubt it, sir.

Bev. To prevent, if possible, the interpretation now put upon seeing me in this house.

Sir John. And it was well contrived, sir. Oh, my Lady Restless!

Lady Rest. By all that's just, I knew nothing of it!

Bev. Nothing, upon my honour, sir!

Sir John. Oh, I knew you would both agree.

Bev. As I am a gentleman, I tell you the real fact.

Sir John. You need not, sir; I know the real fact.

Bev. I have no time to lose in frivolous altercation: I must now desire the picture, directly.

Sir John. I wish you a good evening.

Bev. I shall not stir without it. I should be glad you would comply without a quarrel. I must be obliged to——

Sir John. Ay, now her prize-fighter begins. [*Aside.*]—I desire you will quit my house, sir.

Bev. I am not to be trifled with. If you don't return it by fair means, I shall be forced to draw.

Sir John. There again, now! she has set him on to cut my throat; but I will disappoint her. She is a worthless woman, and I won't fight about her. There, sir, there is your trinket. I shall have proof sufficient without it.

Bev. Upon my honour, sir, you will have no proof of any transgression of mine. If you suspect your lady from these appearances, you wrong her much, I assure you.

Lady Rest. Sir, I desire you will explain all this.

Bev. Call up your maid, madam, and then—

Sir John. No, sir; no more of it. I am satisfied. I wish you good night.

Bev. When you are willing to listen to reason I shall be ready to convince you of your error. Madam, you may depend I shall do justice to your honour upon all occasions. And now I take my leave. [*Exit.*

Sir John. Now, my Lady Restless, now! You are thoroughly known; all your artifices are known; Mr Beverley is known; my lord Conquest is known!

Lady Rest. My lord Conquest, sir! I despise all your imputations. My lord Conquest's maid, sir! what can you say to that?

Sir John. Very well, madam! 'tis now my turn to write to your brother, and I promise you I will do it.

Lady Rest. You will write, sir, you will write! Well, his assurance is unequalled. [*Aside.*]—You will write! That is pleasant indeed—Write, sir; do; you will only expose your weakness—Ha, ha! you make yourself very ridiculous; you do indeed—Ha, ha!

Sir John. 'Sdeath, madam! am I to be insulted with a contumelious laugh into the bargain?

Lady Rest. Why, my dear, this was all done—to—to—to—cure you of your jealousy; for I knew you would act as you have done, and so I resolved to do as I have done. Was it not well done, my dear? Ha, ha!—

Sir John. Damnation! this is too much: it is beyond all patience.

Lady Rest. Ha, ha, ha! the tables are turned, I think. [*Sings, and laughs.*

Sir John. Let me tell you, it is no laughing matter. You are a vile woman; I know you, and the world shall know you: I promise you it shall.

Lady Rest. I am clear in my own conviction, and your slander I despise: nor shall your artifices blind me or my friends any longer. Sir, as you say, it is no laughing matter. I promise you, you shall never dishonour me again in this house.

Sir John. And I promise you, madam, that you shall never dishonour me in any house.

Lady Rest. Injurious, false, perfidious man!

Sir John. Deceitful, wanton! wanton woman!

[*Exeunt at opposite doors.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at* MR BLANDFORD'S.

Enter BELINDA.

Belin. UNGENEROUS, false, deceitful Beverley! under that fair appearance, could I imagine that he harboured so much treachery? Attached to Lady Restless; engaged in a dishonourable intrigue with the wife of another, and yet professing an affection for me, with ardour professing it, and for me only! He is likely to regard the honour of the marriage-bed, who is ready to commit a trespass on the happiness of his neighbour. It was Providence sent sir John Restless to pay me a visit. The whole is now brought to light; and, Mr Beverley, I have done with you for ever. I shall now obey my father's commands. By giving my hand to sir William Bellmont's son, I shall punish an undeserving libertine for his treachery.

Enter TIPPET.

Well, Tippet, have you done as I ordered you?

Tip. I have, madam.

Belin. The perfidious man! did you ever know such behaviour?

Tip. He is a traitor, like the rest of them.

Belin. After all the regard I professed for him! after so many ardent vows and protestations as he has made me!

Tip. The hours that he has sighed away at your feet!

Belin. I will banish him from my thoughts. My resolution is fixed, and so I have told my father. Is sir William Bellmont with him?

Tip. He is, madam: they are both in close talk: they are over their glass, and are so overjoyed at the change of your mind—

Belin. And I applaud myself for what I have done—Oh, Mr Beverley! you have forced me to this extremity—Here, take this letter, Tippet, and give it to him with your own hands.

Tip. He shall have it. [*Takes the letter.*

Belin. Where are all his letters?

Tip. Here, madam. [*Shews a parcel.*

Belin. The bracelets, and the pocket-book?

Tip. I have them safe.

Belin. Very well: take his presents home to him; and, do you hear? Bring me back all the foolish letters I writ to him.

Tip. Never doubt me: I won't quit the house without them. Exchange is all fair.

Belin. That letter will tell him, that though I now break with him in a manner, that may seem abrupt, his character and conduct have compelled me to it. Be sure you confirm that to him.

Tip. He shall hear it all, and roundly, too.

Belin. Very well: you may go—Tippet—ask his man—as if from yourself—carelessly—as it were by accident—whether his master has talked of me? and what he said, Tippet?

Tip. I know Mr Brush: I can wheedle it out of him, I warrant me.

Belin. Get at the particulars: not that I care: I don't want to know any thing about the ungrateful man. It does not concern me now. My foolish weakness is over: let him care as little for me as I do for him: you may tell him so.

Tip. Your message shan't lose in the carrying.

Belin. Well, that's all: you may be gone.

Tip. Yes, madam. [*Going.*

Belin. Mind what I have said.

Tip. You may trust to me. [*Going.*

Belin. Don't forget a word of it.

Tip. No, not a syllable. [*Going.*

Belin. And hark ye? tell him how easy, how composed I am. That will gall him. You see, Tippet, I am quite unconcerned.

[*Forcing a smile.*

Tip. Yes, madam: you don't seem to fret in the least.

Belin. It is easy to perceive that I am not at all disconcerted. You may see how gay I am upon the occasion.

[*Affecting to laugh.*

Tip. [*Laughing.*] Oh! yes, madam: you make quite a laughing matter of it.

Belin. Very true: a perfect air of indifference!—Well, I have done. Tell him, that, upon no account, will I ever exchange a word with him; that I will never hear of him; never think of him; never see him; and never, upon any consideration, admit the smallest intercourse; no, never; I will have no more to do with him.

Tip. I have my lesson, madam, and I am glad you are so resolved upon it. [*Going.*

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Mr Beverley, madam.

Tip. You must not let him up stairs; my lady will never see his face.

Belin. Yes, I think I may see him: shew him up. I will see him once more, and tell him all myself. It will come better from me, Tippet.

Tip. Yes, madam, you will do it with a better grace; and your resolution will melt away like a bit of sugar in your mouth.

Belin. My resolution is not to be altered: you may withdraw, Tippet.

Tip. Yes, madam—Ah! she has a hankering after him still. [*Exit.*

Belin. I shall now take my leave of him—But then, my friend Clarissa! can I rob her of her lover? she has not deserved it at my hands. Though Mr Beverley has deceived me, must I be false to honour, and to friendship?

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. Belinda! how gladly do I once again behold—

Belin. And with what resentment have not I reason to behold, sir——

Bev. You have, Belinda: you have reason, I grant it: forgive the rash words my folly uttered.

Belin. Mistake me not, sir: it is not your words I quarrel with: your actions, Mr Beverley; your actions, sir!

Bev. They are not to be extenuated: but surely, after the letter you honoured me with—

Belin. Sir, I have heard every thing since I was guilty of that folly.

Bev. Heard! what?

Belin. Dissemble if you will: but this must be the last of our conversing together. My maid will return you whatever I have received from you: all my silly letters I must desire you to deliver to her; and then visit me no more, sir.

Bev. Belinda!---you will not wound me thus! Here is the picture which caused that unlucky mistake between us. I have recovered it from sir John Restless.

Belin. From my lady Restless, sir.

Bev. Madam!

Belin. Oh! fy, sir; no more; I have done.

Bev. You must, you must accept it. Thus, on my knees, I beg you. Will you, Belinda?

[*Takes her hand.*

Belin. Leave me, sir: let go my hand, Mr Beverley: your falsehood——

Bev. My falsehood! by all the——

Belin. Your falsehood, sir: sir John Restless has told me all; every circumstance.

Bev. He has told you! what has he told? his life shall answer it.

Belin. You have destroyed my peace of mind for ever. Nay, you yourself have forced me into the arms of another.

Bev. What do I hear?

Belin. My lady Restless will rejoice at the news: the event will not be unpleasing to her; but she is welcome: let her enjoy her triumph.

Bev. You astonish me, Belinda! what does all this mean?

Belin. It means, that, in obedience to the commands of a father, I have agreed to marry Mr Bellmont.

Bev. Mr Bellmont!—him!—marry him! it is very well, madam: I expected it would come to this, and my lady Restless is only mentioned, on this occasion, as a retort for my accusation about sir John. I understand it; and, by Heaven! I believe that whole story.

Belin. You do, sir!

Bev. I do: fool that I was to humble myself to you! My pride is now piqued, and I am glad, madam, as glad as you can be, to break off for ever.

Belin. Oh! sir, I can be as indifferent on my part. You have only to send me back my letters, and——

Bev. Agreed, agreed. I'll go home this moment, and send them all. Before I go, madam, here is your own picture, which you had given me with your own hands. Mr Bellmont will be glad of it; or sir John Restless will be glad of it; or any body will be glad of it; you need not be at a loss.

Belin. Very like, sir. [*Takes the picture.*] Tyrant, tyrant man! to treat me in this barbarous manner. [*Cries.*

Bev. Tears! Belinda! [*Approaching.*] Belinda!

Belin. No more of your insidious arts. I will hear no more. Oh! my heart, my heart will break. I did not think it was in your nature to behave as you have done; but—farewell for ever.

[*Exit* BELIN.

Bev. Belinda! hear me but speak. By Heaven, my lady Restless——she is gone: 'sdeath! I have been duped by her all this time; I will now summon up all that is man within me, and, in my turn, despise her.

Enter TIPPET.

Tip. If you are going home, sir, I will take the things with me now.

Bev. Yes; I am going: I will leave this detested—

Tip. This abominable place, sir.

[*Laughing at him.*

Bev. This hell!

Tip. Ha, ha!—ay, sir, this hell.

Bev. This mansion of perfidy, ingratitude, and fraud!

Tip. Very right, sir; let us go.

Bev. And yet——Tippet, you must not stir. Indulge me but a little. It is all a misunderstanding, this.

Tip. My lady will have no more to say to you. You may take the things, sir: my lady resigns them to you, sir.

Bev. Oh! Tippet, use your interest with her. Keep them in the house till I return. I will clear up this whole matter presently. I must not lose her thus. [*Exit.*

Tip. Poor gentleman! he seems in a lamentable way. Well, I fancy for my part he is a true lover after all; that's what I do; and my young lady, I fear, is——

Enter BELINDA.

Madam, madam, madam! you are to blame; you are, indeed.

Belin. Is he gone?

Tip. He is, madam.

Belin. Did he say any thing? was he uneasy? or did he carry it off with a——

Tip. Oh! madam, he went away sighing short,

his heart throbbing, his eyes brimful, his looks pale: you are to blame; you are, indeed, madam. I dare be sworn he has never proved false.

Belin. Oh! Tippet, could I be sure of that!

Tip. But you are not sure of the contrary. Why won't you see my lady Restless? See her directly, madam; go to her now, before it is too late; before the old folks, who are putting their heads together, have settled the whole affair. Dear madam, be advised. I hear them coming. They will hurry you into a match, and you'll repent of it. How cruel this is! Here they come. ——No, 'tis madam Clarissa.

Enter CLARISSA.

Cla. So, Belinda; you have thrown things into fine confusion. You have involved yourself, and my brother, and Mr Bellmont, and every body, in most terrible difficulties.

Belin. My dear Clarissa, here have been such doings between your brother and me—

Cla. So I find. I met him as I came hither. You have had fine doings, indeed. I have heard the whole; my brother has told me every thing.

Tip. Madam, madam! I hear your father. Sir William Bellmont is with him: they are coming up stairs.

Belin. I am not in a disposition to see them now. Clarissa, suspend your judgment; step with me to my own room, and I will then give you such reasons, as, you will own yourself, sufficiently justify my conduct.

Cla. The reasons must be ingenious, that can make any kind of apology for such behaviour: I shall be glad to hear you.

Belin. Very well, follow me quickly. You will find that my resolution is not so rash as you imagine. [*Exit with* CLA.

Tip. They have got into a rare puzzle! and how they will get out of it, is beyond my dexterity; and so let them manage as well as they can.

Enter BLANDFORD, SIR WILLIAM, *and* YOUNG BELLMONT.

Bland. Sir William, we have made a good day's work of it: the writings will be ready to-morrow morning. Where is Belinda? I thought she was in this room.

Tip. She is gone into her own room, sir; she is not well.

Sir Wil. She has changed her mind, perhaps: I shall have no faith in this business, till it is all concluded.

Bland. Changed her mind, say you? No, no; I can depend upon her. I'll bring her to you this moment, and you and your son shall hear a declaration of her mind out of her own lips. Tippet, where is Belinda?

Tip. I'll shew you the way, sir.

[*Exit with* BLANDFORD.

Sir Wil. Now we shall see what authority you have over your daughter. I have you promise, George; if she consent, you will be ready to comply with the wishes of your father?

Bel. Sir—you may depend, that is as far as matters are in my power: but you know, as I told you already, the lady has a settled rooted aversion to me.

Sir Wil. Aversion!——she can change her mind, can't she? Women have no settled principle. They like to-day, and dislike to-morrow. Besides, has not her father promised her to you in marriage? If the old gentleman likes you, what have you to do with her aversion?

Bel. To do with it! A great deal, I am afraid. You are not now to learn, that, when a young lady marries against her inclination, billet-doux, assignations, plots, intrigues, and a terrible *et cætera* of female stratagem, mount into her brain, and the poor husband in the mean time———

Sir Wil. Come, lad; don't play the rogue with your father. Did not you promise me, if she made no objection, that there would be no obstacle on your part?

Bel. I promised, to be sure; but yet, I can't help thinking———

Sir Wil. And I can't help thinking, that you know how to equivocate. Look you, George, your words were plain downright English, and I expect that you will perform to the very letter. I have fixed my heart upon this match. Mr Blandford and I have passed the day at the Crown and Rolls to read over the deeds. I have been dining upon parchment, as I may say. I now tell you, once for all, you must be observant of my will and pleasure.

Bel. To end all dispute, sir, if the lady—— [*Aside.*] She will never consent; I may safely promise.—If the lady, sir, can at once forget her engagements with my friend Beverley———

Sir Wil. You will then forget Clarissa? safely spoken. Come, I am satisfied. And now, now we shall see.

Enter BLANDFORD.

Bland. Sir William, give me joy: every thing goes as I wish. My daughter is a complying girl. She is ready to obey my commands. Clarissa is with her, beseeching, wrangling; complaining, soothing; now in a rage, and now in tears; one moment expostulating, and the next imploring; but all in vain; Belinda holds her resolution; and so, young gentleman, you are now completely happy.

Bel. Death to my hopes! can this be true? [*Aside.*

Bland. Sir William, give me your hand upon it. This will not only be a match of prudence, but of inclination.

Sir Wil. There, George! there is news for you! your business is done.

Bland. She owns very frankly, that her heart has been hitherto fixed upon a worthless man: she renounces him for ever, and is willing to give her hand as I shall direct.

Bel. What a dilemma am I brought into! [*Aside*

Sir Wil. George, what's the matter, boy? You a bridegroom! Wounds! at your age, I could cut a caper over the moon upon such an occasion.

Bel. I am more slack-mettled, sir: I cannot leap quite so high.

Sir Wil. A cup too low, I fancy. Let us go and finish our bottle. Belinda shall be my toast. I'll give you her health in a bumper. Come, Mr Blandford: I want to wash down the cobwebs of the law. [*Exit.*

Bland. I attend you, sir William. Mr Bellmont, follow us: we must have your company: you are under par: come, we will raise you a note higher. [*Exit* BLAND.

Bel. You have sunk me so low, that I shall never recover myself. This behaviour of Belinda's!—Can she think her treachery to one lover will recommend her to another?

Enter CLARISSA.

Cla. Mr Bellmont, I wish you joy, sir. Belinda has consented; and you have done the same. You are both consenting. The match is a very proper one. You will be finely paired.

Bel. You are misinformed, Clarissa; why will you do me this injustice?

Cla. Injustice! Mr Blandford has reported every thing: he has done you justice: he has told us how easily you have been persuaded: don't imagine that I am hurt. I resign all pretensions: I can be prevailed upon with as much ease as you, sir: I can copy the easy compliance of Mr Bellmont.

Bel. If you will but hear me! moderate your anger.

Cla. Anger!—anger indeed! I should be sorry any thing that has happened were of consequence enough to disturb my peace of mind.—Anger! I shall die with laughing at the thought. You may be false to your friends, sir; false to your vows; you may break every solemn engagement; Mr Blandford wishes it; Belinda wishes it; and why should not you comply? Follow the dictates of your own heart, sir.

Bel. Whatever has happened, Clarissa, I am not to blame.

Cla. I dare say not; and here is a lady will say the same.

Enter BELINDA.

Belin. Spare your reproaches, Clarissa. Mr Bellmont, you too may spare me. The agitations of my mind distress me so, I know not which way to turn myself. The provocation I have had———

Cla. Provocation, madam! from whom?

Belin. From your brother: you need not question me; you know what his conduct has been.

Bel. By Heaven, you wrong him: and so you will find in the end.

Cla. Your own conduct, madam! will that stand as clear as my brother's? My lady Restless, I believe, has something to say. It will become you to refute that charge.

Belin. Downright malice, my dear: but I excuse you for the present.

Enter TIPPET.

Tip. [*To* BELIN.] Your chair is ready, ma'am.

Belin. Very well: I have not a moment to lose: I am determined to know the bottom of this whole affair. Clarissa, when I return, you will be better disposed to hear me.

Cla. You need not trouble yourself, madam: I am perfectly satisfied.——Tippet, will you be so good as to order my chair.

Belin. Well; suspend your judgment. This business is of importance: I must leave you now. [*Exit with* TIP.

Bel. Clarissa, if you knew how all this wounds me to the heart!

Cla. Oh! keep your resolution; go on with your very honourable design: inclination should be consulted; and the necessity of the case, you know, will excuse you to the world.

Bel. Command your temper, and the whole shall be explained.

Cla. It wants no explanation: it is too clear already.

Bel. A moment's patience would set every thing right.—'Sdeath! one would imagine that lady Restless had been speaking to you, too. This is like the rest of them: downright jealousy!

Cla. Jealousy!—Upon my word, sir, you are of great consequence to yourself: but you shall find that I can, with perfect serenity, banish you, and your Belinda, entirely from my thoughts.

Enter TIPPET.

Tip. The chairmen are in the hall, ma'am.

Bel. Let me but speak to you.

Cla. No, sir: I have done: I shall quit this house immediately. [*Going.*] Mrs Tippet, could you let me have pen, ink, and paper, in your lady's room?

Tip. Every thing is ready there, ma'am.

Cla. Very well:—I'll go and write a letter to Belinda. I'll tell her my mind, and then adieu to all of you. [*Exit with* TIP.

Bel. How perverse and obstinate.

Enter SIR WILLIAM.

Sir Wil. Well, George, every thing is settled.

Bel. Why, really, sir, I don't know what to say. I wish you would consider——

Sir Wil. At your tricks again?

Bel. I am above an attempt to deceive you: but, if all circumstances were known—I am not fond of speaking detractingly of a young lady; but for the honour of your family, sir, let us desist from this match.

Sir Wil. Roguery, lad! there's roguery in this.

Bel. I see you will force me to speak out. If there is, unhappily, a flaw in Belinda's reputation———

Sir Wil. How?

Bel. This is no time to dissemble. In short, sir, my lady Restless, a worthy lady here in the neighbourhood, has discovered a connection between her and sir John Restless; sir John and lady Restless lived in perfect harmony, till this affair broke out. The peace of the family is now destroyed. The whole is come to the knowledge of my friend Beverley: with tears in his eyes, with a bleeding heart (for he loved Belinda tenderly), he has at last mustered up resolution, and taken his final leave.

Sir Wil. Ay! can this be true?

Bel. It is but too true; I am sorry to report it. And now, sir, judge yourself——Oh!——here comes Mr Blandford: 'tis a dreadful scene to open to him; a terrible story for the ear of a father! You had best take no notice: we need not be accessary to a young lady's ruin: it is a family affair, and we may leave them to patch it up among themselves, as well as they can.

Sir Wil. If these things are so, why then the case is altered.

Enter BLANDFORD.

Bland. Hey! what's in the wind now? You two look as grave! what's come over you? For my part, my spirits are above proof with joy: I am in love with my daughter for her compliance, and I fancy I shall throw in an odd thousand more, to enliven the honey-moon.

Sir Wil. Mr Blandford, we are rather in a hurry, I think. We had better not precipitate matters.

Bland. Nay, if you are for changing your mind—Look you, sir; my daughter shall not be trifled with. Where is she? Where is my girl? Who answers there?

Enter TIPPET.

Where's Belinda?

Tip. She is not gone far, sir; just stept out upon a moment's business to sir John Restless.

Sir Wil. Gone to sir John Restless! [*Aside.*

Bel. You see, sir.——— [*To* SIR WIL.

Bland. I did not think she knew sir John.

Sir Wil. Yes, she knows him: she has been acquainted with him for some time past.

Bland. What freak has she got in her head? She is not gone after her Mr Beverley, I hope? Zookers, this has an odd appearance! I don't like it: I'll follow her this moment.

Sir Wil. You are right: I'll attend you.—Now, George, this will explain every thing. [*Aside.*]—Come, Mr Blandford, this may be an escape: young birds will wing their flight.

Bland. Well, well, say no more: we shall see how it is. Come, sir William: it is but a step. [*Exit* BLAND.

Bel. [*To* TIP.] Where is Clarissa?

Sir Wil. [*Looking back.*] What, loitering, George?

Bel. I follow you, sir. [*Exit* SIR WIL.] Clarissa is not gone, I hope?

Tip. Gone, sir! She is writing, and crying, and wiping her eyes, and tearing her paper, and beginning again, and in such a piteous way!

Bel. I must see her: she must come with us. If lady Restless persists in her story, who knows what turn this affair may take? Come, Mrs Tippet, shew me the way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The hall in the house of* SIR JOHN RESTLESS.

A loud rap at the door; and enter ROBERT.

Rob. What a hurry you are in there?—This is my lady, I suppose. Where can she have been?—Now for more confusion. If she finds Madam Belinda with sir John, we are all blown up again.

SIR JOHN. [*Peeping in.*]

Sir John. Robert, Robert! is that your lady?

Rob. Mercy on us! She is coming, I believe, sir.—[*Looks out.*] I see her chair: it is my lady.

Sir John. Don't let her know that Belinda is in the house.

Rob. Not if I can help it. Trust to me, sir. [*Exit* SIR JOHN.] Here she comes. What has she been about?

A chair is brought into the hall.

Lady Rest. [*Coming out of the chair.*] Is sir John at home?

Rob. I fancy he is, my lady.

Lady Rest. Has any body been with him?

Rob. He has been all alone, writing letters in his study: he desired not to be interrupted.

Lady Rest. I shall not interrupt him, I promise him. You never will tell me any thing, Robert: I don't care who comes after him. To-morrow I shall quit this house, and then he may riot in licentious pleasure. If he asks for me, I am not well; I am gone to my own apartment: I hope to see no more of him. [*Going.*

Chair. Shall your ladyship want the chair any more to-night?

Lady Rest. I don't know what I shall want. Leave the chair there: you may wait.

[*Exit* LADY REST.

Chair. Ay, always a waiting job. [*Puts the chair aside. Exeunt Chairman and* ROBERT.]

Enter SIR JOHN *and* BELINDA.

Belin. If you will but permit me to say a word to her——

Sir John. Excuse me for the present: I beg you will.

Belin. A short interview with lady Restless might clear up all my doubts: what objection can you have?

Sir John. A million of objections. You do not

know the consequence of being seen in this house. She will interpret every thing her own way. I am unhappy, madam, while you stay.

Belin. There is more cruelty in your refusal than you can imagine. Mr Beverley's character is in question: it is of the last importance to me to know the whole truth.

Sir John. You know it all, madam. Mr Beverley's character is too clear. Proofs thicken, and grow stronger every hour. Since the visit I paid you this very day, I have made another discovery. I found him lurking here in my house.

Belin. Found him here, sir?

Sir John. Found him here. He was lying in ambush for another amorous meeting.

Belin. If there is no mistake in this business—

Sir John. Mistake! May I trust my own eyes? I saw him; I spoke to him; I taxed him with his guilt. He was concealed in her closet. Does that amount to proof? Her maid Tattle stationed him there. My lady was privy to it: she favoured the stratagem. Are you satisfied now, madam?

Belin. The particulars of this discovery, sir John, may convince me: tell me all, sir: you will oblige me.

Sir John. Enquire no more for the present. You will oblige me, madam. Robert shall see you safe home. I would not have my lady find us together: I think I hear her: no, no. In a day or two, the particulars will be known to the wide world. Where is Robert? He shall conduct you home. My peace and happiness require it.

Belin. My peace and happiness are destroyed for ever. If your story be true——

Sir John. It is too true: I wish you a good night. I am miserable while you are here. Robert!

Belin. Deliver me! I am ruined. I hear my father's voice: what brings him hither? I am undone, if he finds me. Let me retire into that room.

Sir John. That room will not do: you will be seen there.

Belin. Cannot I go up stairs? [*Going.*

Sir John. No; I am ruined, if you go that way. Hell and distraction! My lady Restless coming down! Here, madam, here; into that chair. You will be concealed there: nobody will suspect you.

Belin. Any where, sir: put me any where, to avoid this impending storm.

[*Goes into the chair.*

Sir John. [*Shutting the chair.*]—This is lucky. I am safe now. Let my lady come as soon as she will.

Enter LADY RESTLESS.

Lady Rest. I only wanted to say one word, sir.

Enter BLANDFORD.

Bland. Sir John, I am obliged to intrude: I am told my daughter is here.

Lady Rest. There! He has heard it all!

Bland. I have heard that Belinda came to your house: on what business, I do not know.—I hope, sir John, that you do not harbour the girl to disturb the peace and happiness of a father?

Sir John. That imputation, sir——

Lady Rest. He does harbour her.

Sir John. Mr Blandford, I give you my honour——

Lady Rest. I know he does. He has ruined your daughter; he has injured you, sir, as well as me, in the most essential point.

Sir John. She raves; she is mad. If you listen to her——

Enter SIR WILLIAM *and* BEVERLEY.

Bland. I am glad you are come, sir William. This is more than I expected.

Sir John. And more than I expected. There, madam, there is your favourite again!

Bev. My visit is public, sir. I come to demand, in the presence of this company, an explanation of the mischief you have done me.

Sir John. You need not be so public, sir. The closet is ready for you: Tattle will turn the key, and you will there be very safe.

Lady Rest. How can you persist in such a fallacy? He knows, he perfectly well knows it was an accident; a mere blunder of the servant, entirely unknown to me.

Sir John. She was privy to the whole.

Bland. This is beside my purpose. I came hither in quest of my daughter: a father demands her. Is she here? Is she in the house?

Sir John. In this house, sir? Our families never visited. I am not acquainted with her.

Lady Rest. He is acquainted with her. I saw him clasp her in his arms.

Bland. In his arms! When? Where? Tell me all!

Lady Rest. Yes; now let him give an account of himself.

Sir John. When you have accounted for your actions, madam——

Lady Rest. Render an account to the lady's father, sir.

Bland. Yes; to her father. Account with me, sir. When, and where, was all this?

Lady Rest. This very day; at noon; in the Park.

Bev. But in the eyes of the whole world: I know Belinda: I can acquit her.

Sir John. And I proclaim her innocence. We can both acquit her.

[*Goes up to* BEVERLEY.

Lady Rest. You are both in a plot: both combined.

Sir John. It was all harmless; all inoffensive. Was not it, Mr Beverley?

Bev. Yes; all, all.

Lady Rest. All guilt; manifest, downright guilt.

Sir Will. If you all talk together, we shall never understand.

Bev. I understand it all. Mr Blandford, you met Belinda in the Park this morning?

Bland. I did, sir.

Bev. You accosted her violently: the harshness of your language overpowered her spirits: she was ready to faint: sir John was passing by: she was going to drop down: sir John assisted her: that is the whole of the story. Injured as I am, I must do justice to Belinda's character.—She may treat me with the caprice and pride of insolent beauty; but her virtue claims respect.

Sir John. There now! there! that is the whole of the story.

Lady Rest. The whole of the story! No, sir John: you shall suppress nothing: you could receive a picture from her.

Sir John. You, madam, could receive a picture; and you, Mr Beverley, could present it.

Lady Rest. Mr Beverley, you hear this!

Bev. I can justify you, madam. I gave your lady no picture, sir John.

Sir John. She had it in her hand. I saw her print her kisses on it, and in that moment I seized it from her.

Bev. Belinda dropt it in the Park, when she was taken ill: I had just given it to her. Your lady found it there.

Lady Rest. I found it on that very spot.

Bev. There, sir; she found it.

Sir John. I found you locked up in her cabinet; concealed in private.

Lady Rest. But with no bad intent.

Sir John. With the worst intent.

Bev. Your jealousy, sir John, has fixed an imputation upon me, who have not deserved it: and your suspicions, madam, have fallen, like a blasting mildew, upon a lady, whose name was never before sullied by the breath of calumny.

Sir Will. The affair is clear, as to your daughter, Mr Blandford. I am satisfied; and now we need not intrude any longer upon this family.

Enter BELLMONT *and* CLARISSA.

Walk in, George, every thing is right: your fears may now go to rest.

Lady Rest. I shall not stay another night in this house. Time will explain every thing. Call my chairmen there. Sir John has it his own way at present.

Enter Chairmen.

You have settled this among yourselves. I shall now go to my brother's. Sir John, I have no more to say at present. Hold up.

[*Goes to the chair.*

Sir John. Let the chair alone. You shall not go: you shall not quit this house till I consent.

[*Goes between her and the chair.*

Lady Rest. I say, hold up.

Sir John. Let it alone.

Lady Rest. Very well, sir: I must be your prisoner, must I?

Sir John. It is mine to command here. No loose escapes this night; no assignations; no intrigues, to disgrace me.

Lady Rest. Such inhuman treatment! I am glad there are witnesses of your behaviour.

[*Walks away.*

Bland. I am sorry to see all this confusion; but, since my daughter is not here——

Lady Rest. He knows where she is, and so you will find.

Sir John. [*Coming forward.*]—Your daughter is innocent, sir, I give you my honour. Where should she be in this house? Lady Restless has occasioned all this mischief. She formed a story to palliate her own misconduct. To her various artifices, you are a stranger; but, in a few days, you may depend——

Lady Rest. [*aside, as she goes towards the chair.*]—He shall find that I am not to be detained here.

[*Makes signs to the chairmen to hold up.*

Sir John. I say, gentlemen, you may depend that I have full proof, and in a little time every thing will———

[*The chair is opened, and* BELINDA *comes out.*

Lady Rest. Who has proof now? There, there! In his house all the time!

Bland. What do I see?

Bev. Belinda here!

Sir Wil. So, so! There is something in it, I see.

Sir John. Distraction! this is unlucky.

Lady Rest. What say you now, Mr Beverley? Now, Mr Blandford! there; ocular demonstration for you!

Sir Wil. George, take Clarissa as soon as you will. Mr Blandford, you will excuse me, if I now decline any further treaty with you.

Bland. This abrupt behaviour, sir William——

Sir Wil. I am satisfied, sir. I am resolved. Clarissa, you have my approbation: my son is at your service. Here, George, take her, and be happy.

Bel. [*Taking her hand.*] To you, from this moment, I dedicate all my future days.

Bland. Very well: take your own way. I can still protect my daughter.

Bev. And she deserves your protection: my dear Belinda, explain all this: I know it is in your power.

Belin. This generous behaviour, sir, recalls me to new life. You, I am now convinced, have been accused by my lady Restless without foundation. Whatever turn her ladyship's unhappy self-tor-

menting fancy may give to my conduct, it may provoke a smile, but will excite no other passion.

Lady Rest. Mighty fine! what brought you to this house?

Belin. To be a witness of your folly, madam, and sir John's into the bargain.

Bel. That I can vouch: sir John can fill his mind with vain chimæras, with as apt a disposition as his lady. Beverley has been represented in the falsest colours——

Lady Rest. That I admit: sir John invented the story.

Bev. And Belinda, madam, has been cruelly slandered by you.

Sir John. She has so: that I admit.

Belin. And my design to see all this cleared up, brought me to this house, madam. Now, you see what has made all this confusion.

Lady Rest. Oh! I expected these airs. You may discuss the point where you please: I will hear no more upon the subject.

[*Exit* LADY RESTLESS.

Bland. Madam, the subject must be settled.

[*Follows her.*

Sir John. You have a right to insist upon it.—The whole shall be explained in a moment. Sir William, you are a dispassionate man. Give us your assistance. [*Exit.*

Sir Wil. With all my heart. George, you are no longer concerned in this business, and I am glad of it. [*Exit with young* BELLMONT.

Cla. [*To* BEVERLEY.] Now, brother, now is your time: your difficulties are all removed.——Sir John suspected you without reason: my lady Restless did the same to Belinda: you are both in love, and now may do each other justice. I can satisfy my Lady Restless and your father.

[*Exit.*

Bev. [*Aside.*] I see, I see my rashness.

Belin. [*Aside.*] I have been terribly deceived.

Bev. If she would but forgive my folly.

Belin. Why does not he open his mind to me? I can't speak first.

Bev. What apology can I make her?——Belinda!

Belin. Charming! he begins.

[*Aside, and smiling.*

Bev. [*Approaching.*] Belinda!——no answer? Belinda!

Belin. Mr Beverley! [*Smiles aside.*

Bev. Don't you think you have been very cruel to me, Belinda?

[*Advancing towards her.*

Belin. Don't you think you have been barbarous to me? [*Without looking at him.*

Bev. I have: I grant it. Can you find in your heart to forgive me?

Belin. [*Without looking at him.*] You have kept me on the rack this whole day, and can you wonder that I feel myself unhappy?

Bev. I am to blame: I acknowledge it. If you knew how my own heart reproaches me, you would spare yourself the trouble. With tears in my eyes I now speak to you: I acknowledge all my errors.

Belin. [*Looking at him.*] Those are not tears, Mr Beverley. [*Smiling.*

Bev. They are; you see that they are.

Belin. Ah! you men can command tears.

Bev. My life! my angel! [*Kisses her hand.*] Do you forgive me?

Belin. No; I hate you.

[*Looking pleased at him.*

Bev. Now, I don't believe that. [*Kisses her cheek.*] Do you hate me, Belinda?

Belin. How could you let an extravagance of temper get the better of you? You know the sincerity of my affection. Oh, Mr Beverley, was it not ungenerous?

Bev. It was; I own it; on my knees, I own it.

Belin. [*Laughing.*] Oh, proud man! have I humbled you? Since you submit to my will and pleasure, I think I can forgive you. Beg my picture back this moment. [*Shews it him.*

Bev. [*Taking the picture.*] I shall adore it ever, and heal this breach with uninterrupted love.

Enter SIR JOHN, LADY RESTLESS, SIR WILLIAM, BLANDFORD, BELLMONT, *and* CLARISSA.

Sir John. [*Laughing.*] Why, yes; it is very clear. I can now laugh at my own folly, and my wife's, too.

Lady Rest. There has been something of a mistake, I believe.

Bev. You see, sir John, what your suspicions are come to. I never was within your doors before this day; nor should I, perhaps, have had the honour of speaking to your lady, had it not been for the misunderstanding your mutual jealousies occasioned between Belinda and me.

Bland. And your ladyship has been ingenious enough to work out of those whimsical circumstances a charge against my daughter.——Ha, ha!

Sir John. It is ever her way, sir. I told you, my dear, that you would make yourself very ridiculous.

Lady Rest. I fancy, sir, you have not been behind-hand with me. Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Wil. And now, Mr Blandford, I think we may as well let the match go on as we at first intended.

Bland. No, no more of that: you have disposed of your son. Belinda, I no longer oppose your inclinations: take Mr Beverley as soon as you will.

Sir John. Now let us see: if she agrees to marry him, why, then, she knows he is innocent, and I shall be satisfied. [*Aside.*

Belin. If you insist upon it, sir.

Bland. I do insist.

Lady Rest. If Beverley accepts of her, all my suspicions are at an end. [*Aside.*

Bev. Thus, let me take the bright reward of all my wishes. [*Takes her hand.*

Belin. Since it is over, you have used your authority, sir, to make me happy, indeed. We have both seen our error, and frankly confess that we have been in the wrong, too.

Sir Wil. Why, we have all been in the wrong, I think.

Sir John. It has been a day of mistakes, but of fortunate ones, conducing at least to the advantage of all parties. My lady Restless will now be taught———

Lady Rest. Sir John, I hope you will be taught———

Bland. Never mention what is past. The wrangling of married people about unlucky questions that break out between them, is like the lashing of a top: it only serves to keep it up the longer.

Sir John. Very true: and since we have been ALL IN THE WRONG TO-DAY, we will, for the future, endeavour to be ALL IN THE RIGHT.

Bev. A fair proposal, sir John: we will make it our business, both you, who are married, and we, who are now entering into that state, by mutual confidence to ensure mutual happiness.

The God of Love thinks we profane his fire,
When trifles, light as air, mistrust inspire.
But where esteem and generous passions spring,
There reigns secure, and waves his purple wing;
Gives home-felt peace; prevents the nuptial strife;
Endears the bliss, and bids it last for life.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

JEALOUS WIFE.

BY

COLMAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

OAKLY, *unhappy from his wife's jealousy.*
MAJOR OAKLY, *a bachelor, his brother.*
CHARLES, *nephew to* OAKLY; *attached to* HARRIOT.
RUSSET, *father to* HARRIOT.
SIR HARRY BEAGLE, *a sportsman.*
LORD TRINKET, *a coxcomb.*
CAPTAIN O'CUTTER, *an Irish sea-captain.*
PARIS, WILLIAM, } *servants to* OAKLY.
JOHN, *servant to* OAKLY.
TOM, *servant to* SIR HARRY BEAGLE.
Servant to LADY FREELOVE.

WOMEN.

MRS OAKLY, *the Jealous wife.*
LADY FREELOVE, *a woman of fashion.*
HARRIOT, *attached to* CHARLES.
TOILET, *servant to* MRS OAKLY.
Chambermaid.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* OAKLY'S *House.*

Noise heard within—MRS OAKLY, *within.*

DON'T tell me—I know it is so—It's monstrous, and I will not bear it.

Oak. [*Within.*] But, my dear——

Mrs Oak. Nay, nay, &c. [*Squabbling within.*

Enter MRS OAKLY, *with a letter,* OAKLY *following.*

Say what you will, Mr Oakly, you shall never persuade me but this is some filthy intrigue of yours.

Oak. I can assure you, my love!——

Mrs Oak. Your love!—Don't I know your—Tell me, I say, this instant, every circumstance relating to this letter.

Oak. How can I tell you, when you will not so much as let me see it?

Mrs Oak. Look you, Mr Oakly, this usage is not to be borne. You take a pleasure in abusing my tenderness and soft disposition—To be perpetually running over the whole town, nay, the whole kingdom, too, in pursuit of your amours!—Did not I discover that you was great with mademoiselle, my own woman?—Did not you contract a shameful familiarity with Mrs Freeman?—Did not I detect your intrigue with lady Wealthy?—Was not you——

Oak. Oons! madam, the Grand Turk himself has not half so many mistresses—You throw me out of all patience—Do I know any body but our common friends?—Am I visited by any body that does not visit you?—Do I ever go out, unless you go with me?—And am I not as constantly by your side, as if I was tied to your apron-strings?

Mrs Oak. Go, go; you are a false man—— Have not I found you out a thousand times? And have not I this moment a letter in my hand, which convinces me of your baseness?——Let me know the whole affair, or I will——

Oak. Let you know! Let me know what you would have of me——You stop my letter before it comes to my hands, and then expect that I should know the contents of it.

Mrs Oak. Heaven be praised! I stopt it—I suspected some of these doings for some time past—But the letter informs me who she is, and I'll be revenged on her sufficiently. Oh, you base man, you!

Oak. I beg, my dear, that you would moderate your passion!—Shew me the letter, and I'll convince you of my innocence.

Mrs Oak. Innocence!—Abominable!—Innocence!—But I am not to be made such a fool—I am convinced of your perfidy, and very sure that——

Oak. 'Sdeath and fire! your passion hurries you out of your senses——Will you hear me?

Mrs Oak. No, you are a base man; and I will not hear you.

Oak. Why, then, my dear, since you will neither talk reasonably yourself, nor listen to reason from me, I shall take my leave till you are in a better humour. So, your servant! [*Going.*

Mrs Oak. Ay, go, you cruel man!——Go to your mistresses, and leave your poor wife to her miseries——How unfortunate a woman am I!—I could die with vexation——

[*Throwing herself into a chair.*

Oak. There it is—Now dare not I stir a step further—If I offer to go, she is in one of her fits in an instant—Never, sure, was woman at once of so violent and so delicate a constitution! What shall I say to sooth her? Nay, never make thyself so uneasy, my dear—Come, come, you know I love you. Nay, nay, you shall be convinced.

Mrs Oak. I know you hate me; and that your unkindness and barbarity will be the death of me. [*Whining.*

Oak. Do not vex yourself as this rate—I love you most passionately—Indeed, I do—This must be some mistake.

Mrs Oak. Oh, I am an unhappy woman!

[*Weeping.*

Oak. Dry up thy tears, my love, and be comforted! You will find that I am not to blame in this matter—Come, let me see this letter—Nay, you shall not deny me. [*Taking the letter.*

Mrs Oak. There! Take it; you know the hand, I am sure.

Oak. 'To Charles Oakly, esq.'—[*Reading.*]—Hand! 'Tis a clerk-like hand, indeed! A good round text! and was certainly never penned by a fair lady.

Mrs Oak. Ay, laugh at me, do!

Oak. Forgive me, my love, I did not mean to laugh at thee—But what says the letter?—[*Reading.*]—'Daughter eloped—you must be privy to 'it—scandalous—dishonourable—satisfaction—'revenge'—um, um, um—'injured father.

'HENRY RUSSET.'

Mrs Oak. [*Rising.*]—Well, sir—you see I have detected you—Tell me this instant where she is concealed.

Oak. So—so—so—This hurts me—I'm shocked—— [*To himself.*

Mrs Oak. What, are you confounded with your guilt? Have I caught you at last?

Oak. O that wicked Charles! To decoy a young lady from her parents in the country! The profligacy of the young fellows of this age is abominable. [*To himself.*

Mrs Oak. [*Half aside, and musing.*]—Charles! Let me see! Charles! No! Impossible. This is all a trick.

Oak. He has certainly ruined this poor lady. [*To himself.*

Mrs Oak. Art! Art! All art! There's a sudden turn now! You have ready wit for an intrigue, I find.

Oak. Such an abandoned action! I wish I had never had the care of him. [*To himself.*

Mrs Oak. Mighty fine, Mr Oakly! Go on, sir; go on! I see what you mean. Your assurance provokes me beyond your very falsehood itself. So, you imagine, sir, that this affected concern, this flimsy pretence about Charles, is to bring you off? Matchless confidence! But I am armed against every thing—I am prepared for all your dark schemes: I am aware of all your low stratagems.

Oak. See there, now! Was ever any thing so provoking? To persevere in your ridiculous—— For Heaven's sake, my dear, don't distract me! When you see my mind thus agitated and uneasy, that a young fellow, whom his dying father, my own brother, committed to my care, should be guilty of such enormous wickedness; I say, when you are witness of my distress on this occasion, how can you be weak enough and cruel enough to——

Mrs Oak. Prodigiously well, sir! You do it very well. Nay, keep it up, carry it on, there's nothing like going through with it. O you artful creature! But, sir, I am not to be so easily satisfied. I do not believe a syllable of all this—— Give me the letter—[*Snatching the letter.*]—You shall sorely repent this vile business, for I am resolved that I will know the bottom of it.

[*Exit* MRS OAK.

Oak. This is beyond all patience. Provoking woman! Her absurd suspicions interpret every thing the wrong way. She delights to make me wretched, because she sees I am attached to her, and converts my tenderness and affection into the instruments of my own torture. But this ungracious boy! In how many troubles will he involve his own and this lady's family—I never imagined that he was of such abandoned principles. O, here he comes!

Enter MAJOR OAKLY *and* CHARLES.

Cha. Good-morrow, sir.

Maj. Good-morrow, brother, good-morrow!—What! You have been at the old work, I find? I heard you—ding! dong! i'faith! She has rung a noble peal in your ears. But how now? Why, sure, you've had a remarkable warm bout on't.—You seem more ruffled than usual.

Oak. I am, indeed, brother! Thanks to that young gentleman there. Have a care, Charles! You may be called to a severe account for this. The honour of a family, sir, is no such light matter.

Cha. Sir!

Maj. Hey day? What, has a curtain lecture produced a lecture of morality? What is all this?

Oak. To a profligate mind, perhaps, these things may appear agreeable in the beginning.—But don't you tremble at the consequences?

Cha. I see, sir, that you are displeased with me; but I am quite at a loss to guess at the occasion.

Oak. Tell me, sir! Where is Miss Harriot Russet?

Cha. Miss Harriot Russet! Sir—explain——

Oak. Have not you decoyed her from her father?

Cha. I decoyed her!——Decoyed my Harriot!—I would sooner die than do her the least injury. What can this mean?

Maj. I believe the young dog has been at her, after all.

Oak. I was in hopes, Charles, you had better principles. But there's a letter just come from her father———

Cha. A letter! What letter? Dear sir, give it me. Some intelligence of my Harriot, major!—The letter, sir; the letter this moment, for Heaven's sake!

Oak. If this warmth, Charles, tends to prove your innocence———

Cha. Dear sir, excuse me—I'll prove any thing—Let me but see this letter, and I'll———

Oak. Let you see it? I could hardly get a sight of it myself. Mrs Oakly has it.

Cha. Has she got it? Major, I'll be with you again directly. [*Exit* CHA. *hastily.*

Maj. Hey-day! The devil's in the boy! What a fiery set of people! By my troth, I think the whole family is made of nothing but combustibles!

Oak. I like this emotion. It looks well. It may serve, too, to convince my wife of the folly of her suspicions. Would to Heaven I could quiet them for ever!

Maj. Why, pray now, my dear naughty brother, what heinous offence have you committed this morning? What new cause of suspicion? You have been asking one of the maids to mend your ruffle, I suppose, or have been hanging your head out of window, when a pretty young woman has past by, or———

Oak. How can you trifle with my distresses, major? Did not I tell you it was about a letter?

Maj. A letter! Hum—a suspicious circumstance, to be sure! What, and the seal a true lover's knot now, hey? or an heart transfixed with darts; or, possibly, the wax bore the industrious impression of a thimble; or, perhaps, the folds were lovingly connected by a wafer, pricked with a pin, and the direction written in a vile scrawl, and not a word spelt as it should be; ha, ha, ha!

Oak. Pooh! brother—Whatever it was, the letter, you find, was for Charles, not for me—this outrageous jealousy is the devil!

Maj. Mere matrimonial blessings, and domestic comfort, brother! Jealousy is a certain sign of love.

Oak. Love! it is this very love that hath made us both so miserable. Her love for me has confined me to my house, like a state prisoner, without the liberty of seeing my friends, or the use of pen, ink, and paper; while my love for her has made such a fool of me, that I have never had the spirit to contradict her.

Maj. Ay, ay; there you've hit it; Mrs Oakly would make an excellent wife, if you did but know how to manage her.

Oak. You are a rare fellow, indeed, to talk of managing a wife! a debauched bachelor! a rattle-brained, rioting fellow—who have picked up your common-place notions of women in bagnios, taverns, and the camp; whose most refined commerce with the sex has been in order to delude country girls at your quarters, or to besiege the virtue of abigails, milliners, or mantua-maker's 'prenticees.

Maj. So much the better! So much the better! Women are all alike in the main, brother, high or low, married or single, quality or no quality. I have found them so, from a duchess down to a milk-maid.

Oak. Your savage notions are ridiculous.—What do you know of a husband's feelings? You, who comprise all your qualities in your honour, as you call it! Dead to all sentiments of delicacy, and incapable of any but the grossest attachments to women. This is your boasted refinement, your thorough knowledge of the world! While, with regard to women, one poor train of thinking, one narrow set of ideas, like the uniform of the whole regiment, serves the whole corps.

Maj. Very fine, brother! There's common-place for you, with a vengeance! Henceforth, expect no quarter from me. I tell you again and again, I know the sex better than you do.—They all love to give themselves airs, and to have power: every woman is a tyrant at the bottom. But they could never make a fool of me. No, no! no woman should ever domineer over me, let her be mistress or wife.

Oak. Single men can be no judges in these

cases. They must happen in all families. But when things are driven to extremities—to see a woman in uneasiness—a woman one loves, too—one's wife, who can withstand it? You neither think nor speak like a man that has loved, and been married, major!

Maj. I wish I could hear a married man speak my language—I'm a bachelor, it's true; but I am no bad judge of your case, for all that. I know yours, and Mrs Oakly's disposition to a hair.—She is all impetuosity and fire—a very magazine of touchwood and gunpowder. You are hot enough, too, upon occasion; but then, it's over in an instant. In come love and conjugal affection, as you call it; that is, mere folly and weakness—And you draw off your forces, just when you should pursue the attack, and follow your advantage. Have at her with spirit, and the day's your own, brother!

Oak. I tell you, brother, you mistake the matter. Sulkiness, fits, tears! These, and such as these, are the things which make a feeling man uneasy. Her passion and violence have not half such an effect on me.

Maj. Why, then, you may be sure, she'll play that upon you, which she finds does most execution. But you must be proof against every thing. If she's furious, set passion against passion; if you find her at her tricks, play off art against art, and foil her at her own weapons. That's your game, brother!

Oak. Why, what would you have me do?

Maj. Do as you please, for one month, whether she likes it or not; and, I'll answer for it, she will consent you shall do as you please all her life after.

Oak. This is fine talking. You do not consider the difficulty that————

Maj. You must overcome all difficulties. Assert your right boldly, man! Give your own orders to servants, and see they observe them; read your own letters, and never let her have a sight of them; make your own appointments, and never be persuaded to break them; see what company you like; go out when you please; return when you please; and don't suffer yourself to be called to account where you have been.—In short, do but shew yourself a man of spirit, leave off whining about love, and tenderness, and nonsense, and the business is done, brother!

Oak. I believe you are in the right, major! I see you're in the right. I'll do it; I'll certainly do it. But, then, it hurts me to the soul, to think what uneasiness I shall give her. The first opening of my design will throw her into fits, and the pursuit of it, perhaps, may be fatal.

Maj. Fits! Ha, ha, ha! Fits! I'll engage to cure her of her fits. Nobody understands hysterical cases better than I do: besides, my sister's symptoms are not very dangerous. Did you ever hear of her falling into a fit when you was not by? Was she ever found in convulsions in her closet? No, no; these fits, the more care you take of them, the more you will increase the distemper: let them alone, and they will wear themselves out, I warrant you.

Oak. True—very true—you're certainly in the right—I'll follow your advice. Where do you dine to-day? I'll order the coach and go with you.

Maj. O brave! keep up this spirit, and you're made for ever.

Oak. You shall see now, major! Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Order the coach directly: I shall dine out to-day.

Ser. The coach, sir! Now, sir!

Oak. Ay, now, immediately.

Ser. Now? Sir!—the—the—coach! Sir!—that is—my mistress————

Oak. Sirrah! Do as you're bid. Bid them put to this instant.

Ser. Ye—yes, sir—yes, sir. [*Exit Ser.*

Oak. Well, where shall we dine?

Maj. At the St Alban's, or where you will.—This is excellent, if you do but hold it.

Oak. I will have my own way, I am determined.

Maj. That's right.

Oak. I am steel.

Maj. Bravo!

Oak. Adamant.

Maj. Bravissimo!

Oak. Just what you'd have me.

Maj. Why, that's well said. But will you do it?

Oak. I will.

Maj. You won't.

Oak. I will. I'll be a fool to her no longer.—But, hark ye, major! my hat and sword lie in my study. I'll go and steal them out, while she is busy talking with Charles.

Maj. Steal them! for shame! prithee, take them boldly, call for them, make them bring them to you here, and go out with spirit, in the face of your whole family.

Oak. No, no—you are wrong—let her rave after I am gone; and, when I return, you know, I shall exert myself with more propriety, after this open affront to her authority.

Maj. Well, take your own way.

Oak. Ay, ay—let me manage it; let me manage it. [*Exit* OAK.

Maj. Manage it! Ay, to be sure, you are a rare manager! It is dangerous, they say, to meddle between man and wife. I am no great favourite of Mrs Oakly's already; and, in a week's time, I expect to have the door shut in my teeth.

Enter CHARLES.

How now, Charles, what news?

Cha. Ruined and undone! She's gone, uncle! My Harriot's lost for ever!

Maj. Gone off with a man? I thought so: they are all alike.

Cha. O no! Fled to avoid that hateful match with sir Harry Beagle.

Maj. Faith, a girl of spirit! Joy! Charles, I give you joy! she is your own, my boy! A fool and a great estate! Devilish strong temptations!

Cha. A wretch! I was sure she would never think of him.

Maj. No! to be sure! commend me to your modesty! Refuse five thousand a-year and a baronet, for pretty Mr Charles Oakly! It is true, indeed, that the looby has not a single idea in his head besides a hound, a hunter, a five-barred gate, and a horse-race; but, then, he's rich, and that will qualify his absurdities. Money is a wonderful improver of the understanding. But whence comes all this intelligence?

Cha. In an angry letter from her father. How miserable I am! If I had not offended my Harriot, much offended her by that foolish riot and drinking at your house in the country, she would certainly, at such a time, have taken refuge in my arms.

Maj. A very agreeable figure for a young lady, to be sure, and extremely decent!

Cha. I am all uneasiness. Did not she tell me, that she trembled at the thoughts of having trusted her affections with a man of such a wild disposition? What a heap of extravagancies was I guilty of?

Maj. Extravagancies with a witness! Ah, you silly young dog, you would ruin yourself with her father, in spite of all I could do. There you sat, as drunk as a lord, telling the old gentleman the whole affair, and swearing you would drive sir Harry Beagle out of the country, though I kept winking and nodding, pulling you by the sleeve, and kicking your shins under the table, in hopes of stopping you, but all to no purpose.

Cha. What distress may she be in at this instant! Alone, and defenceless! Where? Where can she be?

Maj. What relations or friends has she in town?

Cha. Relations! let me see.—Faith! I have it. If she is in town, ten to one but she is at her aunt's, lady Freelove's. I'll go thither immediately.

Maj. Lady Freelove's! Hold, hold, Charles! do you know her ladyship?

Cha. Not much: but I'll break through all forms to get to my Harriot.

Maj. I do know her ladyship.

Cha. Well, and what do you know of her?

Maj. Oh, nothing! Her ladyship is a woman of the world, that's all——she'll introduce Harriot to the best company.

Cha. What do you mean?

Maj. Yes, yes: I would trust a wife, or a daughter, or a mistress with lady Freelove, to be sure! I'll tell you what, Charles! you're a good boy, but you don't know the world. Women are fifty times oftener ruined by their acquaintance with each other, than by their attachment to men. One thorough-paced lady will train up a thousand novices. That lady Freelove is an arrant———By the by, did not she, last summer, make formal proposals to Harriot's father from lord Trinket?

Cha. Yes! but they were received with the utmost contempt. The old gentleman, it seems, hates a lord, and he told her so in plain terms.

Maj. Such an aversion to the nobility may not run in the blood. The girl, I warrant you, has no objection. However, if she's there, watch her narrowly, Charles! lady Freelove is as mischievous as a monkey, and as cunning, too.——Have a care of her. I say, have a care of her.

Cha. If she's there, I'll have her out of the house within this half hour, or set fire to it.

Maj. Nay, now, you're too violent—— Stay a moment, and we'll consider what's best to be done.

Re-enter OAKLY.

Oak. Come, is the coach ready? Let us be gone. Does Charles go with us?

Cha. I go with you! What can I do? I am so vext and distracted, and so many thoughts crowd in upon me, I don't know which way to turn myself.

Mrs Oak. [*Within.*] The coach! dines out! where is your master?

Oak. Zounds! brother, here she is!

Enter MRS OAKLY.

Mrs Oak. Pray, Mr Oakly, what is the matter you cannot dine at home to-day?

Oak. Don't be uneasy, my dear! I have a little business to settle with my brother: so I am only just going to dinner with him and Charles to the tavern.

Mrs Oak. Why cannot you settle your business here as well as at a tavern? But it is some of your ladies' business, I suppose, and so you must get rid o' my company. This is always your fault, major Oakly!

Maj. Lord, sister! what signifies it, whether a man dines at home or abroad? [*Coolly.*

Mrs Oak. It signifies a great deal, sir! and I don't choose———

Maj. Phoo! let him go, my dear sister, let him go! he will be ten times better company when he comes back. I tell you what, sister—you sit at home till you are quite tired of one another, and, then, you grow cross, and fall out. If you would but part a little now and then, you might meet again in good humour.

Mrs Oak. I beg, major Oakly, that you would

trouble yourself about your own affairs; and let me tell you, sir, that I——

Oak. Nay, do not put thyself into a passion with the major, my dear! It is not his fault; and I shall come back to thee very soon.

Mrs Oak. Come back! why need you go out? I know well enough when you mean to deceive me: for, then, there is always a pretence of dining with sir John, or my lord, or somebody; but when you tell me that you are going to a tavern, it's such a bare-faced affront——

Oak. This is so strange, now! Why, my dear, I shall only just——

Mrs Oak. Only just go after the lady in the letter, I suppose?

Oak. Well, well; I won't go then. Will that convince you? I'll stay with you, my dear! will that satisfy you?

Maj. For shame! hold out, if you are a man. [*Apart.*

Oak. She has been so much vext this morning already, I must humour her a little now. [*Apart.*

Maj. Fy, fy! go out, or you're undone. [*Apart.*

Oak. You see it's impossible—— [*Apart.*

[*To Mrs* OAKLY.] I'll dine at home with thee, my love.

Mrs Oak. Ay, ay; pray do, sir. Dine at a tavern, indeed! [*Going.*

Oak. [*Returning.*] You may depend on me another time, major.

Maj. Steel and adamant! Ah!

Mrs Oak. [*Returning.*] Mr Oakly!

Oak. Oh, my dear!

[*Exeunt* MR *and* MRS OAKLY.

Maj. Ha, ha, ha! there's a picture of resolution! there goes a philosopher for you! ha! Charles!

Cha. Oh, uncle! I have no spirits to laugh, now.

Maj. So! I have a fine time on't between you and my brother. Will you meet me to dinner at the St Alban's by four? We'll drink her health, and think of this affair.

Cha. Don't depend upon me. I shall be running all over the town in pursuit of my Harriot. I have been considering what you have said; but, at all events, I'll go directly to lady Freelove's. If I find her not there, which way I shall direct myself, Heaven knows.

Maj. Hark ye, Charles! If you meet with her, you may be at a loss. Bring her to my house. I have a snug room, and——

Cha. Phoo! prithee, uncle, don't trifle with me, now.

Maj. Well, seriously, then, my house is at your service.

Cha. I thank you: but I must be gone.

Maj. Ay, ay; bring her to my house, and we'll settle the whole affair for you. You shall clap her into a a post-chaise, take the chaplain of our regiment along with you; wheel her down to Scotland; and, when you come back, send to settle her fortune with her father: that's the modern art of making love, Charles!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A room in the Bull and Gate Inn.*

Enter SIR HARRY BEAGLE *and* TOM.

Sir Har. TEN guineas a mare, and a crown the man? hey, Tom!

Tom. Yes, your honour.

Sir Har. And are you sure, Tom, that there is no flaw in his blood?

Tom. He's a good thing, sir, and as little beholden to the ground, as any horse that ever went over the turf upon four legs. Why, here's his whole pedigree, your honour!

Sir Har. Is he attested?

Tom. Very well attested: it is signed by Jack Spur, and my lord Startall.

[*Giving the pedigree.*

Sir Har. Let me see—[*Reading.*]—'Tom-'come-tickle-me was out of the famous Tantwi-'vy-mare, by sir Aaron Driver's chesnut horse 'White Stockings. White Stockings, his dam, 'was got by lord Hedge's South Barb, full sister 'to the Proserpine Filley, and his sire Tom 'Jones, his grandam was the Irish Dutchess, and 'his grandsire 'Squire Spotly's Trajan; his great 'grandam, and great great grandam, were New-'market Peggy and Black Moll, and his great 'grandsire, and great great grandsire, were sir 'Ralph Whip's Regulus, and the famous Prince 'Anamaboo.

his
JOHN X SPUR,
mark.
STARTAL.'

Tom. All fine horses, and won every thing! a foal out of your honour's bald-faced Venus, by this horse, would beat the world.

Sir Har. Well, then, we'll think on't. But, pox on't, Tom; I have certainly knocked up my little roan gelding, in this damned wild-goose chase of threescore miles an end.

Tom. He's deadly blown to be sure, your honour; and I am afraid we are upon a wrong scent after all. Madam Harriot certainly took across the country, instead of coming on to London.

Sir Har. No, no; we traced her all the way up. But d'ye hear, Tom, look out among the

stables and repositories here in town, for a smart road nag, and a strong horse to carry a portmanteau.

Tom. Sir Roger Turf's horses are all to be sold—I'll see if there's ever a tight thing there—but I suppose, sir, you would have one somewhat stronger than Snip?—I don't think he's quite enough of a horse for your honour.

Sir Har. Not enough of a horse! Snip's a powerful gelding; master of two stone more than my weight. If Snip stands sound, I would not take a hundred guineas for him. Poor Snip! go into the stable, Tom; see they give him a warm mash, and look at his heels and his eyes. But where's Mr Russet all this while?

Tom. I left the 'squire at breakfast on a cold pigeon-pye, and enquiring after madam Harriot in the kitchen. I'll let him know your honour would be glad to see him here.

Sir Har. Ay, do: but hark'e, Tom, be sure you take care of Snip.

Tom. I'll warrant your honour.

Sir Har. I'll be down in the stables myself by and by. [*Exit* TOM.] Let me see———out of the famous Tantwivy by White Stockings; White Stockings his dam, full sister to the Proserpine Filly, and his sire—pox on't, how unlucky it is, that this damned accident should happen in the Newmarket week! ten to one I lose my match with lord Choakjade, by not riding myself, and I shall have no opportunity to hedge my betts neither———what a damned piece of work have I made on't! I have knocked up poor Snip, shall lose my match, and, as to Harriot, the odds are, that I lose my match there, too—a skittish young tit! If I once get her tight in hand, I'll make her wince for it. Her estate joined to my own, I would have the finest stud, and the noblest kennel in the whole country.—But here comes her father, puffing and blowing, like a broken-winded horse up hill.

Enter RUSSET.

Rus. Well, sir Harry, have you heard any thing of her?

Sir Har. Yes, I have been asking Tom about her, and he says, you may have her for five hundred guineas.

Rus. Five hundred guineas! how d'ye mean? where is she? which way did she take?

Sir Har. Why, first she went to Epsom, then to Lincoln, then to Nottingham, and now she is at York.

Rus. Impossible! she could not go over half the ground in the time. What the devil are you talking of?

Sir Har. Of the mare you was just now saying you wanted to buy.

Rus. The devil take the mare!—who would think of her, when I am mad about an affair of so much more consequence?

Sir Har. You seemed mad about her a little while ago. She's a fine mare, and a thing of shape and blood.

Rus. Damn her blood!—Harriot! my dear provoking Harriot! Where can she be? Have you got any intelligence of her?

Sir Har. No, faith, not I: we seem to be quite thrown out here—but, however, I have ordered Tom to try if he can hear any thing of her among the ostlers.

Rus. Why don't you inquire after her yourself? why don't you run up and down the whole town after her?———t'other young rascal knows where she is, I warrant you.—What a plague it is to have a daughter! When one loves her to distraction, and has toiled and laboured to make her happy, the ungrateful slut will sooner go to hell her own way—but she shall have him—I will make her happy, if I break her heart for it.—A provoking gipsy!—to run away, and torment her poor father, that dotes on her! I'll never see her face again.—Sir Harry, how can we get any intelligence of her? Why don't you speak? why don't you tell me?—Zounds! you seem as indifferent as if you did not care a farthing about her.

Sir Har. Indifferent! you may well call me indifferent!—this damned chase after her will cost me a thousand------if it had not been for her, I would not have been off the course this week, to have saved the lives of my whole family ------I'll hold you six to two that------

Rus. Zounds! hold your tongue, or talk more to the purpose------I swear, she is too good for you—you don't deserve such a wife—a fine, dear, sweet, lovely, charming girl!—She'll break my heart.------How shall I find her out?------Do, prithee, sir Harry, my dear honest friend, consider how we may discover where she is fled to.

Sir Har. Suppose you put an advertisement into the news-papers, describing her marks, her age, her height, and where she strayed from. I recovered a bay mare once by that method.

Rus. Advertise her! What! describe my daughter and expose her in the public papers, with a reward for bringing her home, like horses stolen or strayed!------recovered a bay mare!—the devil's in the fellow!------he thinks of nothing but racers, and bay mares, and stallions.------'Sdeath I wish your------

Sir Har. I wish Harriot was fairly pounded; it would save us both a deal of trouble.

Rus. Which way shall I turn myself?——I am half distracted.——If I go to that young dog's house, he has certainly conveyed her somewhere out of my reach——if she does not send to me to day, I'll give her up for ever——perhaps, though, she may have met with some accident, and has nobody to assist her.——No, she is certainly with that young rascal.—I wish she was dead, and I was dead------I'll blow young Oakly's brains out.

Enter TOM.

Sir Har. Well, Tom, how is poor Snip?

Tom. A little better, sir, after his warm mash: but Lady, the pointing bitch that followed you all the way, is deadly foot-sore.

Rus. Damn Snip and Lady! have you heard any thing of Harriot?

Tom. Why I came on purpose to let my master and your honour know, that John Ostler says as how, just such a lady as I told him madam Harriot was, came here in a four-wheel chaise, and was fetched away soon after by a fine lady in a chariot.

Rus. Did she come alone?

Tom. Quite alone, only a servant-maid, please your honour.

Rus. And what part of the town did they go to?

Tom. John Ostler says as how, they bid the coachman drive to Grosvenor-square.

Sir Har. Soho! puss——Yoics!

Rus. She is certainly gone to that young rogue——he has got his aunt to fetch her from hence——or else she is with her own aunt, lady Freelove——they both live in that part of the town. I'll go to his house; and in the mean while, sir Harry, you shall step to lady Freelove's. We'll find her, I warrant you. I'll teach my young mistress to be gadding. She shall marry you to-night. Come along, sir Harry, come along; we won't lose a minute. Come along.

Sir Har. Soho! hark forward! wind 'em and cross 'em! hark forward! Yoics! Yoics!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* OAKLY'S.

Enter MRS OAKLY.

Mrs Oak. After all, that letter was certainly intended for my husband. I see plain enough they are all in a plot against me. My husband intriguing, the major working him up to affront me, Charles owning his letters, and so playing into each other's hands.——They think me a fool, I find——but I'll be too much for them yet.——I have desired to speak with Mr Oakly, and expect him here immediately. His temper is naturally open; and if he thinks my anger abated, and my suspicions laid asleep, he will certainly betray himself by his behaviour. I'll assume an air of good-humour, pretend to believe the fine story they have trumped up, throw him off his guard, and so draw the secret out of him. Here he comes.—How hard it is to dissemble one's anger! O, I could rate him soundly! but I'll keep down my indignation at present, though it chokes me.

Enter OAKLY.

O my dear! I am very glad to see you. Pray sit down. [*They sit.*] I longed to see you. It seemed an age till I had an opportunity of talking over the silly affair that happened this morning. [*Mildly.*

Oak. Why, really, my dear——

Mrs Oak. Nay, don't look so grave now. Come—it's all over. Charles and you have cleared up matters. I am satisfied.

Oak. Indeed! I rejoice to hear it! You make me happy beyond my expectation. This disposition will insure our felicity. Do but lay aside your cruel unjust suspicion, and we should never have the least difference.

Mrs Oak. Indeed, I begin to think so. I'll endeavour to get the better of it. And really sometimes it is very ridiculous. My uneasiness this morning, for instance! ha, ha, ha! To be so much alarmed about that idle letter, which turned out quite another thing at last——was not I very angry with you? ha, ha, ha! [*Affecting a laugh.*

Oak. Don't mention it. Let us both forget it. Your present cheerfulness makes amends for every thing.

Mrs Oak. I am apt to be too violent: I love you too well to be quite easy about you. [*Fondly.*] Well—no matter—what is become of Charles?

Oak. Poor fellow! he is on the wing, rambling all over the town in pursuit of this young lady.

Mrs Oak. Where is he gone, pray!

Oak. First of all, I believe, to some of her relations.

Mrs Oak. Relations! Who are they? Where do they live?

Oak. There is an aunt of her's lives just in the neighbourhood; lady Freelove.

Mrs Oak. Lady Freelove! Oho! gone to lady Freelove's, is he?—and do you think he will hear any thing of her?

Oak. I don't know; but I hope so with all my soul.

Mrs Oak. Hope! with all your soul! do you hope so? [*Alarmed.*

Oak. Hope so! ye—yes—why, don't you hope so? [*Surprised.*

Mrs Oak. Well—yes—[*Recovering.*]—O ay, to be sure. I hope it of all things. You know, my dear, it must give me great satisfaction, as well as yourself, to see Charles well settled.

Oak. I should think so; and really I don't know where he can be settled so well. She is a most deserving young woman, I assure you.

Mrs Oak. You are well acquainted with her, then?

Oak. To be sure, my dear! after seeing her so often last summer at the major's house in the country, and at her father's.

Mrs Oak. So often!

Oak. O ay, very often—Charles took care of that—almost every day.

Mrs Oak. Indeed! But pray—a—a—a—I say—a—a— [*Confused.*

Oak. What do you say? my dear!

Mrs Oak. I say—a—a—[*Stammering.*] Is she handsome?

Oak. Prodigiously handsome indeed.

Mrs Oak. Prodigiously handsome! and is she reckoned a sensible girl?

Oak. A very sensible, modest, agreeable young lady, as ever I knew. You would be extremely fond of her, I am sure. You can't imagine how happy I was in her company. Poor Charles! she soon made a conquest of him; and no wonder: she has so many elegant accomplishments! such an infinite fund of cheerfulness and good humour! Why, she's the darling of the whole country.

Mrs Oak. Lord! you seem quite in raptures about her.

Oak. Raptures! not at all. I was only telling you the young lady's character. I thought you would be glad to find that Charles had made so sensible a choice, and was so likely to be happy.

Mrs Oak. O, Charles! True, as you say, Charles will be mighty happy.

Oak. Don't you think so?

Mrs Oak. I am convinced of it. Poor Charles! I am much concerned for him. He must be very uneasy about her. I was thinking whether we could be of any service to him in this affair.

Oak. Was you, my love? that is very good of you. Let me see? How can we manage it? Gad! I have hit it. The luckiest thought! and it will be of great service to Charles.

Mrs Oak. Well, what is it? [*Eagerly.*]—You know I would do any thing to serve Charles, and oblige you. [*Mildly.*

Oak. That is so kind! Lord, my dear, if you would but always consider things in this proper light, and continue this amiable temper, we should be the happiest people———

Mrs Oak. I believe so: but what's your proposal?

Oak. I am sure you'll like it. Charles, you know, may perhaps be so lucky as to meet with this lady—

Mrs Oak. True.

Oak. Now, I was thinking, that he might, with your leave, my dear——

Mrs Oak. Well!

Oak. Bring her home here——

Mrs Oak. How!

Oak. Yes, bring her home here, my dear!—it will make poor Charles's mind quite easy: and you may take her under your protection till her father comes to town.

Mrs Oak. Amazing! this is even beyond my expectation.

Oak. Why!——what!——

Mrs Oak. Was there ever such assurance! Take her under my protection! What! would you keep her under my nose?

Oak. Nay, I never conceived—I thought you would have approved——

Mrs Oak. What! make me your convenient woman!—No place but my own house to serve your purposes?

Oak. Lord, this is the strangest misapprehension! I am quite astonished.

Mrs Oak. Astonished! yes——confused, detected, betrayed by your vain confidence of imposing on me. Why, sure you imagine me an idiot, a driveller. Charles, indeed! yes, Charles is a fine excuse for you. The letter this morning, the letter, Mr Oakly!

Oak. The letter! why, sure that———

Mrs Oak. Is sufficiently explained. You have made it very clear to me. Now I am convinced. I have no doubt of your perfidy. But I thank you for some hints you have given me, and you may be sure I shall make use of them: nor will I rest, till I have full conviction, and overwhelm you with the strongest proof of your baseness towards me.

Oak. Nay, but———

Mrs Oak. Go, go! I have no doubt of your falsehood: away! [*Exit* MRS OAKLY.

Oak. Was there ever any thing like this? Such unaccountable behaviour! angry I don't know why! jealous of I know not what! pretending to be satisfied merely to draw me in, and then creating imaginary proofs out of an innocent conversation!——Hints!——hints I have given her!——What can she mean?———

TOILET *crossing the stage.*

Toilet! where are you going?

Toilet. To order the porter to let in no company to my lady to-day. She won't see a single soul, sir. [*Exit* TOILET.

Oak. What an unhappy woman! Now will she sit all day feeding on her suspicions, till she has convinced herself of the truth of them.

JOHN *crossing the stage.*

Well, sir, what's your business?

John. Going to order the chariot, sir.—My lady's going out immediately. [*Exit* JOHN.

Oak. Going out! what is all this?—But every way she makes me miserable. Wild and ungovernable as the sea or the wind! made up of storms and tempests! I can't bear it: and, one way or other, I will put an end to it. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—LADY FREELOVE'S *house.*

Enter LADY FREELOVE *with a card—Servant following.*

Lady Free. [*Reading as she enters.*]—'And 'will take the liberty of waiting on her ladyship '*en cavalier*, as he comes from the menage.'—Does any body wait that brought this card?

Ser. Lord Trinket's servant is in the hall, madam.

Lady Free. My compliments, and I shall be glad to see his lordship.—Where is Miss Russet?

Ser. In her own chamber, madam.

Lady Free. What is she doing?

Ser. Writing, I believe, madam.

Lady Free. Oh! ridiculous!—scribbling to that Oakly, I suppose. [*Aparl.*]—Let her know I should be glad of her company here.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

It is a naughty troublesome thing to manage a simple girl, that knows nothing of the world. Harriot, like all other girls, is foolishly fond of this young fellow of her own chusing, her first love, that is to say, the first man that is particularly civil, and the first air of consequence which a young lady gives herself. Poor silly soul!—But Oakly must not have her positively. A match with lord Trinket will add to the dignity of the family. I must bring her into it. I will throw her into his way as often as possible, and leave him to make his party good as fast as he can. But here she comes.

Enter HARRIOT.

Well! Harriot, still in the pouts? nay, prithee, my dear little run-away girl, be more cheerful! your everlasting melancholy puts me into the vapours.

Har. Dear madam, excuse me. How can I be cheerful in my present situation? I know my father's temper so well, that I am sure this step of mine must almost distract him. I sometimes wish that I had remained in the country, let what would have been the consequence.

Lady Free. Why, it is a naughty child, that's certain; but it need not be so uneasy about papa, as you know that I wrote by last night's post, to acquaint him, that his little lost sheep was safe, and that you are ready to obey his commands in every particular, except marrying that oaf, sir Harry Beagle.——Lord! Lord! what a difference there is between a country and town education! Why, a London lass would have jumped out of a window into a gallant's arms, and without thinking of her father, unless it were to have drawn a few bills on him, been an hundred miles off in nine or ten hours, or perhaps out of the kingdom in twenty-four.

Har. I fear I have already been too precipitate. I tremble for the consequences.

Lady Free. I swear, child, you are a downright prude. Your way of talking gives me the spleen; so full of affection, and duty, and virtue, 'tis just like a funeral sermon. And yet, pretty soul! it can love. Well, I wonder at your taste; a sneaking simple gentleman! without a title! and when, to my knowledge, you might have a man of quality to-morrow.

Har. Perhaps so. Your ladyship must excuse me. But many a man of quality would make me miserable.

Lady Free. Indeed, my dear, these antediluvian notions will never do now-a-days; and at the same time, too, those little wicked eyes of yours speak a very different language. Indeed you have fine eyes, child! And they have made fine work with lord Trinket.

Har. Lord Trinket! [*Contemptuously.*

Lady Free. Yes, lord Trinket: you know it as well as I do; and yet, you ill-natured thing, you will not vouchsafe him a single smile. But you must give the poor soul a little encouragement, prithee do.

Har. Indeed, I cannot, madam, for of all mankind Lord Trinket is my aversion.

Lady Free. Why so, child? He is counted a well-bred, sensible young fellow, and the women all think him handsome.

Har. Yes, he is just polite enough to be able to be very unmannerly with a great deal of good breeding; is just handsome enough to make him most excessively vain of his person; and has just reflection enough to finish him for a coxcomb; qualifications, which are all very common among those whom your ladyship calls men of quality.

Lady Free. A satirist, too! Indeed, my dear, this affectation sits very awkwardly upon you.—There will be a superiority in the behaviour of persons of fashion.

Har. A superiority, indeed! For his lordship alway behaves with so much insolent familiarity, that I should almost imagine he was soliciting me for other favours, rather than to pass my whole life with him.

Lady Free. Innocent freedoms, child, which every fine woman expects to be taken with her, as an acknowledgement of her beauty.

Har. They are freedoms, which, I think, no innocent woman can allow.

Lady Free. Romantic to the last degree!——Why, you are in the country still, Harriot!

Enter Servant.

Ser. My lord Trinket, madam.

[*Exit Servant.*

Lady Free. I swear now I have a good mind to tell him all you have said.

Enter LORD TRINKET *in boots, &c. as from the Riding-house.*

Your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

Lord Trink. Your ladyship does me too much honour. Here I am *en battine* as you see—just come from the menege. Miss Russet, I am your slave. I declare it makes me quite happy to find you together. 'Pon honour, madam, [*To* HARRIOT.] I begin to conceive great hopes of you: and, as for you, Lady Freelove, I cannot sufficiently commend your assiduity with your fair pupil. She was before possessed of every grace that nature could bestow on her, and nobody is so well qualified as your ladyship to give her the *Bon Ton.*

Har. Compliment and contempt all in a breath! My lord, I am obliged to you. But waving my acknowledgements, give me leave to ask

your lordship, whether nature and the *Bon Ton* (as you call it) are so different, that we must give up one, in order to obtain the other?

Lord Trink. Totally opposite, madam. The chief aim of the *Bon Ton* is to render persons of family different from the vulgar, for whom, indeed, nature serves very well. For this reason, it has, at various times, been ungenteel to see, to hear, to walk, to be in good health, and to have twenty other horrible perfections of nature. Nature, indeed, may do very well sometimes. It made you, for instance, and it then made something very lovely; and if you would suffer us of quality to give you the *Ton*, you would be absolutely divine: but now ——me——madam——me—— nature never made such a thing as me.

Har. Why, indeed, I think your lordship has very few obligations to her

Lord Trink. Then, you really think it's all my own? I declare now that is a mighty genteel compliment. Nay, if you begin to flatter already, you improve apace. 'Pon honour, lady Freelove, I believe we shall make something of her at last.

Lady Free. No doubt on't. It is in your lordship's power to make her a complete woman of fashion at once.

Lord Trink. Hum! Why, ay———

Har. Your lordship must excuse me. I am of a very tasteless disposition. I shall never bear to be carried out of nature.

Lady Free. You are out of nature, now, Harriot! I am sure no woman but yourself ever objected to being carried among persons of quality. Would you believe it, my lord? here has she been a whole week in town, and would never suffer me to introduce her to a rout, an assembly, a concert, or even to court, or to the opera; nay, would hardly so much as mix with a living soul that has visited me.

Lord Trink. No wonder, madam, you do not adopt the manners of persons of fashion, when you will not even honour them with your company. Were you to make one in our little coteries, we should soon make you sick of the boors and bumpkins of the horrid country. By the bye, I met a monster at the riding-house this morning, who gave me some intelligence, that will surprize you, concerning your family?

Har. What intelligence?

Lady Free. Who was this monster, as your lordship calls him? A curiosity, I dare say.

Lord Trink. This monster, madam, was formerly my head groom, and had the care of all my running-horses; but, growing most abominably surly and extravagant, as you know all these fellows do, I turned him off; and, ever since, my brother, Slouch Trinket, has had the care of my stud, rides all my principal matches himself—and———

Har. Dear my lord, don't talk of your groom, and your brother, but tell me the news. Do you know any thing of my father?

Lord Trink. Your father, madam, is now in town. This fellow, you must know, is now groom to sir Harry Beagle, your sweet rural swain, and informed me, that his master and your father were running all over the town in quest of you; and that he himself had orders to enquire after you; for which reason, I suppose, he came to the riding-house stables to look after it, thinking it, to be sure, a very likely place to meet you.—Your father, perhaps, is gone to seek you at the Tower, or Westminster-Abbey, which is all the idea he has of London; and your faithful lover is probably cheapening a hunter, and drinking strong beer at the Horse and Jockey in Smithfield.

Lady Free. The whole set admirably disposed of!

Har. Did not your lordship inform him where I was?

Lord Trink. Not I, 'pon honour, madam:—that I left to their own ingenuity to discover.

Lady Free. And, pray, my lord, where, in this town, have this polite company bestowed themselves?

Lord Trink. They lodge, madam, of all places in the world, at the Bull and Gate Inn, in Holborn.

Lady Free. Ha, ha, ha! The Bull and Gate! Incomparable! What, have they brought any hay or cattle to town?

Lord Trink. Very well, lady Freelove! very well, indeed! There they are, like so many graziers; and there, it seems, they have learned that this lady is certainly in London.

Har. Do, dear madam, send a card directly to my father, informing him where I am, and that your ladyship would be glad to see him here. For my part, I dare not venture into his presence till you have, in some measure, pacified him; but, for Heaven's sake, desire him not to bring that wretched fellow along with him.

Lord Trink. Wretched fellow! Oho! Courage, Milor Trinket! [*Aside.*

Lady Free. I'll send immediately. Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Ser. [*Apart to* LADY FREELOVE.] Sir Harry Beagle is below, madam.

Lady Free. [*Apart to Servant.*] I am not at home. Have they let him in?

Ser. Yes, madam.

Lady Free. How abominably unlucky this is! Well, then, shew him into my dressing-room. I will come to him there. [*Exit Servant.*

Lord Trink. Lady Freelove! No engagement, I hope. We won't part with you, 'pon honour.

Lady Free. The worst engagement in the world. A pair of musty old prudes! Lady Formal and Miss Prate.

Lord Trink. O the beldams! As nauseous as ipecacuanha, 'pon honour.

Lady Free. Lud! lud! what shall I do with them? Why do these foolish women come troubling me now? I must wait on them in the dressing-room, and you must excuse the card, Harriot, till they are gone. I'll dispatch them as soon as I can; but Heaven knows when I shall get rid of them, for they are both everlasting gossips; though the words come from her ladyship one by one, like drops from a still, while the other tiresome woman overwhelms us with a flood of impertinence. Harriot, you'll entertain his lordship till I return. [*Exit.*

Lord Trink. Gone! 'Egad, my affairs here begin to grow very critical—the father in town! lover in town! Surrounded by enemies! What shall I do?—[*To* HARRIOT.]—I have nothing fit for it but a coup de main. 'Pon honour, I am not sorry for the coming in of these old tabbies, and am much obliged to her ladyship for leaving us such an agreeable tête-a-tête.

Har. Your lordship will find me extremely bad company.

Lord Trink. Not in the least, my dear! we'll entertain ourselves one way or other, I'll warrant you. 'Egad, I think it a mighty good opportunity to establish a better acquaintance with you.

Har. I don't understand you.

Lord Trink. No? Why, then, I'll speak plainer.—[*Pausing, and looking her full in the face.*] You are an amazing fine creature, 'pon honour.

Har. If this be your lordship's polite conversation, I shall leave you to amuse yourself in soliloquy. [*Going.*

Lord Trink. No, no, no, madam; that must not be.—[*Stopping her.*]—This place, my passion, the opportunity, all conspire——

Har. How, sir! You don't intend to do me any violence?

Lord Trink. 'Pon honour, madam, it will be doing great violence to myself, if I do not. You must excuse me.

[*Struggling with her.*

Har. Help! Help! Murder! Help!

Lord Trink. Your yelping will signify nothing; nobody will come. [*Struggling.*

Har. For Heaven's sake! Sir! My lord!

[*Noise within.*

Lord Trink. Pox on't! what noise? Then I must be quick. [*Still struggling.*

Har. Help! Murder! Help! Help!

Enter CHARLES *hastily.*

Cha. What do I hear? My Harriot's voice calling for help? Ha!—[*Seeing them.*]—Is it possible? Turn, ruffian! I'll find you employment.

[*Drawing.*

Lord Trink. You are a most impertinent scoundrel, and I'll whip you through the lungs, 'pon honour.

[*They fight,* HARRIOT *runs out, screaming help, &c.*

Enter LADY FREELOVE, SIR HARRY BEAGLE, *and Servants.*

Lady Free. How's this? Swords drawn in my house!—Part them—[*They are parted.*]—This is the most impudent thing!

Lord Trink. Well, rascal, I shall find a time; I know you, sir!

Cha. The sooner the better; I know your lordship, too.

Sir Har. I'faith, madam,—[*To* LADY FREE.] we had like to have been in at the death.

Lady Free. What is all this? Pray, sir, what is the meaning of your coming hither to raise this disturbance? Do you take my house for a brothel? [*To* CHA.

Cha. Not I, indeed, madam! but I believe his lordship does.

Lord Trink. Impudent scoundrel!

Lady Free. Your conversation, sir, is as insolent as your behaviour. Who are you? What brought you here?

Cha. I am one, madam, always ready to draw my sword in defence of innocence in distress, and more especially in the cause of that lady I delivered from his lordship's fury; in search of whom I troubled your ladyship's house.

Lady Free. Her lover, I suppose, or what?

Cha. At your ladyship's service; though not quite so violent in my passion as his lordship there.

Lord Trink. Impertinent rascal!

Lady Free. You shall be made to repent of this insolence.

Lord Trink. Your ladyship may leave that to me.

Cha. Ha, ha!

Sir Har. But pray, what is become of the lady all this while? Why, lady Freelove, you told me she was not here, and, i'faith, I was just drawing off another way, if I had not heard the view-halloo.

Lady Free. You shall see her immediately, sir! Who's there?

Enter a Servant.

Where is Miss Russet?

Ser. Gone out, madam.

Lady Free. Gone out! Where?

Ser. I don't know, madam: but she ran down the back stairs crying for help, crossed the servants' hall in tears, and took a chair at the door.

Lady Free. Blockheads! to let her go out in a chair alone! Go, and inquire after her immediately. [*Exit Ser.*

Sir Har. Gone! What a pox, had I just run

her down, and is the little puss stole away at last?

Lady Free. Sir, if you will walk in—[*To* SIR HAR.]—with his lordship and me, perhaps you may hear some tidings of her; though it is most probable she may be gone to her father. I don't know any other friend she has in town.

Cha. I am heartily glad she is gone. She is safer any where than in this house.

Lady Free. Mighty well, sir! My lord! Sir Harry! I attend you.

Lord Trink. You shall hear from me, sir! [*To* CHA.

Cha. Very well, my lord.

Sir Har. Stole away! Pox on't—stole away. [*Exeunt* SIR HAR. *and* LORD TRINK.

Lady Free. Before I follow the company, give me leave to tell you, sir, that your behaviour here has been so extraordinary——

Cha. My treatment here, madam, has indeed been very extraordinary.

Lady Free. Indeed! Well—no matter—permit me to acquaint you, sir, that there lies your way out, and that the greatest favour you can do me, is to leave the house immediately.

Cha. That your ladyship may depend on.—Since you have put Miss Russet to flight, you may be sure of not being troubled with my company. I'll after her immediately—I cannot rest till I know what is become of her.

Lady Free. If she has any regard for her reputation, she'll never put herself into such hands as yours.

Cha. O, madam, there can be no doubt of her regard for that, by her leaving your ladyship.

Lady Free. Leave my house!

Cha. Directly. A charming house! And a charming lady of the house, too! Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Free. Vulgar fellow!

Cha. Fine lady! [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—LADY FREELOVE'S *house.*

Enter LADY FREELOVE *and* LORD TRINKET.

Lord Trink. DOUCEMENT, doucement, my dear lady Freelove! Excuse me! I meant no harm, 'pon honour.

Lady Free. Indeed, indeed, my lord Trinket, this is absolutely intolerable. What, to offer rudeness to a young lady in my house! What will the world say of it?

Lord Trink. Just what the world pleases. It does not signify a doit what they say. However, I ask pardon; but, 'egad, I thought it was the best way.

Lady Free. For shame, for shame, my lord! I am quite hurt at your want of discretion.—Leave the whole conduct of this affair to me, or I'll have done with it at once. How strangely you have acted! There, I went out of the way on purpose to serve you, by keeping off that looby sir Harry Beagle, and preventing him or her father from seeing the girl, till we had some chance of managing her ourselves. And then you chose to make a disturbance, and spoiled all.

Lord Trink. Devil take sir Harry and t'other scoundrel, too! That they should come driving hither just at so critical an instant! And that the wild little thing should take wing, and fly away the lord knows whither!

Lady Free. Ay——And there again you was indiscreet past redemption. To let her know, that her father was in town, and where he was to be found, too! For there I am confident she must be gone, as she is not acquainted with one creature in London.

Lord Trink. Why a father is, in these cases, the *pisaller* I must confess. 'Pon honour, lady Freelove, I can scarce believe this obstinate girl a relation of yours. Such narrow notions! I'll swear, there is less trouble in getting ten women of the *prémiere volée*, than in conquering the scruples of a silly girl in that style of life.

Lady Free. Come, come, my lord, a truce with your reflections on my niece! Let us consider what is best to be done.

Lord Trink. E'en just what your ladyship thinks proper——For my part, I am entirely *dérangée*.

Lady Free. Will you submit to be governed by me, then?

Lord Trink. I'll be all obedience——your ladyship's slave, 'pon honour.

Lady Free. Why, then, as this is rather an ugly affair in regard to me, as well as your lordship, and may make some noise, I think it absolutely necessary, merely to save appearances, that you should wait on her father, palliate matters as well as you can, and make a formal repetition of your proposal of marriage.

Lord Trink. Your ladyship is perfectly in the right——You are quite *au fait* of the affair. It shall be done immediately, and then your reputation will be safe, and my conduct justified to all the world——But, should the old rustic continue as stubborn as his daughter, your ladyship, I hope, has no objections to my being a little *rusée*, for I must have her, 'pon honour.

Lady Free. Not in the least.

Lord Trink. Or, if a good opportunity should offer, and the girl should be still untractable——

Lady Free. Do what you will, I wash my hands of it. She's out of my care now, you know——But you must beware your rivals. One, you know, is in the house with her, and the other

will lose no opportunity of getting to her.

Lord Trink. As to the fighting gentleman, I shall cut out work for him in his own way. I'll send him a *petit billet* to-morrow morning, and then there can be no great difficulty in outwitting her bumpkin father, and the baronet.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Captain O'Cutter to wait on your ladyship.

Lady Free. O the hideous fellow! The Irish sailor-man, for whom I prevailed on your lordship to get the post of regulating captain. I suppose he is come to load me with his odious thanks. I won't be troubled with him now.

Lord Trink. Let him in, by all means. He is the best creature to laugh at in nature. He is a perfect sea-monster, and always looks and talks as if he was upon deck. Besides, a thought strikes me——He may be of use.

Lady Free. Well—send the creature up then. [*Exit Servant.*

But what fine thought is this!

Lord Trink. A *coup de maitre*, 'pon honour! I intend——but hush! Here the porpus comes.

Enter CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

Lady Free. Captain, your humble servant! I am very glad to see you.

O'Cut. I am much obliged to you, my lady! Upon my conscience, the wind favours me at all points. I had no sooner got under way to tank your ladyship, but I have borne down upon my noble friend his lordship, too. I hope your lordship's well?

Lord Trink. Very well, I thank you, captain! —But you seem to be hurt in the service; what is the meaning of that patch over your right eye?

O'Cut. Some advanced wages from my new post, my lord! This pressing is hot work, though it entitles us to smart-money.

Lady Free. And pray, in what perilous adventure did you get that scar, captain?

O'Cut. Quite out of my element, indeed, my lady! I got it in an engagement by land. A day or two I spied three stout fellows, belonging to a merchantman. They made down Wapping. I immediately gave my lads the signal to chase, and we bore down right upon them. They tacked, and lay to. We gave them a thundering broadside, which they resaved like men; and one of them made use of small arms, which carried off the weathermost corner of Ned Gage's hat: so, I immediately stood in with him, and raked him, but resaved a wound on my starboard eye, from the stock of the pistol. However, we took them all, and they now lie under the hatches, with fifty more, a-board a tender off the Tower.

Lord Trink. Well done, noble captain!—— But, however, you will soon have better employment, for I think the next step to your present post, is commonly a ship.

O'Cut. The sooner the better, my lord! Honest Terence O'Cutter shall never flinch, I warrant you; and has had as much sea-sarvice as any man in the navy.

Lord Trink. You may depend on my good offices, captain!—But, in the mean time, it is in your power to do me a favour.

O'Cut. A favour! my lord! your lordship does me honour. I would go round the world, from one end to the other, by day or by night, to sarve your lordship, or my good lady here.

Lord Trink. Dear madam, the luckiest thought in nature! [*Apart to* LADY FREE.]—The favour I have to ask of you, captain, need not carry you so far out of your way. The whole affair is, that there are a couple of impudent fellows at an inn in Holborn, who have affronted me, and you would oblige me infinitely, by pressing them into his Majesty's service.

Lady Free. Now, I understand you——Admirable! [*Apart to* L. TRINK.

O'Cut. With all my heart, my lord, and tank you too, fait. But, by the by, I hope they are not housekeepers, or freemen of the city. There's the devil a way in meddling with them. They boder one about liberty and property, and stuff. It was but t'other day that Jack Frowser was carried before my lord Mayor, and lost above a twelvemonth's pay, for nothing at all, at all.

Lord Trink. I'll take care you shall be brought into no trouble. These fellows were formerly my grooms. If you'll call on me in the morning, I'll go with you to the place.

O'Cut. I'll be with your lordship, and bring with me four or five as pretty boys as you'd wish to clap your two lucking eyes upon of a summer's day.

Lord Trink. I am much obliged to you. But, captain, I have another little favour to beg of you.

O'Cut. Upon my shoul, and I'll do it!

Lord Trink. What, before you know it?

O'Cut. Fore and aft, my lord!

Lord Trink. A gentleman has offended me in a point of honour——

O'Cut. Cut his throat.

Lord Trink. Will you carry him a letter from me?

O'Cut. Indeed, and I will: and I'll take you in tow, too, and you shall engage him yard-arm and yard-arm.

Lord Trink. Why, then, captain, you'll come a little earlier to-morrow morning than you proposed, that you may attend him with my billet, before you proceed on the other affair.

O'Cut. Never fear it, my lord!—Your sarvant!—My ladyship, your humble sarvant!

Lady Free. Captain, yours! Pray give my

service to my friend Mrs O'Cutter. How does she do?

O'Cut. I tank your ladyship's axing——The dear creature is purely tight and well.

Lord Trink. How many children have you, captain?

O'Cut. Four, and please your lordship, and another upon the stocks.

Lord Trink. When it is launched, I hope to be at the christening. I'll stand godfather, captain!

O'Cut. Your lordship's very good.

Lord Trink. Well, you'll come to-morrow.

O'Cut. O, I'll not fail, my lord! Little Terence O'Cutter never fails, fait, when a troat is to be cut. [*Exit.*

Lady Free. Ha, ha, ha! But sure you don't intend to ship off both her father and her country lover for the Indies?

Lord Trink. O no! Only let them contemplate the inside of a ship for a day or two.

Lady Free. Well, but after all, my lord, this is a very bold undertaking. I don't think you'll be able to put it in practice.

Lord Trink. Nothing so easy, 'pon honour. To press a gentleman——a man of quality——one of us——would not be so easy, I grant you. But these fellows, you know, have not half so decent an appearance as one of my footmen; and, from their behaviour, conversation, and dress, it is very possible to mistake them for grooms and ostlers.

Lady Free. There may be something in that indeed. But what use do you propose to make of this stratagem?

Lord Trink. Every use in nature. This artifice must at least take them out of the way for some time; and, in the mean while, measures may be concerted to carry off the girl.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Mrs Oakly, madam, is at the door, in her chariot, and desires to have the honour of speaking to your ladyship, on particular business.

Lord Trink. Mrs Oakly! what can that jealous-pated woman want with you?

Lady Free. No matter what.——I hate her mortally.—Let her in. [*Exit Servant.*

Lord Trink. What wind blows her hither?

Lady Free. A wind that must blow us some good.

Lord Trink. How?——I was amazed you chose to see her.

Lady Free. How can you be so slow of apprehension?——She comes, you may be sure, on some occasion relating to this girl: in order to assist young Oakly, perhaps to sooth me, and gain intelligence, and so forward the match: but I'll forbid the banns, I warrant you.——Whatever she wants, I'll draw some sweet mischief out of it.——But away! away!——I think I hear her—slip down the back stairs——or, stay, now I think on't, go out this way—meet her—and be sure to make her a very respectful bow, as you go out.

Lord Trink. Hush! here she is.

Enter MRS OAKLY. [LORD TRINKET *bows, and exit.*]

Mrs Oak. I beg pardon for giving your ladyship this trouble.

Lady Free. I am always glad of the honour of seeing Mrs Oakly.

Mrs Oak. There is a letter, madam, just come from the country, which has occasioned some alarm in our family. It comes from Mr Russet——

Lady Free. Mr Russet!

Mrs Oak. Yes, from Mr Russet, madam; and is chiefly concerning his daughter. As she has the honour of being related to your ladyship, I took the liberty of waiting on you.

Lady Free. She is indeed, as you say, madam, a relation of mine; but, after what has happened, I scarce know how to acknowledge her.

Mrs Oak. Has she been so much to blame, then?

Lady Free. So much, madam?——Only judge for yourself.——Though she had been so indiscreet, not to say indecent in her conduct, as to elope from her father, I was in hopes to have hushed up that matter, for the honour of our family.——But she has run away from me too, madam!—went off in the most abrupt manner, not an hour ago.

Mrs Oak. You surprise me. Indeed her father, by his letter, seems apprehensive of the worst consequences. But does your ladyship imagine any harm has happened?

Lady Free. I cannot tell—I hope not—but, indeed, she is a strange girl. You know, madam, young women cannot be too cautious in their conduct. She is, I am sorry to declare it, a very dangerous person to take into a family.

Mrs Oak. Indeed! [*Alarmed.*

Lady Free. If I was to say all I know!

Mrs Oak. Why, sure, your ladyship knows of nothing that has been carried on clandestinely between her and Mr Oakly. [*In disorder.*

Lady Free. Mr Oakly!

Mrs Oak. Mr Oakly—no, not Mr Oakly—that is, not my husband—I don't mean him—not him—but his nephew—young Mr Oakly.

Lady Free. Jealous of her husband! So, so! Now I know my game. [*Aside.*

Mrs Oak. But pray, madam, give me leave to ask, was there any thing very particular in her conduct, while she was in your ladyship's house?

Lady Free. Why, really, considering she was here scarce a week, her behaviour was rather mysterious; letters and messages, to and fro, between her and I don't know who—I suppose you know that Mr Oakly's nephew has been here, madam?

Mrs Oak. I was not sure of it. Has he been to wait on your ladyship already on this occasion?

Lady Free. To wait on me! The expression is much too polite for the nature of his visit. My lord Trinket, the nobleman whom you met as you came in, had, you must know, madam, some thoughts of my niece, and, as it would have been an advantageous match, I was glad of it; but, I believe, after what he has been witness to this morning, he will drop all thoughts of it.

Mrs Oak. I am sorry that any relation of mine should so far forget himself——

Lady Free. It's no matter—his behaviour, indeed, as well as the young lady's, was pretty extraordinary—and yet, after all, I don't believe he is the object of her affections.

Mrs Oak. Ha! [*Much alarmed.*

Lady Free. She has certainly an attachment somewhere, a strong one; but his lordship, who was present all the time, was convinced, as well as myself, that Mr Oakly's nephew was rather a convenient friend, a kind of go-between, than the lover. Bless me, madam, you change colour! You seem uneasy! What's the matter?

Mrs Oak. Nothing—madam—nothing—— a little shocked that my husband should behave so.

Lady Free. Your husband, madam!

Mrs Oak. His nephew, I mean. His unpardonable rudeness—but I am not well—I am sorry I have given your ladyship so much trouble—I'll take my leave.

Lady Free. I declare, madam, you frighten me. Your being so visibly affected makes me quite uneasy. I hope I have not said any thing—I really don't believe your husband is in fault. Men, to be sure, allow themselves strange liberties. But I think, nay, I am sure, it cannot lie so. It is impossible. Don't let what I have said have any effect on you.

Mrs Oak. No, it has not—I have no idea of such a thing. Your ladyship's most obedient—[*Going, returns.*]—but sure, madam, you have not heard, or don't know any thing.

Lady Free. Come, come, Mrs Oakly, I see how it is, and it would not be kind to say all I know. I dare not tell you what I have heard.—Only be on your guard—there can be no harm in that. Do you be against giving the girl any countenance, and see what effect it has.

Mrs Oak. I will—I am much obliged—But does it appear to your ladyship, then, that Mr Oakly——

Lady Free. No, not at all—nothing in't, I dare say—I would not create uneasiness in a family—but I am a woman myself, have been married, and cannot help feeling for you. But don't be uneasy; there's nothing in't, I dare say.

Mrs Oak. I think so. Your ladyship's humble servant.

Lady Free. Your servant, madam. Pray don't be alarmed; I must insist on your not making yourself uneasy.

Mrs Oak. Not at all alarmed—not in the least uneasy. Your most obedient.

[*Exit* MRS OAKLY.

Lady Free. Ha, ha, ha! There she goes, brimful of anger and jealousy, to vent it all on her husband. Mercy on the poor man!

Enter LORD TRINKET.

Bless me! My lord, I thought you was gone.

Lord Trink. Only into the next room. My curiosity would not let me stir a step further. I heard it all, and was never more diverted, in my life, 'pon honour. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady Free. How the silly creature took it! Ha, ha, ha!

Lord Trink. Ha, ha, ha! My dear lady Freelove, you have a deal of ingenuity, a deal of esprit, 'pon honour.

Lady Free. A little shell thrown into the enemy's works, that's all.

Both. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Lady Free. But I must leave you. I have twenty visits to pay. You'll let me know how you succeeded in your secret expedition?

Lord Trink. That you may depend on.

Lady Free. Remember, then, that to-morrow morning I expect to see you. At present, your lordship will excuse me. Who's there?—[*Calling to the servants.*]—Send Epingle into my dressing-room.

[*Exit* LADY FREELOVE.

Lord Trink. So! If O'Cutter and his myrmidons are alert, I think I cannot fail of success, and then *prenez garde*, Mademoiselle Harriot! This is one of the drollest circumstances in nature! Here is my lady Freelove, a woman of sense, a woman that knows the world, too, assisting me in this design. I never knew her ladyship so much out. How, in the name of wonder, can she imagine that a man of quality, or any man else, 'egad, would marry a fine girl, after—not I, 'pon honour. No—no—when I have had the *entamure*, let who will take the rest of the loaf. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* MR OAKLY'S *house.*

Enter HARRIOT *following a servant.*

Har. Not at home! Are you sure that Mrs Oakly is not at home, sir?

Ser. She is just gone out, madam.

Har. I have something of consequence——— If you will give me leave, sir, I will wait till she returns.

Ser. You would not see her, if you did, madam. She has given positive orders not to be interrupted with any company to-day.

Har. Sure, sir, if you was to let her know that I had particular business———

Ser. I should not dare to trouble her, indeed, madam.

Har. How unfortunate this is! What can I do? Pray, sir, can I see Mr Oakly, then?

Ser. Yes, madam: I'll acquaint my master, if you please.

Har. Pray do, sir.

Ser. Will you favour me with your name, madam?

Har. Be pleased, sir, to let him know that a lady desires to speak with him.

Ser. I shall, madam. [*Exit Ser.*

Har. I wish I could have seen Mrs Oakly.—What an unhappy situation am I reduced to! What will the world say of me? And yet what could I do? To remain at lady Freelove's was impossible. Charles, I must own, has this very day revived much of my tenderness for him; and yet I dread the wildness of his disposition. I must now, however, solicit Mr Oakly's protection, a circumstance (all things considered) rather disagreeable to a delicate mind, and which nothing, but the absolute necessity of it, could excuse. Good Heavens! What a multitude of difficulties and distresses am I thrown into, by my father's obstinate perseverance to force me into a marriage which my soul abhors!

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. [*At entering.*]—Where is this lady?—[*Seeing her.*]—Bless me, Miss Russet, is it you? Was ever any thing so unlucky?—[*Aside.*]—Is it possible, madam, that I see you here?

Har. It is too true, sir; and the occasion on which I am now to trouble you, is so much in need of an apology, that———

Oak. Pray make none, madam. If my wife should return before I get her out of the house again! [*Aside.*

Har. I dare say, sir, you are not quite a stranger to the attachment your nephew has professed to me?

Oak. I am not, madam. I hope Charles has not been guilty of any baseness towards you. If he has, I'll never see his face again.

Har. I have no cause to accuse him. But—

Oak. But what, madam? Pray be quick! The very person in the world I would not have seen! [*Aside.*

Har. You seem uneasy, sir!

Oak. No, nothing at all——Pray go on, madam.

Har. I am at present, sir, through a concurrence of strange accidents, in a very unfortunate situation, and do not know what will become of me without your assistance.

Oak. I'll do every thing in my power to serve you; I know of your leaving your father, by a letter we have had from him. Pray, let me know the rest of your story.

Har. My story, sir, is very short. When I left my father's, I came immediately to London, and took refuge with a relation, where, instead of meeting with the protection I expected, I was alarmed with the most infamous designs upon my honour. It is not an hour ago, since your nephew rescued me from the attempts of a villain. I tremble to think, that I left him actually engaged in a duel.

Oak. He is very safe. He has just sent home the chariot from the St Alban's tavern, where he dines to-day. But what are your commands for me, madam?

Har. I am heartily glad to hear of his safety. The favour, sir, I would now request of you is, that you would suffer me to remain for a few days in your house.

Oak. Madam!

Har. And that, in the mean time, you will use your utmost endeavours to reconcile me to my father, without his forcing me into a marriage with sir Harry Beagle.

Oak. This is the most perplexing situation!—Why did not Charles take care to bestow you properly?

Har. It is most probable, sir, that I should not have consented to such a measure myself. The world is but too apt to censure, even without a cause: and, if you are so kind as to admit me into your house, I must desire not to consider Mr Oakly in any other light than as your nephew; as, in my present circumstances, I have particular objections to it.

Oak. What an unlucky circumstance!—Upon my soul, madam, I would do any thing to serve you!—but being in my house creates a difficulty, that——

Har. I hope, sir, you do not doubt the truth of what I have told you?

Oak. I religiously believe every tittle of it, madam; but I have particular family considerations, that———

Har. Sure, sir, you cannot suspect me to be base enough to form any connections in your family contrary to your inclinations, while I am living in your house?

Oak. Such connections, madam, would do me, and all my family, great honour. I never dreamt of any scruples on that account. What can I do? Let me see—let me see—suppose——— [*Pausing.*

Enter MRS OAKLY *behind, in a capuchin, tippet, &c.*

Mrs Oak. I am sure I heard the voice of a woman conversing with my husband———Ha! [*Seeing* HARRIOT.] It is so, indeed! Let me contain myself——I'll listen.

Har. I see, sir, you are not inclined to serve me—good Heaven! what I am reserved to?—Why, why did I leave my father's house to expose myself to greater distresses? [*Ready to weep.*

Oak. I would do any thing for your sake:—indeed I would. So, pray be comforted, and I'll think of some proper place to bestow you in

Mrs Oak. So! So!

Har. What place can be so proper as your own house?

Oak. My dear madam, I——I———

Mrs Oak. My dear madam——mighty well!

Oak. Hush! hark!——what noise——no—nothing. But I'll be plain with you, madam; we may be interrupted. The family consideration I hinted at, is nothing else than my wife. She is a little unhappy in her temper, madam! and if you was to be admitted into the house, I don't know what would be the consequence.

Mrs Oak. Very fine——

Har. My behaviour, sir——

Oak. My dear life, it would be impossible for you to behave in such a manner, as not to give her suspicion.

Har. But if your nephew, sir, took every thing upon himself———

Oak. Still that would not do, madam. Why this very morning, when the letter came from your father, though I positively denied any knowledge of it, and Charles owned it, yet it was almost impossible to pacify her.

Mrs Oak. The letter! How I have been bubbled!

Har. What shall I do? What will become of me?

Oak. Why, look'e, my dear madam, since my wife is so strong an objection, it is absolutely impossible for me to take you into my house. Nay, if I had not known she was gone out, just before you came, I should be uneasy at your being here even now. So we must manage as well as we can. I'll take a private lodging for you a little way off, unknown to Charles or my wife, or any body; and if Mrs Oakly should discover it at last, why the whole matter will light upon Charles, you know.

Mrs Oak. Upon Charles!

Har. How unhappy is my situation! [*Weeping.*] I am ruined for ever.

Oak. Ruined! Not at all. Such a thing as this has happened to many a young lady before you, and all has been well again——Keep up your spirits! I'll contrive, if I possibly can, to visit you every day.

Mrs Oak. [*Advancing.*] Will you so? O, Mr Oakly! have I discovered you at last? I'll visit you, indeed. And you, my dear madam, I'll—

Har. Madam, I don't understand——

Mrs Oak. I understand the whole affair, and have understood it for some time past. You shall have a private lodging, miss! It is the fittest place for you, I believe. How dare you look me in the face?

Oak. For Heaven's sake, my love, don't be so violent. You are quite wrong in this affair—you don't know who you are talking to. That lady is a person of fashion.

Mrs Oak. Fine fashion, indeed! to seduce other women's husbands!

Har. Dear madam! how can you imagine—

Oak. I tell you, my dear, this is the young lady that Charles——

Mrs Oak. Mighty well! but that won't do, sir! Did not I hear you lay the whole intrigue together? Did not I hear your fine plot of throwing all the blame upon Charles?

Oak. Nay, be cool a moment. You must know, my dear, that the letter which came this morning related to this lady——

Mrs Oak. I know it———

Oak. And since that, it seems, Charles has been so fortunate as to———

Mrs Oak. O, you deceitful man! That trick is too stale to pass again with me It is plain, now, what you meant by your proposing to take her into the house this morning. But the gentlewoman could introduce herself, I see.

Oak. Fy! fy! my dear; she came on purpose to inquire for you.

Mrs Oak. For me! better and better! Did not she watch her opportunity, and come to you just as I went out? But I am obliged to you for your visit, madam. It is sufficiently paid. Pray, don't let me detain you.

Oak. For shame! for shame, Mrs Oakly!—How can you be so absurd? Is this proper behaviour to a lady of her character?

Mrs Oak. I have heard her character. Go, my fine run-away madam! Now, you've eloped from your family, and run away from your aunt! Go! You shan't stay here, I promise you.

Oak. Prithee, be quiet. You don't know what you are doing. She shall stay.

Mrs Oak. She shan't stay a minute.

Oak. She shall stay a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, a year! 'Sdeath, madam, she shall stay for ever, if I choose it.

Mrs Oak. How!

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir, let me go. I am frighted to death.

Oak. Don't be afraid, madam! She shall stay, I insist upon it.

Rus. [*Within.*] I tell you, sir, I will go up. I am sure the lady is here, and nothing shall hinder me.

Har. O my father! my father!

[*Faints away.*

Oak. See! she faints. [*Catching her.*] Ring the bell! Who's there?

Mrs Oak. What! take her into your arms, too! I have no patience.

Enter RUSSET *and Servants.*

Rus. Where is this——ha! fainting! [*Running to her.*] O my dear Harriot! my child! my child!

Oak. Your coming so abruptly shocked her spirits. But she revives. How do you, madam?

Har. [*To* RUSSET.] O, sir!

Rus. O my dear girl! How could you run

away from your father, that loves you with such fondness———But I was sure I should find you here———

Mrs Oak. There—there! sure he should find her here! Did not I tell you so? Are not you a wicked man, to carry on such base underhand doings, with a gentleman's daughter?

Rus. Let me tell you, sir, whatever you may think of the matter, I shall not easily put up with this behaviour. How durst you encourage my daughter to an elopement, and receive her in your house.

Mrs Oak. There, mind that! The thing is as plain as the light.

Oak. I tell you, you misunderstand——

Rus. Look you, Mr Oakly, I shall expect satisfaction from your family for so gross an affront. Zounds, sir! I am not to be used ill by any man in England.

Har. My dear sir, I can assure you——

Rus. Hold your tongue, girl! You'll put me in a passion.

Oak. Sir, this is all a mistake.

Rus. A mistake! Did not I find her in your house?

Oak. Upon my soul, she has not been in my house above——

Mrs Oak. Did not I hear you say you would take her a lodging? a private lodging!

Oak. Yes, but that———

Rus. Has not this affair been carried on a long time in spite of my teeth?

Oak. I never troubled myself———

Mrs Oak. Never troubled yourself! Did not you insist on her staying in the house, whether I would or no?

Oak. No.

Rus. Did not you send me to meet her, when she came to town?

Oak. No.

Mrs Oak. Did not you deceive me about the letter this morning?

Oak. No—no—no—I tell you, no.

Mrs Oak. Yes—yes—yes——I tell you, yes.

Rus. Shan't I believe my own eyes?

Mrs Oak. Shan't I believe my own ears?

Oak. I tell you, you are both deceived.

Rus. Zounds, sir, I'll have satisfaction.

Mrs Oak. I'll stop these fine doings, I warrant you.

Oak. 'Sdeath, you will not let me speak—and you are both alike, I think. I wish you were married to one another with all my heart.

Mrs Oak. Mighty well! mighty well!

Rus. I shall soon find a time to talk with you.

Oak. Find a time to talk! you have talked enough now for all your lives.

Mrs Oak. Very fine! Come along, sir! Leave that lady with her father. Now she is in the properest hands.

Oak. I wish I could leave you in his hands. [*Going, returns.*] I shall follow you, madam! One word with you, sir!——The height of your passion, and Mrs Oakly's strange misapprehension of this whole affair, makes it impossible to explain matters to you at present. I will do it when you please, and how you please. [*Exit.*

Rus. Yes, yes; I'll have satisfaction.——So, madam! I have found you at last. You have made a fine confusion here!

Har. I have, indeed, been the innocent cause of a great deal of confusion.

Rus. Innocent!—What business had you to be running hither after———

Har. My dear sir, you misunderstand the whole affair. I have not been in this house half an hour.

Rus. Zounds, girl, don't put me in a passion!—You know I love you——but a lie puts me in a passion. But come along—we'll leave this house directly—[CHARLES *singing without.*] Heyday! what now?

After a noise without, enter CHARLES, *drunk.*

Cha. *But my wine neither nurses nor babies can bring,*
And a big-bellied bottle's a mighty good thing. [*Singing.*

What's here? a woman? Harriot! impossible! My dearest, sweetest Harriot! I have been looking all over the town for you, and at last——— when I was tired—and weary—and disappointed—why, then, the honest major and I sat down together to drink your health in pint bumpers.

[*Running up to her.*

Rus. Stand off!——How dare you take any liberty with my daughter before me? Zounds, sir, I'll be the death of you!

Cha. Ha! 'Squire Russet, too!——You jolly old cock, how do you do?—But Harriot! my dear girl! [*Taking hold of her.*] My life, my soul, my———

Rus. Let her go, sir—come away, Harriot!—Leave him this instant, or I'll tear you asunder.

[*Pulling her.*

Har. There needs no violence to tear me from a man who could disguise himself in such a gross manner, at a time when he knew I was in the utmost distress.

[*Disengages herself, and exit with* RUS.

Cha. Only hear me, sir——madam!——my dear Harriot——Mr Russet——gone!——she's gone!—and, egad, in very ill humour, and in very bad company!——I'll go after her—but hold!—I shall only make it worse——as I did—now I recollect—once before. How the devil came they here?—Who would have thought of finding her in my own house?——My head turns round with conjectures.—I believe I am drunk—very drunk——so, egad, I'll e'en go and sleep myself sober, and then inquire the meaning of all this. For,

I love Sue, and Sue loves me, &c.

[*Exit singing.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—OAKLY'S *house.*

Enter MRS OAKLY *and* MAJOR OAKLY.

Maj. WELL——well——but sister!

Mrs Oak. I will know the truth of this matter. Why can't you tell me the whole story?

Maj. I'll tell you nothing. There's nothing to tell—you know the truth already. Besides, what have I to do with it? Suppose there was a disturbance yesterday, what's that to me? was I here? it's no business of mine.

Mrs Oak. Then, why do you study to make it so? Am not I well assured that this mischief commenced at your house in the country? And now you are carrying it on in town.

Maj. This is always the case in family squabbles. My brother has put you out of humour, and you choose to vent your spleen upon me.

Mrs Oak. Because I know that you are the occasion of his ill-usage. Mr Oakly never behaved in such a manner before.

Maj. I? Am I the occasion of it?

Mrs Oak. Yes, you. I am sure on't.

Maj. I am glad on't with all my heart.

Mrs Oak. Indeed!

Maj. Ay, indeed: and you are the more obliged to me. Come, come, sister, it's time you should reflect a little. My brother is become a public jest; and, by and by, if this foolish affair gets wind, the whole family will be the subject of town-talk.

Mrs Oak. And well it may, when you take so much pains to expose us. The little disquiets and uneasiness of other families are kept secret; but here, quarrels are fomented, and afterwards industriously made public. And you, sir, you have done all this—you are my greatest enemy.

Maj. Your truest friend, sister.

Mrs Oak. But it's no wonder. You have no feelings of humanity, no sense of domestic happiness, no idea of tenderness, or attachment to any woman.

Maj. No idea of plague or disquiet—no, no—and yet I can love a woman for all that—heartily—as you say, tenderly——But then, I always chuse a woman should shew a little love for me, too.

Mrs Oak. Cruel insinuation!—But I defy your malice——Mr Oakly can have no doubt of my affection for him.

Maj. Nor I, neither: and yet your affection, such as it is, has all the evil properties of aversion. You absolutely kill him with kindness. Why, what a life he leads! He serves for nothing but a mere whet-stone of your ill-humour.

Mrs Oak. Pray now, sir!——

Maj. The violence of your temper makes his house uncomfortable to him, poisons his meals, and breaks his rest.

Mrs Oak. I beg, Major Oakly, that——

Maj. This it is to have a wife that dotes upon one!—the least trifle kindles your suspicion; you take fire in an instant, and set the whole family in a blaze.

Mrs Oak. This is beyond all patience.—No, sir, 'tis you are the incendiary—you are the cause of—I can't bear such—[*ready to weep.*]—from this instant, sir, I forbid you my house. However Mr Oakly may treat me himself, I'll never be made the sport of all his insolent relations.

[*Exit* MRS OAK.

Maj. Yes, yes, I knew I should be turned out of doors. There she goes!——back again to my brother directly. Poor gentleman!——'Slife, if he was but half the man that I am, I'd engage to keep her going to and fro all day, like a shuttle-cock.

Enter CHARLES.

What, Charles!

Cha. O major! have you heard of what happened after I left you yesterday?

Maj. Heard! Yes, yes, I have heard it plain enough. But poor Charles! Ha, ha, ha! What a scene of confusion! I would give the world to have been there.

Cha. And I would give the world to have been any where else. Cursed fortune!

Maj. To come in so opportunely at the tail of an adventure!——Was not your mistress mighty glad to see you? You was very fond of her, I dare say?

Cha. I am upon the rack. Who can tell what rudeness I might offer her! I can remember nothing—I deserve to lose her—to make myself a beast!—and at such a time, too!—O fool, fool, fool!

Maj. Prithee, be quiet, Charles!——Never vex yourself about nothing; this will all be made up the first time you see her.

Cha. I should dread to see her—and yet, the not knowing where she is, distracts me—her father may force her to marry sir Harry Beagle immediately.

Maj. Not he, I promise you. She'd run plump into your arms first, in spite of her father's teeth.

Cha. But then her father's violence, and the mildness of her disposition——

Maj. Mildness!—Ridiculous!—Trust to the spirit of the sex in her. I warrant you, like all the rest, she'll have perverseness enough not to do as her father would have her.

Cha. Well, well—But then my behaviour to her. To expose myself in such a condition to her again! The very occasion of our former quarrel!——

Maj. Quarrel! ha, ha, ha! What signifies a quarrel with a mistress? Why, the whole affair of making love, as they call it, is nothing but quarreling and making it up again. They quarrel on purpose to kiss and be friends.

Cha. Then, indeed, things seemed to be taking a fortunate turn——To renew our difference at such a time!——Just when I had some reason to hope for a reconciliation!——May wine be my poison, if ever I am drunk again!

Maj. Ay, ay; so every man says the next morning.

Cha. Where, where can she be? Her father would hardly carry her back to lady Freelove's, and he has no house in town himself, nor sir Harry——I don't know what to think——I'll go in search of her, though I don't know where to direct myself.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. A gentleman, sir, that calls himself Captain O'Cutter, desires to speak with you.

Cha. Don't trouble me——I'll see nobody—I'm not at home———

Ser. The gentleman says he has very particular business, and he must see you.

Cha. What's his name? Who did you say?

Ser. Captain O'Cutter, sir.

Cha. Captain O'Cutter! I never heard of him before. Do you know any thing of him, major?

Maj. Not I—But you hear he has particular business. I'll leave the room.

Cha. He can have no business that need be a secret to you——Desire the captain to walk up ——[*Exit Servant.*]——What would I give if this unknown captain was to prove a messenger from my Harriot!

Enter CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

O'Cut. Jontlemen, your sarvant. Is either of your names Charles Oakly, esq.

Cha. Charles Oakly, sir, is my name, if you have any business with it.

O'Cut. Avast, avast, my dear!—I have a little business with your name, but as I was to let nobody know it, I can't mention it till you clear the decks, fait— [*Pointing to the major.*

Cha. This gentleman, sir, is my most intimate friend, and any thing that concerns me may be mentioned before him.

O'Cut. O, if he's your friend, my dear, we may do all above-board. Its only about your deciding a deferance with my lord Trinket. He wants to shew you a little warm work; and as I was steering this way, he desired me to fetch you this letter. [*Giving a letter.*]

Maj. How, sir, a challenge!

O'Cut. Yes, fait, a challenge. I am to be his lordship's second; and if you are fond of a hot birth, and will come along with that jontleman, we'll all go to it together, and make a little line of battle a-head of our own, my dear.

Cha. [*Reading.*] Ha! what's this? This may be useful. [*Aside.*

Maj. Sir, I am infinitely obliged to you—A rare fellow this! [*Aside.*] Yes, yes, I'll meet all the good company. I'll be there in my waistcoat and pumps, and take a morning's breathing with you. Are you very fond of fighting, sir?

O'Cut. Indeed and I am; I love it better than salt beef or biscuit.

Maj. But pray, sir, how are you interested in this difference? Do you know what it is about?

O'Cut. O, the devil burn me, not I. What signifies what its about, you know? so we do but tilt a little.

Maj. What! fight, and not know for what?

O'Cut. When the signal's out for engaging, what signifies talking?

Maj. I fancy, sir, a duel is a common breakfast with you? I'll warrant now you have been engaged in many such affairs.

O'Cut. Upon my shoul, and I have: sea or land, its all one to little Terence O'Cutter—— When I was last in Dublin, I fought one jontleman for cheating me out of a tousand pounds: I fought two of the Mermaid's crew about Sally Macguire; tree about politics; and one about the play-house in Smock-Alley. But upon my fait, since I am in England, I have done noting at all, at all.

Cha. This is lucky—but my transport will discover me. [*Aside.*] Will you be so kind, sir, [*To* O'CUTTER.] as to make my compliments to his lordship, and assure him that I shall do myself the honour of waiting on him.

O'Cut. Indeed and I will—Arrah, my dear, won't you come, too? [*To* MAJOR OAKLY.

Maj. Depend upon't. We'll go through the whole exercise: carte, tierce, and segoon, captain.

Cha. Now to get my intelligence. [*Aside.*] I think the time, sir, his lordship appoints in his letter, is—a———

O'Cut. You say right——Six o'clock.

Cha. And the place—a—a—is——I think, behind Montague-House?

O'Cut. No, my dear!——Avast, by the Ring in Hyde-Park, fait——I settled it there myself, for fare of interruption.

Cha. True, as you say, the Ring in Hyde-Park—I had forgot—Very well, I'll not fail you, sir.

O'Cut. Devil burn me, not I. Upon my shoul, little Terence O'Cutter will see fair play, or he'll know the reason——And so, my dear, your sarvant. [*Exit.*

Maj. Ha, ha, ha! What a fellow!—He loves fighting like a game-cock.

Cha. O uncle! the luckiest thing in the world!

Maj. What, to have the chance of being run through the body! I desire no such good fortune.

Cha. Wish me joy, wish me joy! I have found her, my dear girl, my Harriot!——She is at an inn in Holborn, major!

Maj. Ay! how do you know?

Cha. Why, this dear, delightful, charming, blundering captain, has delivered me a wrong letter.

Maj. A wrong letter!

Cha. Yes, a letter from lord Trinket to lady Freelove.

Maj. The devil! what are the contents?

Cha. The news I told you just now, that she's at an inn in Holborn:—and besides, an excuse from my lord, for not waiting on her ladyship this morning, according to his promise, as he shall be entirely taken up with his design upon Harriot.

Maj. So!—so!—A plot between the lord and the lady.

Cha. What his plot is, I don't know; but I shall beg leave to be made a party in it: so, perhaps his lordship and I may meet, and *decide* our *deferance*, as the captain calls it, before to-morrow morning——There! read, read, man!

[*Giving the letter.*

Maj. [*Reading.*] Um—um—um—very fine! And what do you propose doing?

Cha. To go thither immediately.

Maj. Then you shall take me with you. Who knows what his lordship's designs may be? I begin to suspect foul play.

Cha. No, no; pray mind your own business. If I find there is any need of your assistance, I'll send for you.

Maj. You'll manage this affair like a boy now—Go on rashly, with noise and bustle and fury, and get yourself into another scrape.

Cha. No—no—Let me alone; I'll go *incog.* Leave my chariot at some distance—Proceed prudently, and take care of myself, I warrant you. I did not imagine that I should ever rejoice at receiving a challenge; but this is the most fortunate accident that could possibly have happened. B'ye, b'ye, uncle! [*Exit hastily.*

Maj. I don't half approve of this—and yet I can hardly suspect his lordship of any very deep designs neither—Charles may easily outwit him. Hark ye, William!

[*Seeing a servant at some distance.*

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir!

Maj. Where's my brother?

Ser. In his study—alone, sir.

Maj. And how is he, William?

Ser. Pretty well, I believe, sir.

Maj. Ay, ay; but is he in good humour, or—

Ser. I never meddle in family affairs, not I, sir. [*Exit.*

Maj. Well said, William!——No bad hint for me, perhaps!—What a strange world we live in!—No two people in it love one another better than my brother and sister, and yet the bitterest enemies could not torment each other more heartily——Ah, if he had but half my spirit!—And yet he don't want it neither—But I know his temper—He pieces out the matter with maxims, and scraps of philosophy, and odds and ends of sentences—I must live in peace——Patience is the best remedy—Any thing for a quiet life! and so on——However, yesterday, to give him his due, he behaved like a man. Keep it up, brother! keep it up! or its all over with you. Since mischief is on foot, I'll even set it forwards on all sides. I'll in to him directly, read him one of my morning lectures, and persuade him, if I possibly can, to go out with me immediately; or work him up to some open act of rebellion against the sovereign authority of his lady-wife. Zounds, brother! rant, and roar, and rave, and turn the house out of the window. If I was a husband!——'Sdeath, what a pity it is, that nobody knows how to manage a wife but a batchelor! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Bull and Gate Inn.*

Enter HARRIOT.

Har. What will become of me? My father is enraged, and deaf to all remonstrances, and here I am to remain, by his positive orders, to receive this booby baronet's odious addresses.—Among all my distresses, I must confess that Charles's behaviour yesterday is not the least. So wild! so given up to excesses! And yet I am ashamed to own it even to myself—I love him: and death itself shall not prevail on me to give my hand to sir Harry.—But here he comes! What shall I do with him?

Enter SIR HARRY BEAGLE.

Sir Har. Your servant, miss!——What? Not speak!——Bashful, mayhap—Why, then, I will.—Look'e, miss, I am a man of few words.——What signifies haggling! It looks just like a dealer.—What d'ye think of me for a husband?—I am a tight young fellow—sound wind and limb—free from all natural blemishes—Rum all over, damme!

Har. Sir, I don't understand you. Speak English, and I'll give you an answer.

Sir Har. English! Why so I do—and good plain English, too.—What d'ye think of me for a husband?—That's English—a'nt it?——I know none of your French tango, none of your *parlyvoos*, not I.—What d'ye think of me for a husband? The 'squire says you shall marry me.

Har. What shall I say to him? I had best be civil. [*Aside.*]——I think, sir, you deserve a much better wife, and beg——

Sir Har. Better! No, no,—though you're so knowing, I'm not to be taken in so—You're a fine thing——Your points are all good.

Har. Sir Harry! Sincerity is above all ceremony. Excuse me, if I declare I never will be your wife. And if you have a real regard for

me, and my happiness, you will give up all pretension to me. Shall I beseech you, sir, to persuade my father not to urge a marriage, to which I am determined never to consent?

Sir Har. Hey! how! what! be off!---Why, it's a match, miss!—It's done and done on both sides.

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir, withdraw your claim to me.———I never can be prevailed on——indeed I can't———

Sir Har. What, make a match, and then draw stakes! That's doing of nothing---Play or pay, all the world over.

Har. Let me prevail on you, sir!———I am determined not to marry you at all events.

Sir Har. But your father's determined you shall, miss; so the odds are on my side.———I am not quite sure of my horse, but I have the rider hollow.

Har. Your horse! Sir———d'ye take me for—but I forgive you. I beseech you come into my proposal. It will be better for us both in the end.

Sir Har. I can't be off.

Har. Let me entreat you.

Sir Har. I tell you, it's unpossible.

Har. Pray, pray do, sir.

Sir Har. I can't, damme.

Har. I beseech you.

Sir Har. [*Whistles.*]

Har. How! laughed at?

Sir Har. *Will you marry me? Dear Ally, Ally Croker!* [*Singing.*

Har. Marry you? I had rather be married to a slave, a wretch———You! [*Walks about.*

Sir Har. A fine going thing.———She has a deal of foot——treads well upon her pasterns---goes above her ground——

Har. Peace, wretch!—Do you talk to me as I were your horse?

Sir Har. Horse! Why not speak of my horse? If your fine ladies had half as many good qualities, they would be much better bargains.

Har. And if their wretches of husbands liked them half so well as they do their horses, they would lead better lives.

Sir Har. Mayhap so.——But what signifies talking to you?——The 'squire shall know your tricks———He'll doctor you.———I'll go and talk to him.

Har. Go any where, so that you go from me.

Sir Har. He'll break you in—If you won't go in a snaffle, you must be put in a curb——He'll break you, damme. [*Exit.*

Har. A wretch!—But I was to blame to suffer his brutal behaviour to ruffle my temper.——I could expect nothing else from him, and he is below my anger.———How much trouble has this odious fellow caused, both to me and my poor father!—I never disobeyed him before, and my denial now makes him quite unhappy. In any thing else, I would be all submission; and even now, while I dread his rage, my heart bleeds for his uneasiness----I wish I could resolve to obey him.

Enter RUSSET.

Rus. Are not you a sad girl? a perverse, stubborn, obstinate——

Har. My dear sir——

Rus. Look ye, Harriot, don't speak; you'll put me in a passion—Will you have him?—Answer me that—Why don't the girl speak? Will you have him?

Har. Dearest sir, there is nothing in the world else——

Rus. Why there! there! Look ye there!——Zounds, you shall have him——Hussy, you shall have him—You shall marry him to-night—Did not you promise to receive him civilly? How came you to affront him?

Har. Sir, I did receive him very civilly;——but his behaviour was so insolent and insupportable———

Rus. Insolent! Zounds, I'll blow his brains out. Insolent to my dear Harriot! A rogue! a villain! a scoundrel! I'll—but it's a lie—I know it's a lie———He durst not behave insolent—Will you have him? Answer me that. Will you have him? Zounds, you shall have him.

Har. If you have any love for me, sir———

Rus. Love for you! You know I love you—You know your poor fond father dotes on you to madness, I would not force you, if I did not love you—Don't I want you to be happy? But I know what you would have. You want young Oakly, a rake-helly, drunken ——

Har. Release me from sir Harry, and if I ever marry against your consent, renounce me for ever.

Rus. I will renounce you, unless you'll have sir Harry.

Har. Consider, my dear sir, you'll make me miserable. I would die to please you, but cannot prostitute my hand to a man my heart abhors. Absolve me from this hard command, and in every thing else it will be my happiness to obey you.

Rus. You'll break my heart, Harriot; you'll break my heart———Make you miserable!—Don't I want to make you happy? Is not he the richest man in the county? That will make you happy. Don't all the pale-faced girls in the country long to get him? And yet you are so perverse, and wayward, and stubborn—Zounds, you shall have him!

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir———

Rus. Hold your tongue, Harriot! I'll hear none of your nonsense. You shall have him, I tell you, you shall have him—He shall marry you this very night———I'll go for a licence and a parson immediately. Zounds! Why do I stand arguing with you? Ain't I your father? Have

not I a right to dispose of you? You shall have him.

Har. Sir!———

Rus. I won't hear a word. You shall have him. [*Exit.*

Har. Sir! Hear me! but one word! He will not hear me, and is gone to prepare for this odious marriage. I will die before I consent to it. You shall have him! O that fathers would enforce their commands by better arguments!—And yet I pity him, while he afflicts me. He upbraided me with Charles; his wildness and intemperance—Alas! but too justly—I see that he is wedded to his excesses; and I ought to conquer an affection for him, which will only serve to make me unhappy.

Enter CHARLES, *in a frock, &c.*

Ha! What do I see! [*Screaming.*

Cha. Peace, my love! My dear life, make no noise! I have been hovering about the house this hour—I just now saw your father and sir Harry go out, and have seized this precious opportunity to throw myself at your feet.

Har. You have given yourself, sir, a great deal of needless trouble. I did not expect, or hope, for the favour of such a visit.

Cha. O my dear Harriot, your words and looks cut me to the soul. You can't imagine what I suffer, and have suffered since last night. And yet I have, in some fond moments, flattered myself, that the service I was so fortunate as to do you at lady Freelove's, would plead a little in my favour.

Har. You may remember, sir, that you took a very early opportunity of cancelling that obligation.

Cha. I do remember it with shame and despair. But may I perish, if my joy at having delivered you from a villain was not the cause! My transport more than half intoxicated me, and wine made an easy conquest over me. I tremble to think, lest I should have behaved in such a manner as you cannot pardon.

Har. Whether I pardon you or no, sir, is a matter of mighty little consequence.

Cha. O, my Harriot! Upbraid me, reproach me; do any thing but look and talk with that air of coldness and indifference. Must I lose you for one offence? when my soul dotes on you, when I love you to distraction!

Har. Did it appear like love, your conduct yesterday? To lose yourself in riot, when I was exposed to the greatest distresses!

Cha. I feel, I feel my shame, and own it.

Har. You confess that you don't know in what manner you behaved. Ought not I to tremble at the very thoughts of a man, devoted to a vice, which renders him no longer a judge or master of his own conduct?

Char. Abandon me, if ever I am guilty of it again. O, Harriot! I am distracted with ten thousand fears and apprehensions of losing you for ever—The chambermaid, whom I bribed to admit me to you, told me, that when the two gentlemen went out, they talked of a license. What am I to think! Is it possible that you can resign yourself to sir Harry Beagle? [HARRIOT *pauses.*] Can you, then, consent to give your hand to another? No, let me once more deliver you———Let us seize this lucky moment! My chariot stands at the corner of the next street. Let me gently force you, while their absence allows it, and convey you from the brutal violence of a constrained marriage.

Har. No! I will wait the event, be it what it may. O, Charles, I am too much inclined——They shan't force me to marry sir Harry——But your behaviour——Not half an hour ago, my father reproached me with the looseness of your character. [*Weeping.*

Cha. I see my folly, and am ashamed of it.—You have reclaimed me, Harriot! On my soul, you have. If all women were as attentive as yourself to the morals of their lovers, a libertine would be an uncommon character. But let me persuade you to leave this place, while you may—Major Oakly will receive us at his house with pleasure—I am shocked at the thoughts of what your stay here may reserve you to.

Har. No, I am determined to remain——To leave my father again, to go off openly with a man, of whose libertine character he has himself so lately been a witness, would justify his anger, and impeach my reputation.

Cha. Fool! fool! How unhappy have I made myself! Consider, my Harriot, the peculiarity of your situation; besides, I have reason to fear other designs against you.

Har. From other designs I can be no where so secure as with my father.

Cha. Time flies———Let me persuade you!

Har. I am resolved to stay here.

Cha. You distract me. For Heaven's sake.—

Har. I will not think of it.

Cha. Consider, my angel!——

Har. I do consider, that your conduct has made it absolutely improper for me to trust myself to your care.

Cha. My conduct! Vexation! 'Sdeath! But, then, my dear Harriot, the danger you are in, the necessity———

Enter Chambermaid.

Cham. O law, ma'am! Such a terrible accident! As sure as I am here, there's a press-gang has seized the two gemmin, and is carrying them away, thof so be one an 'em says as how he's a knight and baronight, and that t'other's a 'squire and a housekeeper.

Har. Seized by a press gang! impossible.

Cha. O, now the design comes out. But I'll baulk his lordship.

Cham. Lack-a-dasy, ma'am, what can we do?

There is master, and John Ostler, and Bootcatcher, all gone a'ter 'em. There is such an uproar as never was. [*Exit.*

Har. If I thought this was your contrivance, sir, I would never speak to you again.

Cha. I would sooner die than be guilty of it. This is lord Trinket's doing, I am sure. I knew he had some scheme in agitation, by a letter I intercepted this morning.

Har. [*Screams.*]

Cha. Ha! Here he comes. Nay, then, 'tis plain enough. Don't be frighted, my love! I'll protect you. But, now, I must desire you to follow my directions.

Enter LORD TRINKET.

Lord Trink. Now, madam. Pox on't, he here, again! Nay, then—[*Drawing.*]—Come, sir! You're unarmed, I see. Give up the lady: give her up, I say, or I am through you in a twinkling. [*Going to make a pass at* CHA.

Cha. Keep your distance, my lord! I have arms.—[*Producing a pistol.*]—If you come a foot nearer, you have a brace of balls through your lordship's head.

Lord Trink. How? what's this? pistols!

Cha. At your lordship's service. Sword and pistol, my lord. Those, you know, are our weapons. If this misses, I have the fellow to't in my pocket. Don't be frighted, madam. His lordship has removed your friends and relations, but he will take great care of you. Shall I leave you with him?

Har. Cruel Charles! You know I must go with you now.

Cha. A little way from the door, if your lordship pleases. [*Waving his hand.*

Lord Trink. Sir!—'Sdeath!—Madam!——

Cha. A little more round, my lord. [*Waving.*

Lord Trink. But, sir! Mr Oakly!

Cha. I have no leisure to talk with your lordship now. A little more that way, if you please.—[*Waving.*]—You know where I live. If you have any commands for Miss Russet, you will hear of her, too, at my house. Nay, keep back, my lord.—[*Presenting.*]—Your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

[*Exit* CHA. *with* HAR.

Lord Trink. [*Looking after them, and pausing for a short time.*]—I cut a mighty ridiculous figure here, 'pon honour. So! I have been concerting this deep scheme, merely to serve him.—Oh, the devil take such intrigues, and all silly country girls, that can give up a man of quality and figure, for a fellow that nobody knows! [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—LADY FREELOVE'S *house.*

Enter LORD TRINKET, LADY FREELOVE *with a letter, and* CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

Lord Trink. Was ever any thing so unfortunate? Pox on't, captain, how could you make such a strange blunder?

O'Cut. I never tought of a blunder. I was to daliver two letters, and, if I gave them one apiece, I tought it was all one, fait.

Lady Free. And so, my lord, the ingenious captain gave the letter intended for me to young Oakly, and here he has brought me a challenge.

Lord Trink. Ridiculous! never was any thing so mal-a-propos. Did you read the direction, captain!

O'Cut. Who, me! Devil burn me, not I. I never rade at all.

Lord Trink. 'Sdeath! How provoking! When I had secured the servants, and got all the people out of the way——When every thing was *en train.*

Lady Free. Nay, never despair, my lord! Things have happened unluckily, to be sure; and yet I think I could hit upon a method to set every thing to right again.

Lord Trink. How? How? my dear lady Freelove, how?

Lady Free. Suppose, then, your ladyship was to go and deliver these country gentlemen from their confinement; make them believe it was a plot of young Oakly's to carry off my niece; and so make a merit of your own services with the father.

Lord Trink. Admirable! I'll about it immediately.

O'Cut. Has your lordship any occasion for my services in this expedition?

Lord Trink. O no: only release me these people, and then keep out of the way, dear captain.

O'Cut. With all my heart, fait. But you are all wrong: this will not signify a brass farding. If you would let me alone, I would give him a salt eel, I warrant you. But, upon my credit, there's noting to be done without a little tilting. [*Exit* O'CUT.

Lady Free. Ha, ha! poor captain!

Lord Trink. But where shall I carry them, when I have delivered them?

Lady Free. To Mr Oakly's, by all means.—You may be sure my niece is there.

Lord Trink. To Mr Oakly's! Why, does your ladyship consider? 'Tis going directly in the fire of the enemy——throwing the *dementi* full in their teeth.

Lady Free. So much the better. Face your enemies: nay, you shall outface them, too. Why, where's the difference between truths and untruths, if you do but stick close to the point?

Falsehood would scarce ever be detected, if we had confidence enough to support it.

Lord Trink. Nay, I don't want bronze upon occasion. But to go amongst a whole troop of people, sure, to contradict every word I say, is so dangerous——

Lady Free. To leave Russet alone amongst them, would be ten times more dangerous. You may be sure that Oakly's will be the first place he will go to after his daughter, where, if you don't accompany him, he will be open to all their suggestions. They'll be all in one story, and nobody there to contradict them: and then their dull truth would triumph, which must not be.—No, no—positively, my lord, you must battle it out.

Lord Trink. Well, I'll go, 'pon honour—and, if I could depend on your ladyship as a corps de reserve——

Lady Free. I'll certainly meet you there.—Tush! my lord, there's nothing in it. It's hard, indeed, if two persons of condition cannot bear themselves out against such trumpery folks as the family of the Oaklys.

Lord Trink. Odious low people! But I lose time—I must after the captain—and so, till we meet at Mr Oakly's, I kiss your ladyship's hand. You won't fail me?

Lady Free. You may depend on me.

[*Exit* LORD TRINK.

Lady Free. So, here is fine work! this artful little hussy has been too much for us all: well, what's to be done? Why, when a woman of fashion gets into a scrape, nothing but a fashionable assurance can get her out of it again. I'll e'en go boldly to Mr Oakly's, as I have promised, and, if it appears practicable, I will forward lord Trinket's match; but, if I find that matters have taken another turn, his lordship must excuse me. In that case, I'll fairly drop him, seem a perfect stranger to all his intentions, and give my visit an air of congratulation to my niece and any other husband, which fortune, her wise father, or her ridiculous self, has provided for her. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* MRS OAKLY'S *dressing-room.*

Enter MRS OAKLY.

Mrs Oak. This is worse and worse! He never held me so much in contempt before. To go out without speaking to me, or taking the least notice! I am obliged to the major for this. How could he take him out? And how could Mr Oakly go with him?

Enter TOILET.

Well, Toilet?

Toil. My master is not come back yet, madam.

Mrs Oak. Where is he gone?

Toil. I don't know, I can assure your ladyship.

Mrs Oak. Why, don't you know? You know nothing. But I warrant you know well enough, if you would tell. You shall never persuade me but you knew of Mr Oakly's going out to-day.

Toil. I wish I may die, madam, upon my honour, and I protest to your ladyship, I knew nothing in the world of the matter, no more than the child unborn. There is Mr Paris, my master's gentleman, knows——

Mrs Oak. What does he know?

Toil. That I knew nothing at all of the matter.

Mrs Oak. Where is Paris? What is he doing?

Toil. He is in my master's room, madam.

Mrs Oak. Bid him come here.

Toil. Yes, madam. [*Exit* TOIL.

Mrs Oak. He is certainly gone after this young flirt. His confidence, and the major's insolence, provoke me beyond expression.

Re-enter TOILET *with* PARIS.

Where's your master?

Par. *Il est sorti.*

Mrs Oak. Where is he gone?

Par. Ah, madame, *je n'en scai rien.* I know noting of it.

Mrs Oak. Nobody knows any thing. Why did not you tell me he was going out?

Par. I dress him—*Je ne m'en soucie pas du plus*—He go where he will——I have no bisues wis it.

Mrs Oak. Yes, you should have told me——that was your business—and if you don't mind your business better, you shan't stay here, I can tell you, sir.

Par. Voila! quelque chose d'extraordinaire!

Mrs Oak. Don't stand jabbering and shrugging your shoulders, but go, and inquire—go—and bring me word where he is gone.

Par. I don't know what I am do.——I'll ask John.——

Mrs Oak. Bid John come to me.

Par. De tout mon cœur.—Jean! ici! Jean—Speak my ladi. [*Exit.*

Mrs Oak. Impudent fellow! His insolent gravity and indifference is insupportable——Toilet!

Toil. Madam?

Mrs Oak. Where's John? Why don't he come? Why do you stand with your hands before you? Why don't you fetch him?

Toil. Yes, madam, I'll go this minute.——O, here, John! my lady wants you.

Enter JOHN.

Mrs Oak. Where's your master?

John. Gone out, madam.

Mrs Oak. Why did not you go with him?

John. Because he went out in the major's chariot, madam.

Mrs Oak. Where did they go to?

John. To the major's, I suppose, madam.

Mrs Oak. Suppose! Don't you know?

John. I believe so, but can't tell for certain, indeed, madam.

Mrs Oak. Believe, and suppose!---and don't know, and can't tell!——You are all fools.——Go about your business. [JOHN *going.*]—Come here. [*Returns.*] Go the major's---no---it does not signify——go along---[JOHN *going.*]—Yes, hark'e, [*Returns.*] go to the major's, and see if your master is there.

John. Give your compliments, madam?

Mrs Oak. My compliments, blockhead! Get along! [JOHN *going.*] Come hither. [*Returns.*] Can't you go to the major's, and bring me word if Mr Oakly is there, without taking any further notice?

John. Yes, madam.

Mrs Oak. Well, why don't you go, then? And make haste back.———And d'ye hear, John?

[JOHN *going, returns.*

John. Madam?

Mrs Oak. Nothing at all—go along—[JOHN *goes.*]—How uneasy Mr Oakly makes me!——Hark'e, John! [JOHN *returns.*]

John. Madam!

Mrs Oak. Send the porter here.

John. Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

Toil. So, she's in a rare humour! I shall have a fine time on't.—[*Aside.*]———Will your ladyship choose to dress?

Mrs Oak. Prithee, creature, don't tease me with your fiddle-faddle stuff—I have a thousand things to think of.———Where is the porter? Why has not that booby sent him? What is the meaning———

Re-enter JOHN.

John. Madam, my master is this moment returned with Major Oakly, and my young master, and the lady that was here yesterday.

Mrs Oak. Very well. [*Exit* JOHN.] Returned!—yes, truly, he is returned—and in a very extraordinary manner. This is setting me at open defiance. But I'll go down, and shew them I have too much spirit to endure such usage. —[*Going.*]—Or stay—I'll not go amongst his company—I'll go out.——Toilet!

Toil. Madam!

Mrs Oak. Order the coach, I'll go out. [TOILET *going.*]——Toilet, stay,—I'll e'en go down to them———No———Toilet!

Toil. Madam!

Mrs Oak. Order me a boiled chicken——I'll not go down to dinner———I'll dine in my own room, and sup there——I'll not see his face these three days. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to another room.*

Enter OAKLY, MAJOR OAKLY, CHARLES, *and* HARRIOT.

Cha. My dear Harriot, do not make yourself so uneasy.

Har. Alas! I have too much cause for my uneasiness. Who knows what that vile lord has done with my father?

Oak. Be comforted, madam; we shall soon hear of Mr Russet, and all will be well, I dare say.

Har. You are too good to me, sir:——But I can assure you, I am not a little concerned on your account, as well as my own; and if I did not flatter myself with hopes of explaining every thing to Mrs Oakly's satisfaction, I should never forgive myself for having disturbed the peace of such a worthy family.

Maj. Don't mind that, madam; They'll be very good friends again. This is nothing among married people.——'Sdeath, here she is!—No, —it's only Mrs Toilet.

Enter TOILET.

Oak. Well, Toilet, what now? [TOILET *whispers.*] Not well?—Can't come down to dinner?—Wants to see me above?—Hark'e, brother, what shall I do?

Maj. If you go, you're undone.

Har. Go, sir; go to Mrs Oakly—Indeed you had better———

Maj. 'Sdeath, brother! don't budge a foot—This is all fractiousness and ill humour———

Oak. No, I'll not go.—Tell her I have company, and we shall be glad to see her here.

[*Exit* TOILET.

Maj. That's right.

Oak. Suppose I go, and watch how she proceeds?

Maj. What d'ye mean? You would not go to her? Are you mad?

Oak. By no means go to her---I only want to know how she takes it. I'll lie *perdue* in my study, and observe her motions.

Maj. I don't like this pitiful ambuscade-work —this bush-fighting. Why can't you stay here? —Ay, ay!—I know how it will be—She'll come bounce in upon you with a torrent of anger and passion, or, if necessary, a whole flood of tears, and carry all before her at once.

Oak. You shall find that you're mistaken, major.—Don't imagine, that, because I wish not to be void of humanity, that I am destitute of resolution. Now I am convinced I'm in the right, I'll support that right with ten times your steadiness.

Maj. You talk this well, brother.

Oak. I'll do it well, brother.

Maj. If you don't, you're undone.

Oak. Never fear, never fear. [*Exit.*

Maj. Well, Charles.

Cha. I can't bear to see my Harriot so uneasy. I'll go immediately in quest of Mr Russet. Perhaps, I may learn at the inn where his lordship's ruffians have carried him.

Rus. [*Without.*] Here? Yes, yes, I know she's

here well enough. Come along, sir Harry, come along.

Har. He's here!—My father! I know his voice. Where is Mr Oakly? O, now, good sir, [*To the* MAJOR.] do but pacify him, and you'll be a friend indeed.

Enter RUSSET, LORD TRINKET, *and* SIR HARRY BEAGLE.

Lord Trink. There, sir——I told you it was so.

Rus. Ay, ay, it is too plain.—O you provoking slut! Elopement after elopement! And at last to have your father carried off by violence! To endanger my life! Zounds! I am so angry, I dare not trust myself within reach of you.

Cha. I can assure you, sir, that your daughter is entirely——

Rus. You assure me? You are the fellow that has perverted her mind——That has set my own child against me——

Cha. If you will but hear me, sir——

Rus. I won't hear a word you say. I'll have my daughter——I won't hear a word.

Maj. Nay, Mr Russet, hear reason. If you will but have patience——

Rus. I'll have no patience——I'll have my daughter, and she shall marry sir Harry to-night.

Lord Trink. That is dealing rather too much *en cavalier* with me, Mr Russet, 'pon honour. You take no notice of my pretensions, though my rank and family——

Rus. What care I for rank and family? I don't want to make my daughter a rantipole woman of quality. I'll give her to whom I please. Take her away, sir Harry; she shall marry you to-night.

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir, hear me but a moment!

Rus. Hold your tongue, girl. Take her away, sir Harry; take her away.

Cha. It must not be.

Maj. Only three words, Mr Russet!

Rus. Why don't the booby take her?

Sir Har. Hold hard, hold hard! You are all on a wrong scent: Hold hard! I say, hold hard! —Hark ye, squire Russet.

Rus. Well! what now?

Sir Har. It was proposed, you know, to match me with Miss Harriot——But she can't take kindly to me. When one has made a bad bet, it is best to hedge off, you know—and so I have e'en swopped her with Lord Trinket here for his brown horse Nabob, that he bought of Lord Whistle-Jacket for fifteen hundred guineas.

Rus. Swopped her? Swopped my daughter for a horse? Zounds, sir, what d'ye mean?

Sir Har. Mean? Why, I mean to be off, to be sure—It won't do—I tell you, it won't do——First of all, I knocked up myself and my horses, when they took for London—and now I have been stewed aboard a tender——I have wasted three stone at least——If I could have rid my match, it would not have grieved me——And so, as I said before, I have swopped her for Nabob.

Rus. The devil take Nabob, and yourself, and Lord Trinket, and——

Lord Trink. Pardon! je vous demande pardon, Monsieur Russet, 'pon honour.

Rus. Death and the devil! I shall go distracted. My daughter plotting against me—the——

Maj. Come, come, Mr Russet, I am your man after all. Give me but a moment's hearing, and I'll engage to make peace between you and your daughter, and throw the blame where it ought to fall most deservedly.

Sir Har. Ay, ay, that's right. Put the saddle on the right horse, my buck!

Rus. Well, sir!—What d'ye say?—Speak——I don't know what to do——

Maj. I'll speak the truth, let who will be offended by it. I have proof presumptive and positive for you, Mr Russet. From his lordship's behaviour at lady Freelove's, when my nephew rescued her, we may fairly conclude, that he would stick at no measures to carry his point. There's proof presumptive. But, sir, we can give you proof positive, too—proof under his lordship's own hand, that he, likewise, was the contriver of the gross affront that has just been offered you.

Rus. Hey! how?

Lord Trink. Every syllable romance, 'pon honour.

Maj. Gospel, every word on't.

Cha. This letter will convince you, sir!—In consequence of what happened at lady Freelove's, his lordship thought fit to send me a challenge: but the messenger blundered, and gave me this letter instead of it. [*Giving the letter.*] I have the case which inclosed it in my pocket.

Lord Trink. Forgery, from beginning to end, 'pon honour.

Maj. Truth, upon my honour. But read, read, Mr Russet, read, and be convinced.

Rus. Let me see—let me see——[*Reading.*]—Um—um—um—um—so, so!—um—um—um—damnation!—Wish me success—obedient slave—Trinket.——Fire and fury! How dare you do this?

Lord Trink. When you are cool, Mr Russet, I will explain this matter to you.

Rus. Cool! 'Sdeath and hell!—I'll never be cool again—I'll be revenged.—So my Harriot, my dear girl, is innocent at last. Say so, my Harriot; tell me you are innocent! [*Embracing her.*

Har. I am, indeed, sir; and happy beyond expression, at your being convinced of it.

Rus. I am glad on't—I'm glad on't—I believe you, Harriot! You was always a good girl.

Maj. So she is, an excellent girl!—Worth a regiment of such lords and baronets—Come, sir, finish every thing handsomely at once. Come—Charles will have a handsome fortune.

Rus. Marry!—She durst not do it.

Maj. Consider, sir, they have long been fond of each other—old acquaintance—faithful lovers—turtles—and may be very happy.

Rus. Well, well—since things are so—I love my girl. Hark'e, young Oakly, if you don't make her a good husband, you'll break my heart, you rogue.

Cha. Do not doubt it, sir! my Harriot has reformed me altogether.

Rus. Has she?—Why then—there—Heaven bless you both—there—now, there's an end on't.

Sir Har. So, my lord, you and I are both distanced—A hollow thing, damme!

Lord Trink. N'importe.

Sir Har. [*Aside.*] Now this stake is drawn, my lord may be for hedging off mayhap. Ecod! I'll go to Jack Speed's, and secure Nabob, and be out of town in an hour. Soho! Lady Freelove! Yoics! [*Exit.*

Enter LADY FREELOVE.

Lady Free. My dear Miss Russet, you'll excuse———

Cha. Mrs Oakly, at your ladyship's service.

Lady Free. Married?

Har. Not yet, madam; but my father has been so good as to give his consent.

Lady Free. I protest I am prodigiously glad of it. My dear, I give you joy—and you, Mr Oakly. I wish you joy, Mr Russet, and all the good company—for I think the most of them are parties concerned.

Maj. How easy, impudent, and familiar! [*Aside.*

Lady Free. Lord Trinket here, too! I vow I did not see your lordship before.

Lord Trink. Your ladyship's most obedient slave. [*Bowing.*

Lady Free. You seem grave, my lord!—Come, come, I know there has been some difference between you and Mr Oakly—You must give me leave to be a mediator in this affair.

Lord Trink. Here has been a small fracas to be sure, madam!—We are all blown, 'pon honour.

Lady Free. Blown! What do you mean, my lord?

Lord Trink. Nay, your ladyship knows that I never mind these things, and I know that they never discompose your ladyship—But things have happened a little *en travers*—The little billet I sent your ladyship has fallen into the hands of that gentleman—[*Pointing to* CHARLES]—and so—there has been a little *brouillerie* about it—that's all.

Lady Free. You talk to me, my lord, in a very extraordinary style—If you have been guilty of any misbehaviour, I am sorry for it; but your ill conduct can fasten no imputation on me. Miss Russet will justify me sufficiently.

Maj. Had not your ladyship better appeal to my friend Charles here?—The letter! Charles! Out with it this instant!

Cha. Yes, I have the credentials of her ladyship's integrity in my pocket.——Mr Russet, the letter you read a little while ago was inclosed in this cover, which also I now think it my duty to put into your hands.

Rus. [*Reading.*] 'To the right honourable la-'dy Freelove——'Sdeath and hell!—and now I recollect, the letter itself was pieced with scraps of French, and madam, and your ladyship—Fire and fury! madam, how came you to use me so? I am obliged to you, then, for the insult that has been offered me?

Lady Free. What is all this? Your obligations to me, Mr Russet, are of a nature that———

Rus. Fine obligations! I dare say I am partly obliged to you, too, for the attempt on my daughter, by that thing of a lord yonder at your house. Zouns! madam, these are injuries never to be forgiven———They are the grossest affronts to me and my family—All the world shall know them—Zouns!—I'll———

Lady Free. Mercy on me! how boisterous are these country gentlemen! Why really, Mr Russet, you rave like a man in Bedlam—I am afraid you'll beat me—and then you swear most abominably. How can you be so vulgar?—I see the meaning of this low malice——But the reputations of women of quality are not so easily impeached—My rank places me above the scandal of little people, and I shall meet such petty insolence with the greatest ease and tranquillity. But you and your simple girl will be the sufferers. I had some thoughts of introducing her into the first company—But now, madam, I shall neither receive, nor return your visits, and will entirely withdraw my protection from the ordinary part of the family. [*Exit.*

Rus. Zouns, what impudence! that's worse than all the rest.

Lord Trink. Fine presence of mind, faith!—The true French *nonchalance*—But, good folks, why such a deal of rout and *tapage* about nothing at all?—If Mademoiselle Harriot had rather be Mrs Oakly than lady Trinket—Why, I wish her joy, that's all. Mr Russet, I wish you joy of your son-in-law—Mr Oakly, I wish you joy of the lady—and you, madam, [*To* HARRIOT.] of the gentleman—And, in short, I wish you all joy of one another, 'pon honour! [*Exit.*

Rus. There's a fine fellow of a lord now! The devil's in your London folks of the first fashion, as you call them. They will rob you of your estate, debauch your neighbour, or lie with your wife—and all as if they were doing you a favour, 'pon honour!

Maj. Hey! what now?

[*Bell rings violently.*

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. D'ye, hear, major? d'ye hear?

Maj. Zouns! what a clatter! She'll pull down all the bells in the house.

Oak. My observations, since I left you, have confirmed my resolution. I see plainly, that her good-humour, and her ill-humour, her smiles, her tears, and her fits, are calculated to play upon me.

Maj. Did not I always tell you so? It's the way with them all—they will be rough and smooth, and hot and cold, and all in a breath.—Any thing to get the better of us.

Oak. She is in all moods at present, I promise you—I am at once angry and ashamed of her; and yet she is so ridiculous, I can't help laughing at her——There has she been in her chamber, fuming and fretting, and dispatching a messenger to me every two minutes—servant after servant—now she insists on my coming to her—now, again, she writes a note to entreat—then, Toilet is sent to let me know that she is ill, absolutely dying—then, the very next minute, she'll never see my face again—she'll go out of the house directly. [*Bell rings.*] Again! now the storm rises!

Maj. It will soon drive this way, then—now, brother, prove yourself a man—You have gone too far to retreat.

Oak. Retreat!——Retreat!——No, no!—I'll preserve the advantage I have gained, I am determined.

Maj. Ay, ay! keep your ground! fear nothing—up with your noble heart! Good discipline makes good soldiers; stick close to my advice, and you may stand buff to a tigress——

Oak. Here she is, by Heavens!—now, brother!

Maj. And now, brother! Now or never!

Enter MRS OAKLY.

Mrs Oak. I think, Mr Oakly, you might have had humanity enough to have come to see how I did. You have taken your leave, I suppose, of all tenderness and affection—but I'll be calm—I'll not throw myself into a passion—you want to drive me out of your house—I see what you aim at, and will be aforehand with you—let me keep my temper! I'll send for a chair, and leave the house this instant.

Oak. True, my love! I knew you would not think of dining in your chamber alone, when I had company below. You shall sit at the head of the table, as you ought, to be sure, as you say, and make my friends welcome.

Mrs Oak. Excellent raillery! Look ye, Mr Oakly, I see the meaning of all this affected coolness and indifference.

Oak. My dear, consider where you are——

Mrs Oak. You would be glad, I find, to get me out of your house, and have all your flirts about you.

Oak. Before all this company! Fy!

Mrs Oak. But I'll disappoint you, for I shall remain in it to support my due authority—as for you, major Oakly!——

Maj. Hey-day! What have I done?

Mrs Oak. I think you might find better employment, than to create divisions between married people——and you, sir——

Oak. Nay, but, my dear!

Mrs Oak. Might have more sense, as well as tenderness, than to give ear to such idle stuff.—

Oak. Lord, lord!

Mrs Oak. You, and your wise counsellor there, I suppose, think to carry all your points with me.

Oak. Was ever any thing———

Mrs Oak. But it won't do, sir. You shall find that I will have my own way, and that I will govern my own family.

Oak. You had better learn to govern yourself by half. Your passion makes you ridiculous.—Did ever any body see so much fury and violence? affronting your best friends, breaking my peace, and disconcerting your own temper. And all for what? For nothing. 'Sdeath, madam! at these years, you ought to know better.

Mrs Oak. At these years! Very fine!——Am I to be talked to in this manner?

Oak. Talked to! Why not? You have talked to me long enough—almost talked me to death—and I have taken it all in hopes of making you quiet—but all in vain; for the more one bears, the worse you are. Patience, I find, is all thrown away upon you; and henceforward, come what may, I am resolved to be master of my own house.

Mrs Oak. So, so! Master, indeed! Yes, sir, and you'll take care to have mistresses enough, too, I warrant you.

Oak. Perhaps I may; but they shall be quiet ones, I can assure you.

Mrs Oak. Indeed! And do you think I am such a tame fool as to sit quietly and bear all this? You shall know, sir, that I will resent this behaviour———You shall find that I have a spirit———

Oak. Of the devil.

Mrs Oak. Intolerable! You shall find, then, that I will exert that spirit. I am sure I have need of it. As soon as the house is once cleared again, I'll shut my doors against all company. You shan't see a single soul for this month.

Oak. 'Sdeath, madam, but I will! I'll keep open house for a year. I'll send cards to the whole town—Mr Oakly's route! All the world will come—and I'll go among the world, too—I'll be mewed up no longer.

Mrs Oak. Provoking insolence! This is not to be endured—Look'e, Mr Oakly———

Oak. And look'e, Mrs Oakly, I will have my own way.

Mrs Oak. Nay, then, let me tell you, sir——

Oak. And let me tell you, madam, I will not be crossed——I wont be made a fool.

Mrs Oak. Why, you wont let me speak!

Oak. Because you don't speak as you ought. Madam, madam! you shan't look, nor walk, nor talk, nor think, but as I please.

Mrs Oak. Was there ever such a monster! I can bear this no longer. [*Bursts into tears.*] O you vile man! I can see through your design—you cruel, barbarous, inhuman——such usage to your poor wife!——you'll be the death of her.

Oak. She shan't be the death of me, I am determined.

Mrs Oak. That it should ever come to this!—To be contradicted—[*Sobbing.*]—insulted—abused—hated——'tis too much—my heart will burst with—oh—oh!——[*Falls into a fit.* HARRIOT, CHARLES, *&c. run to her assistance.*]

Oak. [*Interposing.*] Let her alone.

Har. Sir, Mrs Oakly———

Cha. For Heaven's sake, sir, she will be——

Oak. Let her alone, I say; I won't have her touched—let her alone—if her passions throw her into fits, let the strength of them carry her through them.

Har. Pray, my dear sir, let us assist her. She may——

Oak. I don't care—you shan't touch her—let her bear them patiently—she'll learn to behave better another time——Let her alone, I say.

Mrs Oak. [*Rising.*] O you monster!—you villain!—you base man!——Would you let me die for want of help?—would you——

Oak. Bless me! madam, your fit is very violent—take care of yourself.

Mrs Oak. Despised, ridiculed—but I'll be revenged—you shall see, sir——

Oak. Tol-de-rol loll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll! [*Singing.*

Mrs Oak. What, am I made a jest of? Exposed to all the world?—If there's law or justice——

Oak. Tol-de-rol loll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll! [*Singing.*

Mrs Oak. I shall burst with anger—Have a care, sir, you may repent this—Scorned and made ridiculous!—No power on earth shall hinder my revenge! [*Going.*

Har. [*Interposing.*] Stay, madam.

Mrs Oak. Let me go. I cannot bear this place.

Har. Let me beseech you, madam.

Oak. What does the girl mean? [*Apart.*

Maj. Courage, brother! you have done wonders. [*Apart.*

Oak. I think she'll have no more fits. [*Apart.*

Har. Stay, madam—Pray stay but one moment. I have been a painful witness of your uneasiness, and in great part the innocent occasion of it. Give me leave then——

Mrs Oak. I did not expect, indeed, to have found you here again. But, however———

Har. I see the agitation of your mind, and it makes me miserable. Suffer me to tell you the real truth. I can explain every thing to your satisfaction.

Mrs Oak. May be so—I cannot argue with you.

Cha. Pray, madam, hear her——for my sake——for your own—dear madam!

Mrs Oak. Well———well——proceed.

Oak. I shall relapse. I can't bear to see her so uneasy. [*Apart.*

Maj. Hush———Hush! [*Apart.*

Har. I understand, madam, that your first alarm was occasioned by a letter from my father to your nephew.

Rus. I was in a bloody passion to be sure, madam!—The letter was not over civil, I believe—I did not know but the young rogue had ruined my girl—But its all over now, and so———

Mrs Oak. You was here yesterday, sir?

Rus. Yes, I came after Harriot. I thought I should find my young madam with my young sir, here.

Mrs Oak. With Charles, did you say, sir?

Rus. Ay, with Charles, madam! The young rogue has been fond of her a long time, and she of him, it seems.

Mrs Oak. I fear I have been to blame. [*Aside.*

Rus. I ask pardon, madam, for the disturbance I made in your house.

Har. And the abrupt manner in which I came into it, demands a thousand apologies. But the occasion must be my excuse.

Mrs Oak. How have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*—But did not I overhear you and Mr Oakly——[*To* HARRIOT.

Har. Dear madam! you had but a partial hearing of our conversation. It related entirely to this gentleman.

Cha. To put it beyond doubt, madam, Mr Russet and my guardian have consented to our marriage; and we are in hopes that you will not withhold your approbation.

Mrs Oak. I have no further doubt—I see you are innocent, and it was cruel to suspect you—You have taken a load of anguish off my mind—and yet your kind interposition comes too late. Mr Oakly's love for me is entirely destroyed. [*Weeping.*

Oak. I must go to her—— [*Apart.*

Maj. Not yet!——Not yet! [*Apart.*

Har. Do not disturb yourself with such apprehensions. I am sure Mr Oakly loves you most affectionately.

Oak. I can hold no longer. [*Going to her.*] My affection for you, madam, is as warm as ever. Nothing can ever extinguish it. My constrained behaviour cut me to the soul—For, within these few hours, it has been all constrained——and it was with the utmost difficulty that I was able to support it.

Mrs Oak. O, Mr Oakly, how have I exposed myself! What low arts has my jealousy induced

me to practise! I see my folly, and fear that you can never forgive me.

Oak. Forgive you!——You are too good, my love!—Forgive you!—Can you forgive me?—This change transports me — Brother! Mr Russet! Charles! Harriot! give me joy!—I am the happiest man in the world.

Maj. Joy, much joy to you both! though, by the by, you are not a little obliged to me for it. Did not I tell you I would cure all the disorders in your family? I beg pardon, sister, for taking the liberty to prescribe for you. My medicines have been somewhat rough, I believe, but they have had an admirable effect, and so don't be angry with your physician.

Mrs Oak. I am indeed obliged to you, and I feel—

Oak. Nay, my dear, no more of this. All that's past must be utterly forgotten.

Mrs Oak. I have not merited this kindness, but it shall, hereafter, be my study to deserve it. Away with all idle jealousies! And since my suspicions have hitherto been groundless, I am resolved for the future never to suspect at all.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

SCHOOL FOR LOVERS.

BY

WHITEHEAD.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.	WOMEN.
Sir John Dorilant, *a man of nice honour, guardian to* Cælia.	Lady Beverley, *a widow lady, mother to* Cælia.
Modely, Belmour, } *men of the town.*	Cælia, *daughter to* Lady Beverley, *and ward to* Sir John.
An old Steward to Sir John Dorilant.	Araminta, *sister to* Sir John Dorilant.
Footman to Sir John Dorilant.	

Scene—A garden belonging to Sir John Dorilant's *house in the country, with an arbour, garden-chairs, &c.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A garden.*

Enter Araminta *with an affected carelessness, and knotting;* Modela *following.*

Mode. But, madam!

Ara. But, sir! what can possibly have alarmed you thus? You see me quite unconcerned. I only tell you in a plain, simple, narrative manner—(this plaguy thread)—and merely by way of conversation, that you are in love with Cælia; and where is the mighty harm in all this?

Mode. The harm in it, madam! have I not told you a thousand and a thousand times, that you were the only woman who could possibly make me happy?

Ara. Why, aye, to be sure you have, and sworn a thousand and a thousand oaths to confirm that assertion.

Mode. And am not I here now, expressly to marry you?

Ara. Why, that, too, is true—but—you are in love with Cælia.

Mode. Bless me, madam, what can I say to you? If it had not been for my attendance upon you, I had never known Cælia, or her mother either—though they are both my relations. The mother has since indeed put some kind of confidence in me—she is a widow, you know—

Ara. And wants consolation! The poor orphan, too, her daughter!—Well, charity is an excellent virtue. I never considered it in that light before. You are vastly charitable, Mr. Modely.

Mode. It is impossible to talk with you.—If you will not do me justice, do it to yourself, at least. Is there any comparison betwixt you and

Cælia? Could any man of sense hesitate a moment? She has yet no character. One does not know what she is, or what she will be; a chit—a green girl of fourteen or fifteen.

Ara. Seventeen, at least.———(I cannot undo this knot.)———

Mode. Well, let her be seventeen. Would any man of judgment attach himself to a girl of that age? On my soul, if one was to make love to her, she would hardly understand what one meant.

Ara. Girls are not quite so ignorant as you may imagine, Mr Modely; Cælia will understand you, take my word for it, and does understand you. As to your men of judgment and sense, here is my brother, now;—I take him to be full as reasonable as yourself, and somewhat older; and yet, with all his philosophy, he has brought himself to a determination at last, to fulfil the father's will, and marry this green girl. I am sorry to tell you so, Mr Modely, but he will certainly marry her.

Mode. Let him marry her. I should perhaps do it myself, if I was in his place. He was an intimate friend of her father's. She is a great fortune, and was given to him by will. But do you imagine, my dear Araminta, that if he was left to his own choice, without any bias, he would not rather have a woman nearer his own years? He might almost be her father.

Ara. That is true. But you will find it difficult to persuade me, that youth in a woman is so insurmountable an objection. I fancy, Mr Modely, it may be got over. Suppose I leave you to think of it.—(I cannot get this right.) [*Going.*

Mode. Stay, dear Araminta! why will you plague me thus? Your own charms, my earnestness, might prove to you—

Ara. I tell you I don't want proofs.

Mode. Well, well, you shall have none, then. But give me leave to hope, since you have done me the honour to be a little uneasy on my account—

Ara. Uneasy!—I uneasy! What does the man mean?—I was a little concerned, indeed, to give you uneasiness by informing you of my brother's intended marriage with Cælia. But—this shuttle bends so abominably.—[*Aside.*]

Mode. Thou perplexing tyrant! Nay, you shall not go. May I continue to adore you? you must not forbid me that.

Ara. For my part, I neither command nor forbid any thing. Only this I would have you remember, I have quick eyes. Your servant.—I wish this knotting had never come in fashion. [*Aside.*] [*Exit* ARA.

Mode. Quick eyes, indeed! I thought my cunning here had been a master-piece. The girl cannot have told, sure! and the mother is entirely on my side. They certainly were those inquisitive eyes she speaks of, which have found out this secret. Well, I must be more cautious for the future, and act the lover to Araminta ten times stronger than ever. One would not give her up till one was sure of succeeding in the other place.

Enter BELMOUR *from behind, with a book in his hand.*

Bel. Ha, ha, ha! Well said, Modely!

Mod. [*Starting.*] Belmour!—how the deuce came you here?

Bel. How came I here!—How came you here, if you come to that? A man can't retire from the noise and bustle of the world, to admire the beauties of the spring, and read pastoral in an arbour, but impertinent lovers must disturb his meditations. Thou art the arrantest hypocrite, Modely— [*Throwing away the book.*

Mod. Hypocrite!—My dear friend, we men of gallantry must be so. But have a care! we may have other listeners for aught I know, who may not be so proper for confidants. [*Looking about.*

Bel. You may be easy on that head. We have the garden to ourselves. The widow and her daughter are just gone in, and sir John is busy with his steward.

Mod. The widow, and her daughter! Why, were they in the garden?

Bel. They just came into it; but upon seeing you and Araminta together, they turned back again.

Mode. On seeing me and Araminta! I hope I have no jealousies there, too. However, I am glad Cælia knows I am in the garden, because it may probably induce her to fall in my way—by chance, you know, and give me an opportunity of talking to her.

Bel. Do you think she likes you?

Mode. She does not know what she does.

Bel. Do you like her?

Mode. Why, faith, I think I do.

Bel. Why, then, do you pursue your affair with Araminta; and not find some honourable means of breaking off with her?

Mode. That might not be quite so expedient. I think Araminta the finest woman, and Cælia the prettiest girl, I know. Now, they are both good fortunes, and one of them I am resolved to have, but which—

Bel. Your great wisdom has not yet determined. Thou art undoubtedly the vainest fellow living. I thought you brought me down here now to your wedding?

Mode. 'Egad, I thought so, too; but this plaguy little rustic has disconcerted all my schemes. Sir John, you know, by her father's will, may marry her if he pleases, and she forfeits her estate if she marries any one else. Now, I am contriving to bring it about, that I may get her, and her fortune, too.

Bel. A very likely business, truly. So you modestly expect that sir John Dorilant should give up his mistress, and then throw her fortune

into the bargain, as an additional reward to the obliging man who has seduced her from him?

Mode. Hum! why, I don't expect quite that. But, you know, Belmour, he is a man of honour, and would not force her inclinations, though he loved her to distraction.——Come, come, he is quite a different creature from what you and I are.

Bel. Speak for yourself, good sir; yet, why should you imagine that her inclinations are not as likely to fix upon him as you? He has a good person, and is scarce older than yourself.

Mode. That shews your ignorance; I am ten years younger than he is. My dress, and the company I keep, give a youth and vivacity to me, which he must always want. An't I a man of the town? O that town, Belmour! Could I but have met these ladies there, I had done the business.

Bel. Were they never there?

Mode. Never.—Sir Harry Beverley, the father of this girl, lived always in the country, and divided his time between his books and his hounds. His wife and daughter seldom mixed with people of their own rank, but at a horse-race, or a rural visit. And see the effects! The girl, though she is naturally genteel, has an air of simplicity.

Bel. But does not want sense.

Mode. No, no! She has a devilish deal of that kind of sense, which is acquired by early reading. I have heard her talk occasionally, like a queen in a tragedy; or, at least, like a sentimental lady in a comedy, much above your misses of thirty in town, I assure you. As to the mother—but she is a character, and explains herself.

Bel. Yes, yes; I have read her. But pray, how came it to pass, that the father, who was of a different way of thinking in regard to party, should have left sir John guardian to his daughter, with the additional clause, too, of her being obliged to marry him?

Mode. Why, that is somewhat surprising. But the truth of the case was, they were thoroughly acquainted, and each considered party as the foible of the other. Sir Harry thought a good husband his daughter's best security for happiness; and he knew it was impossible sir John Dorilant should prove a bad one.

Bel. And yet this prospect of happiness would you destroy?

Mode. No, no; I only see farther than sir Harry did, and would increase that happiness, by giving her a better husband.

Bel. Oh! your humble servant, sir.

Mode. Besides, the mother is entirely in my interest, and, by the by, has a hankering after sir John herself. He is a sober man, and should have a woman of discretion for his wife; not a hoydening girl. 'Egad, Belmour, suppose you attacked the widow? the woman is young enough, and has an excellent jointure.

Bel. And so become your father-in-law?

Mode. You will have an admirable opportunity to-night: we are to have the fiddles, you know, and you may dance with her.

When music softens, and when dancing fires!

Eh! Bellmour?

Bel. You are vastly kind to sir John, and would ease him, I find, of both his mistresses.—But, suppose this man of honour should be fool enough to resign his mistress, may not another kind of honour oblige him to run you through the body for deserting his sister?

Mode. Why, faith, it may. However, it is not the first duel I have fought on such an occasion; so I am his man. Not that it is impossible but he may have scruples there, too.

Bel. You don't think him a coward?

Mode. I know he is not. But your reasoning men have strange distinctions. They are quite different creatures, as I told you, from you and me.

Bel. You are pleased to compliment. But, suppose now, as irrational as you think me, I should find out a means to make this whole affair easy to you?

Mode. How do you mean?

Bel. Not by attacking the widow, but by making my addresses, in good earnest, to Araminta.

Mode. I forbid that absolutely.

Pel. What, do you think it possible I should succeed after the accomplished Mr Modely?

Mode. Why, faith, between you and me, I think not; but I don't chuse to hazard it.

Bel. Then you love her still?

Mode. I confess it.

Bel. And it is nothing upon earth but that insatiable vanity of yours, with a little tincture of avarice, that leads you a gadding thus?

Mode. I plead guilty. But, be it as it will, I am determined to pursue my point. And see, where the little rogue comes most opportunely. I told you she would be here. Go, go, Belmour—you must not listen to all my love scenes.—[*Exit* BEL.]—Now for a serious face, a little upon the tragic; young girls are mighty fond of despairing lovers.

Enter CELIA.

Celia. [*With an affected surprise.*]—Mr Modely!—Are you here?—I am come to meet my mamma—I did not think to meet you here.

Mode. Are you sorry to find me here, madam?

Celia. Why should I be sorry, Mr Modely?

Mode. May I hope you are pleased with it?

Celia. I have no dislike to company.

Mode. But is all company alike? Surely one would choose one's companions. Would it have been the same thing to you, if you had met sir John Dorilant here?

Celia. I should be very ungrateful, if I did not

like sir John Dorilant's company. I am sure I have all the obligations in the world to him, and so had my poor papa. [*Sighing.*

Mode. Whatever were your papa's obligations, his gratitude, I am sure, was unbounded. O that I had been his friend!

Celia. Why should you wish that, Mr Modely? You would have had a great loss in him.

Mode. I believe I should. But I might likewise have had a consolation for that loss, which would have contained in it all earthly happiness.

Celia. I don't understand you.

Mode. He might have left his Celia to me.

Celia. Dear, how you talk!

Mode. Talk, madam! Oh, I could talk for ever, would you but listen to my heart's soft language, nor cruelly affect to disbelieve when I declare I love you.

Celia. Love me, Mr Modely? Are you not in love with Araminta?

Mode. I once thought I was.

Celia. And do lovers ever change?

Mode. Not those who feel a real passion.—But there are false alarms in love, which the unpractised heart sometimes mistakes for true ones.

Celia. And were yours such for Araminta?

Mode. Alas! I feel they were.

[*Looking earnestly at her.*

Celia. You don't intend to marry her then, I hope?

Mode. Do you hope I should not marry her?

Celia. To be sure I do. I would not have the poor lady deceived, and I would willingly have a better opinion of Mr Modely, than to believe him capable of making false protestations.

Mode. To you he never could.

Celia. To me?—I am out of the question.—But I am sorry for Araminta, for I believe she loves you.

Mode. If you can pity those who love in vain, why am not I an object of compassion?

Celia. Dear Mr Modely, why will you talk thus? My hand, you know, is destined to sir John Dorilant, and my duty there does not even permit me to think of other lovers.

Mode. Happy, happy man! Yet give me leave to ask one question, madam. I dread to do it, though my last glimpse of happiness depends upon your answer.

Celia. What question? Nay, pray speak, I entreat it of you.

Mode. Then tell me, lovely Celia, sincerely tell me, were your choice left free, and did it depend upon you only, to determine who should be the master of your affections, might I expect one favourable thought?

Celia. [*After some hesitation.*]—It—it does not depend upon me.

Mode. I know it does not, but if it did?

Celia. Come, come, Mr Modely, I cannot talk upon this subject. Impossibilities are impossibilities. But I hope you will acquaint Araminta instantly with this change in your inclinations.

Mode. I would do it, but dare not.

Celia. You should break it first to sir John.

Mode. My difficulty does not lie in the breaking it; but, if I confess my passion at an end, I must no longer expect admittance into this family, and I could still wish to talk to Celia as a friend.

Celia. Indeed, Mr Modely, I should be loth myself to lose your acquaintance; but—O here comes my mamma! she may put you in a method.

Enter LADY BEVERLEY.

Lady Bev. In any method, my dear, which decency and reserve will permit. Your servant, cousin Modely. What, you are talking strangely to this girl now?—O you men!

Mode. Your ladyship knows the sincerity of my passion here.

Celia. [*With surprise.*]—Knows your sincerity?

Lady Bev. Well, well; what signifies what I know? You were mentioning some method I was to put you in.

Celia. Mr Modely, madam, has been confessing to me that he no longer loves Araminta.

Lady Bev. Hum!—Why, such things may happen, child. We are not all able to govern our affections. But I hope if he breaks off with her, he will do it with decency.

Mode. That, madam, is the difficulty.

Lady Bev. What! Is it a difficulty to be decent? Fie, fie, Mr Modely.

Mode. Far be it from me even to think so, madam, before a person of your ladyship's reserved behaviour. But, considering how far I have gone in the affair——

Lady Bel. Well, well, if that be all, I may, perhaps, help you out, and break it to sir John myself—Not that I approve of roving affections, I assure you.

Mode. You bind me ever to you. But there is another cause, which you alone can promote, and on which my eternal happiness——

Lady Bev. Leave us—leave us, cousin Modely. I must not hear you talk in this extravagant manner.—[*Pushing him towards the scene, and then aside to him.*]—I shall bring it about better in your absence. Go, go, man; go.—[*Exit* MODELY.]—A pretty kind of fellow, really. Now, Celia: come nearer, child; I have something of importance to say to you. What do you think of that gentleman?

Celia. Of Mr Modely, madam?

Lady Bev. Ay, Mr Modely, my cousin Modely.

Celia. Think of him, madam?

Lady Bev. Ay, think of him, child; you are old enough to think, sure, after the education I have given you. Well, what answer do you make?

Celia. I really don't understand your ladyship's question.

Lady Bev. Not understand me, child? Why, I ask you how you like Mr Modely? What you should think of him as a husband?

Celia. Mr Modely as a husband! Why, surely, madam, sir John———

Lady Bev. Fiddlefaddle, sir John! sir John knows better things than to plague himself with a wife in leading-strings.

Celia. Is your ladyship sure of that?

Lady Bev. O ho! Would you be glad to have me sure of it?

Celia. I don't know what I should be glad of. I would not give sir John a moment's pain to be mistress of the whole world.

Lady Bev. But if it should be brought about without giving him pain. Hey! Celia——

[*Patting her cheek with her fan.*

Celia. I should be sorry for it.

Lady Bev. Hey day!

Celia. For then he must think lightly of me.

Lady Bev. What does the girl mean? Come, come, I must enter roundly into this affair. Here, here, sit down, and tell me plainly and honestly, without equivocation or reservation, is Modely indifferent to you? Nay, nay—look me in the face; turn your eyes towards me. One judges greatly by the eyes, especially in women. Your poor papa used to say that my eyes reasoned better than my tongue. Well, and now tell me, without blushing, is Modely indifferent to you?

Celia. I fear he is not, madam, and it is that which perplexes me.

Lady Bev. How do you feel when you meet him?

Celia. Fluttered.

Lady Bev. Hum! While you are with him?

Celia. Fluttered.

Lady Bev. Hum! When you leave him?

Celia. Fluttered still.

Lady Bev. Strong symptoms truly!

Celia. When sir John Dorilant talks to me, my heart is softened, but not perplexed. My esteem, my gratitude overflows towards him. I consider him as a kind father, with all the tenderness, without the authority.

Lady Bev. But when Mr Modely talks?

Celia. My tranquillity of mind is gone; I am pleased with hearing what I doubt is flattery, and when he grasps my hand———

Lady Bev. Well, well, I know all that. Be decent, child. You need say no more. Mr Modely is the man. [*Rising.*

Celia. But, dear madam, there are a thousand obstacles. I am afraid sir John loves me; I am sure he esteems me, and I would not forfeit his esteem for the universe. I am certain I can make him an affectionate and an humble wife, and I think I can forget Mr Modely.

Lady Bev. Forget a fiddle! Don't talk to me of forgetting. I order you, on your duty, not to forget. Mr Modely is, and shall be, the man.—You may trust my prudence for bringing it about. I will talk with sir John instantly. I know what you are going to say, but I will not hear a word of it. Can you imagine, Celia, that I shall do any thing but with the utmost decency and decorum?

Celia. I know you will not, madam; but there are delicacies———

Lady Bev. With which I am unacquainted to be sure, and my daughter must instruct me in them! Pray, Celia, where did you learn this nicety of sentiments? Who was it that inspired them?

Celia. But the maxims of the world———

Lady Bev. Are altered, I suppose, since I was of your age. Poor thing, what world hast thou seen? Notwithstanding your delicacies and your maxims, sir John, perhaps, may be wiser than you imagine, and choose a wife of somewhat more experience.

Celia. May he be happy wherever he chooses—But, dear madam———

Lady Bev. Again? don't make me angry. I will positively not be instructed. Ay, you may well blush. Nay, no tears. Come, come, Celia, I forgive you. I had idle delicacies myself once. Lard! I remember when your poor papa—he, he, he—but we have no time for old stories.—What would you say now, if sir John himself should propose it, and persuade the match, and yet continue as much your friend as ever, nay, become more so, a nearer friend?

Celia. In such a case, madam———

Lady Bev. I understand you, and will about it instantly. B'ye, Celia; O how its little heart flutters! [*Exit.*

Celia. It does, indeed. A nearer friend? I hardly know whether I should wish her success or not—Sir John is so affectionate. Would I had never seen Mr Modely!———Araminta, too! what will she say? O, I see a thousand bad consequences. I must follow her, and prevent them. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter LADY BEVERLEY *and* MODELY.

Lady Bev. PRITHEE, don't tease me so; I vow, cousin Modely, you are almost as peremptory as my daughter. She, truly, was teaching me decorum just now, and plaguing me with her delicacies, and her stuff. I tell you, sir John will be in the garden immediately; this is always his hour of walking; and when he comes, I shall lay the whole affair before him, with all its concatenation of circumstances, and, I warrant you, bring it about.

Mode. I have no doubt, madam, of the transcendency of your ladyship's rhetoric; it is on that I entirely rely. But I must beg leave to hint, that Araminta already suspects my passion, and should it be openly declared, would undoubtedly prevail, that instant, with her brother to forbid me the house.

Lady Bev. Why, that might be———

Mode. And though I told your daughter I did not care how soon it came to an eclaircissement; yet a woman of your ladyship's penetration and knowledge of the world, must see the necessity of concealing it, at least for a time. I beg pardon for offering what may have even the distant appearance of instruction. But it is sir John's delicacy which must be principally alarmed with apprehensions of her disregard for him; and I am sure your ladyship's manner of doing it, will shew him where he might much better place his affections, and with an undoubted prospect of happiness.

Lady Bev. Ay, now you talk to the purpose—But stay, is not that sir John coming this way? It is, I vow, and Araminta with him. We'll turn down this walk, and reason the affair a little more, and then I will come round the garden upon him.

[MODELY *takes her hand to lead her out.* You are very gallant, cousin Modely. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SIR JOHN DORILANT *and* ARAMINTA.

Ara. What do you drag me into the garden for? We were private enough where we were—and I hate walking.

Sir John. Forgive me, my dear sister: I am restless every where; my head and heart are full of nothing but this lovely girl.

Ara. My dear, dear brother, you are enough to spoil any woman in the universe. I tell you, again and again, the girl is a good girl, an excellent girl, and will make an admirable wife. You may trust one woman in her commendations of another; we are not apt to be too favourable in our judgments, especially when there is beauty in the case.

Sir John. You charm me, when you talk thus. If she is really all this, how happy must the man be, who can engage her affections! But, alas! Araminta, in every thing which regards me, it is duty, not love, which actuates her behaviour.—She steals away my very soul by her attentions; but never once expresses that heart-felt tenderness, those sympathetic feelings———

Ara. Ha, ha, ha! O my stars! Sympathetic feelings! Why, would you have a girl of her age have those sympathetic feelings, as you call them? If she had, take my word for it, she would coquette it with half the fellows in town, before she had been married a twelvemonth.—Besides, sir John, you don't consider that you was her father's friend; she has been accustomed, from her infancy, to respect you in that light; and our father's friends, you know, are always old people, greybeards, philosophers, enemies to youth, and the destruction of gaiety.

Sir John. But I was never such.

Ara. You may imagine so; but you always had a grave turn. I hated you once myself.

Sir John. Dear Araminta!

Ara. I did, as I hope to live; for many a time has your aversion to dancing hindered me from having a fiddle. By the by, remember we are to have the fiddles to-night. But let that pass. As the case now stands, if I was not already so near akin to you, you have the temper in the world which I should choose in a husband.

Sir John. That is obliging, however.

Ara. Not so very obliging, perhaps, neither. It would be merely for my own sake; for, then, would I have the appearance of the most obedient, sympathetic wife in the universe, and yet be as despotic in my government as an eastern monarch. And when I grew tired, as I probably should do, of a want of contradiction, why, I should find an easy remedy for that, too; I could break your heart in about a month.

Sir John. Don't trifle with me; 'tis your serious advice I want; give it me honestly as a friend, and tenderly as a sister.

Ara. Why, I have done it fifty times. What can I say more? If you will have it again, you must. This, then, it is, in plain terms. But you are sure you are heartily in love with her?

Sir John. Pshaw!

Ara. Well, then, that we will take for granted; and now you want to know what is right and proper for you to do in the case. Why, was I in your place, I should make but short work with it. She knows the circumstances of her father's will; therefore, would I go immediately to her, tell her how my heart stood inclined, and hope she had no objections to comply, with what it is not in her power to refuse.

Sir John. You would not have me talk thus abruptly to her?

Ara. Indeed I would. It will save a world of trouble. She will blush, perhaps, at first, and look a little awkward (and, by the by, so will you, too); but if she is the girl I take her for, after a little irresolute gesture, and about five minutes conversation, she will drop you a curtesy with the demure humility of a vestal, and tell you it shall be as you and her mamma please.

Sir John. O, that it were come to that!

Ara. And, pray, what hinders it? Nothing upon earth but your consummate prudence and discretion.

Sir John. I cannot think of marrying her, till I am sure she loves me.

Ara. Lud, lud!—Why, what does that signify? If she consents, is not that enough?

Sir John. Her gratitude may induce her to consent, rather than make me unhappy.

Ara. You would absolutely make a woman mad.

Sir John. Why, could you think of marrying a man who has no regard for you?

Ara. The case is widely different, my good casuistical brother; and perhaps I could not—unless I was very much in love with him.

Sir John. And could you then?

Ara. Yes, I could—to tell you the truth, I believe I shall.

Sir John. What do you mean?

Ara. I shall not tell you. You have business enough of your own upon your hands.

Sir John. Have you any doubts of Modely?

Ara. I shall keep them to myself, if I have. For you are a wretched counsellor in a love-case.

Sir John. But dear Araminta———

Ara. But dear sir John Dorilant, you may make yourself perfectly easy, for you shall positively know nothing of my affairs. As to your own, if you do not instantly resolve to speak to Celia, I will go and talk to her myself.

Sir John. Stay, lady Beverley is coming towards us.

Ara. And has left my swain yonder by himself.

Sir John. Suppose I break it to her?

Ara. It is not a method which I should advise; but do as you please. I know that horrid woman's sentiments very exactly, and I shall be glad to have her teased a little. [*Aside.*]——I'll give you an opportunity by leaving you; and so adieu, my dear sentimental brother!

Enter LADY BEVERLEY *and* MODELY.

We'll change partners, if you please, madam.—[*To* LADY BEVERLEY *as she enters. And then exit with* MODELY.]

Lady Bev. Poor mistaken creature! how fond the thing is! [*Aside, and looking after* ARAMINTA.] Your servant, sir John.

Sir John. Your ladyship's most obedient.——[*After some irresolute gesture on both sides*——LADY BEVERLEY *speaks.*]

Lady Bev. I—I—have wanted an opportunity of speaking to you, sir John, a great while.

Sir John. And I, madam, have long had an affair of consequence to propose to your ladyship.

Lady Bev. An affair of consequence to me!—O lud!———will you please to speak, sir.

Sir John. Not till I have heard your ladyship's commands.

Lady Bev. What, must women speak first! Fie, sir John——[*Looking languishingly.*]——Well, then, the matter, in short, is this: I have long been thinking how to dispose of my girl properly. She is grown a woman, you see, and, though I, who am her mother, say it, has her allurements.

Sir John. Uncommon ones indeed.

Lady Bev. Now, I would willingly consult with you how to get her well married, before she is tainted with the indecorums of the world.

Sir John. It was the very subject which I proposed to speak to you upon. I am sorry to put your ladyship in mind of a near and dear loss—But you remember sir Harry's will.

Lady Bev. Yes, yes, I remember it very well. Poor man! it was undoubtedly the only weak thing he was ever guilty of.

Sir John. Madam!

Lady Bev. I say, sir John, we must pardon the failings of our deceased friends. Indeed his affection for his child excuses it.

Sir John. Excuses it!

Lady Bev. Yes, indeed, does it. His fondness for her might naturally make him wish to place her with a person of your known excellence of character; for my own part, had I died, I should have wished it myself. I don't believe you have your equal in the world. Nay, dear sir John, 'tis no compliment. This, I say, might make him not attend to the impropriety of the thing, and the reluctance a gentleman of your good sense and judgment must undoubtedly have to accede to so unsuitable a treaty; especially as he could not but know there were women of discretion in the world, who would be proud of an alliance where the prospect of felicity was so inviting and unquestionable.

Sir John. [*Who had appeared uneasy all the time she was speaking.*] What women, madam? I know of none.

Lady Bev. Sir John! That is not quite so complaisant, methinks—to our sex, I mean.

Sir John. I beg your pardon, madam; I hardly know what I say. Your ladyship has disconcerted every thing I was going to propose to you.

Lady Bev. Bless me, sir John!—I disconcerted every thing! How, pray? I have been only talking to you in an open friendly manner, with regard to my daughter; our daughter, indeed, I might call her, for you have been a father to her. The girl herself always speaks of you as such.

Sir John. Speaks of me as a father?

Lady Bev. Why, more unlikely things have happened, sir John.

Sir John. Than what, madam?

Lady Bev. Dear sir John! You put such peremptory questions; you might easily understand what one meant, methinks.

Sir John. I find, madam, I must speak plain at once. Know, then, my heart, my soul, my every thought of happiness, is fixed upon that lovely girl.

Lady Bev. O, astonishing! Well, miracles are not ceased, that's certain. But every body, they say, must do a foolish thing once in their lives. And can you really and sincerely think of putting sir Harry's will in execution?

Sir John. Would I could!

Lady Bev. To be sure the girl has a fine fortune.

Sir John. Fortune! I despise it. I would give it with all my soul to any one who could engage me her affections. Fortune! dirt.

Lady Bev. I am thunderstruck!

Sir John. [*Turning eagerly to her.*] O, madam, tell me, sincerely tell me, what method can I possibly pursue to make her think favourably of me! You know her inmost soul, you know the tender moments of address, the easy avenues to her unpractised heart. Be kind, and point them out. [*Grasping her hand.*

Lady Bev. I vow, sir John, I don't know what to say to you. Let go my hand. You talked of my disconcerting you just now; I am sure you disconcert me with a witness.——[*Aside.*] I did not think the man had so much rapture in him. He squeezed my hand with such an emphasis, I may gain him, perhaps, at last.

Sir John. Why will you not speak, madam? Can you see me on the brink of desperation, and not lend a friendly hand to my assistance?

Lady Bev. I have it. [*Aside.*]——Alas, sir John, what signifies what I can do? Can I answer for the inclinations of a giddy girl?

Sir John. You know she is not such; her innocent mind is yet untainted with the follies of her sex. And if a life devoted to her service, without a wish but what regards her happiness, can win her to be mine——

Lady Bev. Why, that might go a great way with an unprejudiced mind. But when a first passion has taken place——

Sir John. [*With amazement.*] What do you mean?

Lady Bev. To tell you the truth, I am afraid the girl is not so untainted as you imagine.

Sir John. You distract me.——How—when—whom can she have seen?

Lady Bev. Undoubtedly there is a man—

Sir John. Tell me who, that I may——no, that I may give her to him, and make her happy, whatever becomes of me.

Lady Bev. That is generous indeed——So—so. [*Aside.*

Sir John. But 'tis impossible. I have observed all her motions, all her attentions, with a lover's eye, incapable of erring. Yet stay——has any body written to her?

Lady Bev. There is no occasion for letters, when people are in the same house together.

Sir John. Confusion!

Lady Bev. I was going to offer some proposals to you, but your strange declaration stopped me short.

Sir John. You proposals?—You?—Are you her abettor in the affair? O madam, what unpardonable crime have I committed against you, that you should thus conspire my ruin? Have not I always behaved to you like a friend, a brother?—I will not call you ungrateful.

Lady Bev. Mercy on us!—The man raves—How could it possibly enter into my head, or the girl's either, that you had any serious thoughts of marrying her? But I see you are too much discomposed at present, to admit of calm reasoning. So I shall take some other opportunity.——Friend—brother—ungrateful!—Very fine truly!—I hope, at least, you will not think of forcing the poor girl's inclinations! Ungrateful indeed! [*Exit in a passion.*

Sir John. Not for the universe—Stay, madam! She is gone. But it is no matter. I am but little disposed for altercation now. Heigh ho!—Good Heaven! can so slight an intercourse have effected all this? I have scarce ever seen them together. O that I had been born with Belmour's happy talents of address!—Address!——'tis absolute magic, 'tis fascination—Alas! 'tis the rapidity of real passion. Why did Modely bring him hither to his wedding? Every thing has conspired against me. He brought him; and the delay of the lawyers has kept him here. Had I taken Araminta's advice a poor fortnight ago, it had not been in the power of fate to have undone me. And yet she might have seen him afterwards, which would at least have made her duty uneasy to her. Heigh ho!

Enter ARAMINTA *and* MODELY.

Ara. [*Entering.*] I tell you, I heard them very loud! and I will see what is the matter. O! here is my brother alone.

Sir John. [*Taking her tenderly by the hand.*] O Araminta! I am lost beyond redemption!

Ara. Dear brother, what can have happened to you?

Sir John. [*Turning to* MODELY.] Mr Modely, you could not intend it, but you have ruined me.

Mode. [*Alarmed.*] I, sir John!

Sir John. You have brought a friend with you, who has pierced me to the very soul!

Mode. Belmour!

Sir John. He has stolen my Celia's affections from me.

Ara. [*Looking slyly at* MODELY.] Belmour!

Mode. This must be a mistake, but I'll humour

it. [*Aside.*] It cannot be—who can have told you?

Sir John. Her mother has been this instant with me to make proposals on the subject.

Mode. For Belmour!

Sir John. She did not absolutely mention his name, but I could not mistake it. For she told me the favoured lover was under the same roof with us.

Mode. [*A little disconcerted.*] I could not have believed it of him.

Ara. Nor do I yet.

[*Looking slyly again at* MODELY.

Mode. There must certainly be some mistake in it; at the worst, I am sure I can prevail so far with Belmour, as to make him drop his pretensions.

Sir John. You cannot make her cease to love him. [*Sighing.*]

Mode. Time may easily get the better of so young a passion.

Sir John. Never, never; she is too sincere, too delicately sensible.

Mode. Come, come, you must not think so; it is not yet gone so far, but that it may be totally forgotten.—Now for a master-stroke to clench the whole.—[*Aside.*] In the mean time, sir John, I have the satisfaction of acquainting you, that my affair, with Araminta's leave, draws very near a conclusion. The lawyers have finished their papers, and only now wait for your perusal of them.

Ara. [*Aside.*] Well said!

Mode. I ordered the writings to be laid upon your table.

Ara. [*Aside,*] What does he mean?

Sir John. Dear Mr Modely, you shall not wait a moment for me. I will dispatch them instantly. I feel the want of happiness too severely myself, to postpone it in others. I leave you with my sister; when she names the day, you may depend upon my concurrence.

[*Exit* SIR JOHN.

[MODE. *and* ARA. *look at one another for some time, then he speaks.*] I hope, madam, you are now convinced of my sincerity?

Ara. I am absolutely struck dumb with your assurance.

Mod. [*With an affected surprise.*] Madam!

Ara. You cannot mean all this.

Mode. Why not, madam?

Ara. Why, don't you know that I know——

Mode. I cannot help a lady's knowledge or imaginations. All I know is, that it is in your power to make me either the happiest, or most miserable man in the whole creation.

Ara. Well, this is astonishing.

Mode. I am sorry, madam, that any unguarded behaviour of mine, any little playful gallantries, should have occasioned surmises, which—

Ara. Serious, as I hope to live?

Mode. Is it not enough to make one serious, when the woman one has pursued for years, almost with adoration, is induced, by mere appearances, to doubt the honourableness of one's intentions? Have you not heard me this moment apply to your brother, even in the midst of his uneasiness?——I little expected where the difficulty would lie.

Ara. Well, well, poor thing, I won't tease it any longer; here, there, take my hand.

Mode. Duped, by Jupiter!—[*Aside.*] O my everlasting treasure! And when, and when shall I be happy?

Ara. It shall depend upon yourself.

Mode. To-morrow, then, my angel, be the day. O Araminta, I cannot speak my transport!———And did you really think I was in love with Celia?

Ara. Why, as a proof of my future sincerity, I must confess I did.

Mode. I wonder how you could!

Ara. Come, come, there were grounds enough for a woman in love to go upon.

Mode. [*Taking her by the hand.*] But you are now perfectly easy!

Ara. [*Pulling her hand from him.*] Why, yes, I think I am.———But what can my brother mean about Belmour?

Mode. It is some trick of the widow's.

Ara. I dare say she meant you.

Mode. Possibly she might——you know her motives.

Ara. Yes, yes; her passion for my brother is pretty notorious. But the wretch will be mistaken.———To-morrow, you say?

Mode. To-morrow, my adorable.

Ara. It shall be as you please.———But my situation is so terribly awkward, that I must break from you. Adieu! [*Exit* ARA.

Mode. Upon my soul she is a fine woman, and loves me to distraction; and, what is still more, I most undoubtedly love her.——I have a good mind to take her.-----Yet, not to have it in my power to succeed in the other place, would call my parts in question.——No, no;—I must not disparage my parts neither.-----In order to be a great character, one should go as near being a rogue as possible. I have a philosopher's opinion on my side in that, and the practice of half the heroes and politicians in Europe.

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter BELMOUR.

Bel. CELIA in love with me! 'Egad the thing is not impossible: my friend Modely may have been a little mistaken. Sir John was very serious when he told me of it; and though I protested to him that I had never made the least advances, he still persisted in his opinion.—The girl must have told him so herself——Let me recollect a little. She is always extremely civil to me—but that, indeed, she is to every body.—I do not remember any thing particular in her looks; but I shall watch them more narrowly the next time I see her.——She is very handsome; and yet, in my opinion, notwithstanding Modely's infidelity, Araminta is much the finer woman.—Suppose—No, that will not do.

Enter MODELY.

Mode. So, so, Mr Belmour, I imagined I should find you here; this is the lover's corner. We have all had our reveries in it. But why don't you talk louder, man? You ought, at least, to give me my revenge in that.—My soliloquies, you know, are easily overheard.

Bel. I never designedly over-heard them, Mr Modely; nor did I make any improper use of the accident.

Mode. Grave, very grave, and perfectly moral! And so this is all I am to have for the loss of my mistress.—Heigh ho!

> Then I must be content to see her bless
> Yon happier youth.———

Bel. Your raillery is a little unseasonable, Mr Modely; for, to speak plainly, I begin to suspect that this is some trick of yours, to dupe me, as well as sir John Dorilant.

Mode. Upon my honour, no, if we must be serious: it may be a mistake; but not intended on my side, I can assure you. Come, come, if the girl really likes you, take her. If I should prove the happy man, give me joy, and there's an end of it.

Bel. I fancy you are used to disappointments in love, they sit so easy upon you.—Or rather, I should suppose, in this case, you are pretty sure of your ground.

Mode. Neither, upon my soul; but a certain *Je ne sçai quoi*—*Gaieté du cœur*, which carries me above misfortunes; some people call it vanity.

Bel. And are not absolutely mistaken. But what becomes of Araminta all this while?

Mode. [*Yawning.*] I shall marry her, I believe, to-morrow.

Bel. Marry her!

Mode. Yes; sir John is at this very moment looking over the settlements.

Bel. I don't understand you.

Mode. And yet it is pretty plain, methinks. I tell you I am to be married to-morrow.—Was it not time to make sure of one mistress, when you were running away with the other?

Bel. You know I have no such intentions.—But are you really serious? Have you laid aside your designs upon Celia?

Mode. Not so, neither.

Bel. What do you mean, then, by your marriage with Araminta? Why won't you unriddle this affair to me?

Mode. Because it is at present a riddle to myself, and I expect lady Beverley every moment to resolve the enigma.

Bel. Was it a scheme of her's?

Mode. Certainly, and I partly guess it, but will not unbosom till I know it fully.—Come, come, with all that gravity of countenance and curiosity, you must leave me instantly; the lady will be here, and the plot unravelled, and then——

Bel. I shall expect to be satisfied. [*Exit.*

Mode. Ha, ha, ha! or else you will fight me, I suppose. Why, so you may; and so may sir John Dorilant too, and faith with some colour of reason. But my comfort is, that I have experience on my side; and if I survive the rencounter, I shall be a greater hero than ever amongst the ladies, and be esteemed in all companies as much a man of honour as the best of you.

Enter LADY BEVERLEY.

Lady Bev. Dear cousin Modely, I am all over in an agitation; we shall certainly be discovered—that devil Araminta——

Mode. What of her, madam?

Lady Bev. Is now with her brother talking so eagerly——Oh! I saw her villainous changes in her countenance; I would have given the world to have overheard their conversation—Come, come, you must advise me instantly.

Mode. Your ladyship must first let me into the secret. I am absolutely in a wood with regard to the whole affair—What is all this of Celia and Belmour?

Lady Bev. Nothing, nothing at all; an errant dilemma of the foolish man's own making, which his impertinent sister will immediately clear up to him, and then all must come out.

Mode. But how came Belmour ever to be mentioned in the case?

Lady Bev. Dear, dear, he never was mentioned. I must confess that I was so provoked with sir John's unnatural behaviour, that I could not help telling him that Celia had a lover, and in the house, too. Your situation with regard to Araminta made him never dream of you; and consequently, all his suspicions turned on Belmour.

Mode. But you did not say that that lover had made his addresses to Celia?

Lady Bev. I don't know what I might have said; for he used me like a Turk. But whatever I said, I can unsay it again.

Mode. Why, if I might venture to advise a person of your ladyship's sagacity—

Lady Bev. O ay, with all my heart, cousin Modely. For though I may say, without vanity, that nobody has a more clear apprehension of things when the mental faculty is totally undisturbed; yet, when I am in a trepidation, nobody upon earth can be more glad of advice.

Mode. Why, then, madam, to speak with reverence, I should hope your ladyship would see the necessity of keeping me as concealed as possible. It is the young lady's passion, not mine, which must have the principal influence. Sir John Dorilant's peculiarity of temper is such—

Lady Bev. Yes, yes; he has peculiarity enough, that's certain.

Mode. And it is there, madam, as the weakest part, that our attack will be the surest. If she confesses an inclination for me, not both the Indies, added to her fortune, could induce him to marry her.

Lady Bev. That is honourable, however, cousin Modely. But he is a horrid creature, notwithstanding.

Mode. I grant it, madam; but a failure in an improper pursuit may recall his reason; and, as he does not want understanding, teach him to search for happiness where only it is to be expected.

Lady Bev. He! he! I am so angry with him at present, that I really believe I should refuse him.

Mode. Your ladyship must not be too cruel.

Lady Bev. Why, I confess it is not in my nature; but bless me! Here they come—Let us run down this walk directly, for they must not see us together. [*Exit.*

Enter ARAMINTA *and* SIR JOHN DORILANT.

Ara. Come along, I say; you dragged me into the garden just now, and I will command in my turn. Talk to her you must, and shall. The girl has sense and spirit when she is disengaged from that horrid mother of her's: and I have told her you wanted her, and in this very spot.

Sir John. You cannot feel, Araminta, what you make me suffer—But sooner or later it must come to this; and therefore, I will assume a resolution, and be rid of all my doubts at once.

Ara. I tell you, this nonsense about Belmour is merely a phantom of her mother's raising, to sound your intentions, and promote her own.

Sir John. Thus far is certain, that Belmour disclaims all knowledge of the affair, and with an appearance of sincerity; but even that is doubtful. Besides, they are not his, but her inclinations, which give me any concern. It is the heart I require. The lifeless form, beauteous as it is, would only elude my grasp; the shadow of a joy, not the reality.

Ara. Dear, dear, that men had but a little common sense! or that one could venture to tell them what one knows of one's own sex! I have a good mind to be honest——As I live, the girl is coming—I'll speed her on the way. Courage, brother! Voila! [*Exit.*

Sir John. How shall I begin with her?—What idiots are men, when they have a real passion! ridiculous beneath contempt——[*Walks about the stage.*]——Suppose——I will not suppose: the honest heart shall speak its faithful dictates, and if it fails——why, let it.

Enter CELIA.

Celia. [*With timidity.*] Araminta tells me, sir, that you have something to say to me.

Sir John. I have, madam——Come forward, Miss Beverley—Would you choose to sit?——[*They sit down.——After some irresolute gesture.*] You are not afraid of catching cold?

Celia. Not in the least, sir.

Sir John. I know sitting in the open air has that effect upon some people—but your youth and constitution——Did my sister say any thing concerning the subject I should wish to speak to you upon?

Celia. She only told me, sir, that it was of moment.

Sir John. It is of moment, indeed, Celia—— But you must not think that I am angry.

Celia. Angry, sir!

Sir John. I don't mean angry—I am a little confused; but shall recover myself presently—[*Rises, and* CELIA *rises, too.*]—Nay, pray sit, Miss Beverley——Whatever I feel myself, I would not disturb you——[*Returns to his seat; then, after a pause, goes on.*]——The affair I would speak to you upon, is this:——You remember your father perfectly?

Celia. And ever shall.

Sir John. Indeed, he was a good man, Miss Beverley, a virtuous man, and felt tenderly for your happiness—Those tears become you, and yet, methinks, I would not provoke them—When he died, he left you to my care.

Celia. Which alone made his loss supportable.

Sir John. Are you sincere in what you say?

Celia. I should be ungrateful indeed, if I was not.

Sir John. [*Turning towards her.*] Nay, you are sincerity itself—O Celia! [*Taking her by the hand.*]—But I beg your pardon. I am assuming a liberty I have no right to take, till you allow it.

Celia. Sir!

Sir John. I see I have alarmed you—Retire, Miss Beverley—I'll speak to you some other time. [*She is going.*]—Celia, Miss Beverley—

pray come back, my dear—I am afraid my behaviour is rather too abrupt—Perhaps, too, it may displease you.

Celia. I can be displeased with nothing from you, sir; and am ready to obey you, be your commands what they will.

Sir John. Commands, Celia!—That's a hard word.

Celia. I am sorry it offends you.

Sir John. You know best, Celia, whether it ought to offend me—would I could read the sentiments of your heart! Mine are but too apparent—In short, my dear, you know the purport of your father's will—dare you fulfil it?

Celia. To the minutest circumstance—It is my duty.

Sir John. Ah, Celia! that word *duty* destroys the obligation.

Celia. Sir!

Sir John. I don't know how it is, but I am afraid to ask you the only question, which, sincerely answered, could make me happy—or miserable. [*Half aside.*

Celia. Let me beg of you, sir, to ask it freely.

Sir John. Well, then——is your heart your own!——O Celia! that hesitation confirms my fears. You cannot answer in the affirmative; and have too much humanity for what I feel, to add to my torments—Good God!—and is it possible, that an acquaintance of a few days should entirely obliterate the attentive assiduity, the tender anxieties, which I have shewn for years?—but I understand it all too well. Mine were the awful, though heart-felt attentions of a parent: his, the sprightly address of a presuming lover. His easy assurance has won upon your affections; and, what I thought my greatest merit, has undone me.

Celia. You were so good, sir, a little while ago, to pity my confusion; pity it now; and, whilst I lay my heart open before you, be again that kind, that generous friend, which I have always found you.

Sir John. Go on.

Celia. It is in vain for me to dissemble an ignorance of your meaning; nor would I, if I could. I own I have been too much pleased with Mr Modely's conversation.

Sir John. Modely's!

Celia. Let me go on. His intended marriage with Araminta gave him a freedom in this family, which it was not my business to restrain. His attention to my mother, and the friendly manner in which he executed some commissions of consequence to her, gave him frequent opportunities of talking to me. I will confess, too, that his appearance and his manner struck me. But I was so convinced of his real passion for Araminta, that I never dreamt of the least attachment to me, till——

Sir John. Till what, when—Modely? Why, he is to be married to my sister to-morrow or next day!

Celia. I knew it was so intended; but his behaviour this morning, and the intercessions of my mother, had, I own, won upon me strangely; and induced me to believe that I only was the object of his pursuit.

Sir John. I am thunderstruck!——

Celia. My mother made me clearly perceive, that the completion of his marriage would be an injury to Araminta. She told me, too, sir, that you yourself would be my adviser in the affair, and even persuade me to accept it.

Sir John. O, the malicious woman!

Celia. In that, indeed, I perceive she greatly erred. And I only mean this as a confession of what is past, and of what is now at an end for ever. For the future, I give myself to your guidance alone, and am what you direct——

[*Giving her hand to him.*

Sir John. Thou amiable softness! No, Celia; however miserable I may be myself, I will not make you so; it was your heart, not your hand, I aspired to. As the former has been seduced from me, it would be an injustice to us both, to accept of the latter. As to Mr Modely, and lady Beverley, I have not deserved this treachery from them, and they shall both feel my resentment.

Celia. Sir!

Sir John. She told me, indeed, there was a favoured lover; and my suspicions fell very naturally upon Belmour. Nay, even now, nothing but that lovely sincerity—which undoes me—could make me credit this villainy of Modely. O Celia! what a heart have I lost!

Celia. You cannot, shall not lose it; worthless as it is, 'tis yours, and only yours, my father, guardian, lover, husband!

[*Hangs upon him, weeping.*

Enter ARAMINTA.

Ara. Hey-day! what a scene is here! What is the matter with ye both?

Sir John. O sister! that angel goodness, that mirror of her sex, has ruined me.

Ara. Ruined you! how?

Sir John. Nay, I am not the only sufferer:—Modely is false to you, as her mother is to all of us.

Ara. I don't understand you.

Sir John. You will too soon. My suspicions of Belmour were all a chimera; it is your impious Modely who has possession of her heart.—To me she is lost irrecoverably.—— [*Going.*

Ara. Stay, brother!

Sir John. I cannot; my soul's too full.

[*Exit.*

Ara. Pray, Miss Beverley, what is the meaning of all this?

Celia. I cannot speak——

[*Throwing herself into a chair.*

Ara. I'll be hanged if this fellow Modely has not talked you into an opinion, that he is in love with you. Indeed, my dear, your youth and inexperience may lead you into strange scrapes; and that mother of yours is enough to turn any girl's head in the universe. Come, come, unriddle this affair to me.

Celia. Alas, madam! all I know is, that the only man I ever did, or ever can esteem, despises me, and, I fear, hates me.

Ara. Hates you! he doats upon you to distraction. But, pray, did Modely ever make any serious addresses to you?

Celia. Alas! but too often.

Ara. The hypocrite! but I'll be even with him. And your mother, I suppose, encouraged him? An infamous woman! But I know her drift well enough———

Enter LADY BEVERLEY.

Lady Bev. Where is my poor girl? I met sir John Dorilant in such a furious way, that he seems to have lost all common civility. What have they done to you, child?

Ara. Done to her? What has your ladyship done to her? I knew your little artifices long ago, but——

Lady Bev. My artifices, Araminta!

Ara. Your artifices, lady Beverley; but they are all to no purpose; the girl has too good an understanding to be imposed on any longer; and your boasted machinations are as vain and empty in their effects, as in their contrivance.

Lady Bev. What does the woman mean? But the loss of a lover, I suppose, is an excuse for ill-breeding. Poor creature! if the petulancy of thy temper would let me, I could almost pity thee. The loss of a lover is no agreeable thing; but women at our time of life, Mrs Araminta, must not expect a lasting passion.

Ara. Scarce any at all I believe, if they go a wooing themselves. For my part, I have had the satisfaction of being solicited, however.—— And I am afraid my rustic brother never gave your ladyship's solicitations even the slightest encouragement. How was it? Did you find him quite hard hearted? No bowels of compassion for so accomplished a damsel?

Celia. [*Interposing.*] Dear madam! dear Araminta!

Lady Bev. Stand away, child——Desert, madam, is not always attended with success; nor confidence neither. There are some women so assured of their conquest, as even to disgust a lover on the very day of marriage.

Ara. Was my behaviour ever such?

Lady Bev. I really cannot say, Mrs Araminta; but the world, you know, is censorious enough, when a match is broken off so near its conclusion, generally to charge the inconstancy of the lover to some defect of his mistress.

Ara. I defy him to produce any.

Lady Bev. And yet he has certainly left you; never, never to return!

Ara. Insolent!

Celia. [*Interposing.*] Dear Araminta!

Ara. But your ladyship may be mistaken even in that, too. I may find him at his solicitations again; and if I do———

Lady Bev. You'll take him.

Ara. Take him?—Daggers and poison sooner.

Lady Bev. Poor creature! Come, Celia, words do but aggravate her misfortune. We only disturb her. You see, my dear, what are the effects of too violent a passion. It may be a lesson for your future conduct.

Ara. Look you, lady Beverley, don't provoke me.

Lady Bev. Why, what will ye do?

Celia. [*Interposing.*] For Heaven's sake, madam——

Lady Bev. I fancy, Mrs Araminta, instead of quarrelling, we had better join forces. If we could but get the girl out of the way, we might both succeed.

Ara. You are a wicked woman.

Lady Bev. Poor creature! shall I say any thing to my cousin Modely for you? You know I have weight with him.

Ara. Yes, madam; you may tell him that his connections with you have rendered him ridiculous; and that the revenge of an injured woman is never contemptible. [*Exit.*

Lady Bev. [*Leading off* CELIA *on the other side.*] Poor creature! Come along, child.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter SIR JOHN DORILANT.

Sir John. THIS fatal spot, which draws me to it almost involuntarily, must be the scene of another interview. Thank Heaven, I have recovered myself. Nor shall any misery which I may suffer, much less any prospect of a mean revenge, make me act unbecoming my character.

Enter ARAMINTA.

Ara. Well, brother, I hope you are resolved to marry this girl?

Sir John. Marry her, my dear Araminta! Can

you think it possible, that I should have so preposterous a thought? No, my behaviour shall deserve, but not over-rule, her inclinations. Were I to seize the tender opportunity of her present disposition, the world would ascribe it to her fortune; and I am sure my deceased and valuable friend, however kindly he meant to me in this affair, never intended that I should make his daughter unhappy.

Ara. But I tell you she loves you; and you must, and shall marry her.

Sir John. Ah, sister, you are willing to dispose of her any way. That worthless lover of yours still hangs about your heart, and I have avoided seeing him on your account, as well as Celia's.

Ara. To shew how mistaken you are in all this, I have given him up totally. I despise, and hate him; nay, I am upon the brink of a resolution to give myself to another.—[SIR JOHN *shakes his head.*]—I am, I assure you; his friend, Mr Belmour, is by no means indifferent on the subject.

Sir John. And is this revenge on yourself, a proof of your want of passion for him?—Ah, Araminta! Come, come, my dear; I own I think him unworthy of you, and would resent his usage to the utmost, did not I clearly perceive that it would appear mercenary in myself, and give real pain both to you and Celia.

Ara. I actually don't know what to say to you.

Sir John. You had better say nothing. Your spirits, at present, are too much alarmed. I have sent for Celia hither; a short hour may determine the fate of all of us. I know my honourable intentions will give her great uneasiness. But it is my duty which exacts them from me. You had better take a turn or two in some other part of the garden: I see my steward coming this way; I may want your assistance but too soon. [*Exit* ARA.

Enter the Steward.

Have you brought these papers I bade you look for?

Stew. Yes, sir. But there is the gentleman within to wait upon your honour, concerning the estate you intended to purchase. It seems a mighty good bargain,

Sir John. I cannot speak to him now.

Stew. Your honour always used to be punctual.

Sir John. Alas! Jonathan, I may be punctual again to-morrow. Give me the papers. Did Miss Beverley say she would come to me?

Stew. Immediately, sir. But I wish your honour would consider, such bargains as these do not offer every day.

Sir John. Heigh ho!

Stew. It joins so conveniently, too, to your honour's own estate——within a hedge, as I may say.

Sir John. Prithee, don't plague me.

Stew. Nay, 'tis not my interest, but your honour's. Though that, indeed, I may call my interest, for I am sure I love your honour.

Sir John. I know thou dost, Jonathan; and I am too hasty—but leave me now. If the gentleman will do me the favour of staying all night, I may satisfy him in the morning. My head and heart are too full now, for any business which concerns my fortune.

[*Exit* SIR JOHN.

Stew. Something goes very wrong with my poor master. Some love nonsense or other, I suppose. I wish all the women were in the bottom of the sea, for my part.

[*Exit Steward.*

Enter LADY BEVERLEY *and* CELIA.

Lady Bev. I thought it requisite, sir John, as I heard you had something of importance to transact with my daughter, to wait upon you with her.

Sir John. Was that necessary, madam? I begged the favour of Miss Beverley's company only.

Lady Bev. But a mother, you know, sir John, who has a tender concern for her child——

Sir John. Should shew it on every occasion.

Lady Bev. I find, sir John, there is some misunderstanding at present, which a woman of prudence and experience might be much better consulted upon, than a poor young thing, whose—

Sir John. Not at all, madam; Celia has all the prudence I require, and our present conversation will soon be over.

Lady Bev. Nay, sir John, to be sure I am not afraid of trusting my daughter alone with you.—A man of your discretion will undoubtedly be guilty of no impropriety. But a third person, sometimes, where the parties concerned are a little too much influenced by their passions, has occasioned very substantial, and very useful effects. I have known several instances of it, in the course of my experience.

Sir John. This, madam, will not be one of them. How teasing? [*Walking aside.*

Lady Bev. I find, sir John, that you are determined to have your own way, and therefore will shew you, by my behaviour, that I know what good manners require; though I do not always meet with the same treatment from other people.

[*Exit* LADY BEV.

Sir John. Now, Celia, we are alone, and I have many excuses to make to you for the impassioned sallies of our late conversation, which I do most sincerely—Can you pardon them?

Celia. Alas! sir, 'tis I who ought to entreat pardon.

Sir John. Not in the least, madam; I have no blame to cast upon you for any part of your conduct. Your youth and inexperience, joined to the goodness of your heart, are sufficient apolo-

gies for any shadow of indiscretion which might appear in your behaviour. I am afraid mine was not so irreproachable. However, Celia, I shall endeavour to make you all the amends in my power; and to shew you that it is your happiness, not my own, which is the object of my anxiety. Your father's will is but too clear in its intentions. But the purity of his heart never meant to promote my felicity at the expence of yours.—You are, therefore, madam, entirely at liberty from this moment, to make your choice where you please. This paper will entitle you to that authority; and this will enable you to bestow your fortune where you bestow your hand. Take them, my dear. Why are you so disturbed?—Alas! Celia, I see too plainly the cause of these emotions. You only wish the happy man, to whom you have given your heart, loved you as I do! But I beg pardon; and will only add one caution, which my duty demands of me, as your guardian, your protector, and your father's friend. You have been a witness of Modely's transactions with my sister. Have a care, therefore, Celia! be sure of his firm attachment, before you let your own hurry you into compliance.—These papers give you up all power on my part; but, as an adviser, I shall always be ready to be consulted.

Celia. My tears and my confusion have hitherto hindered me from answering; not the invidious suggestion, which you have so cruelly charged me with. What friend, what lover have I, to engross my attentions? I never had but one, and he has cast me off for ever. O, sir, give me the papers, and let me return them where my soul longs to place them.

Sir John. No, Celia; to accept them again would impeach the justice of my whole proceeding. It would make it look like the mean artifice of a mercenary villain, who attempted to gain, by stratagem, what his merits did not entitle him to. I blush to think of it. I have performed my office. Be mistress of yourself, and let me fly from a combat to which I find myself unequal. [*Exit* SIR JOHN.

[CELIA *sits down, leaning her hand on her head.*

Enter MODELY *and* BELMOUR.

Mode. Hist! Hist! He has just left her, and in a fine situation for my approaches. If you are not yet satisfied, I will make up all differences with you another time. Get into the arbour, and be a witness of my triumph. You shall see me, like another Cæsar—Come, see, and overcome.

[BEL. *goes into the arbour.*

Mode. [*Comes forward, walks two or three turns by her, bowing as he passes, without being taken notice of, then speaks.*]—If it is not an interruption, madam, when I find you thus alone——

Celia. [*Rising.*]—I would choose to be alone.

Mode. Madam!

Celia. [*After a little pause.*]—In short, Mr Modely, your behaviour to me, of late, is what I can by no means approve of. It is unbecoming your character as a man of honour; and would be a stain to the ingenuous modesty of my sex for me to suffer.

Mode. You surprise me, madam! Can the adoration of an humble love—the timid advance of a man, whom your beauty has undone, be such unpardonable offences?

[CELIA *looks with indignation at him, and is going off.*

Mode. [*Catching hold of her, and falling on his knees.*]—Nay, madam, you must not leave me.

Celia. Rise, sir, or I am gone this moment. I thought of flying from you, but my soul disdains it. Know, then, sir, that I am mistress of myself; mistress of my fortune; and may bestow my hand wherever my heart directs it.

Mode. My angel!——

[*Coming eagerly up to her.*

Celia. What do you mean?

Mode. That you may make the most sincere of lovers the happiest of mankind. The addition of your fortune will add splendour to our felicity; and the frowns of disappointed love only heighten our enjoyments.

Celia. Oh, thou vile one! how does that cruel, generous man, who has rejected me, rise on the comparison!

Mode. Rejected you!—Sir John Dorilant!

Celia. Yes, Mr Modely, that triumph, at least, is yours. I have offered myself, and been refused. My hand and fortune equally disdained. But may perpetual happiness attend him, wherever his honest, honest heart shall fix!

Mode. O, madam, your inexperience deceives you. He knows the integrity of your mind, and trusts to that for recompense. His seeming disinterestedness is but the surer method of completing his utmost wishes.

Celia. Blasphemer, stop thy tongue! The purity of his intentions is as much above thy malice, as thy imitation.

[*She walks to one side of the stage, and* MODELY *stands disconcerted on the other.*

Enter LADY BEVERLEY.

Lady Bev. Well, child, what has the man said to thee? Cousin Modely, your servant! you find our plot would not take; they were too quick upon us. Hey day! what has been doing here?

Mode. O, madam, you are my only refuge! a wretch, on the brink of despair, flies to you for protection. That amiable creature is in full

possession of herself and fortune, and yet rejects my tenderest solicitations.

Lady Bev. Really! What is all this? Tell me, Celia, has the man actually given up all right and title to thee, real and personal? Come, come; I must be a principal actress, I find, in this affair. Decency and decorum require it. Tell me, child, is it so?

Celia. Sir John Dorilant, madam, with a generosity peculiar to himself, (cruel generosity!) has cancelled every obligation which could confine my choice. These papers confirm the freedom he has given me——and rob me of all future comfort.

Lady Bev. Indeed! I did not expect this of him; but I am heartily glad of it. Give me the papers, child.

Celia. No, madam: useless as they are, they are yet my own.

Lady Bev. Useless!—What do you mean? Has the base man laid any other embargo on the child?

Celia. I cannot bear, madam, even from you, to hear sir John Dorilant treated with disrespect. Useless!—Yes, they shall be useless. Thus, thus, I tear them into atoms! and disdain a liberty, which but too justly reproaches my conduct.—Your advice, madam, has already made me miserable; but it shall not make me ungrateful or unjust. [*Exit* CELIA.

Lady Bev. I am astonished! I never saw the girl in such a way before.—Why, this is arrant disobedience, cousin Modely! I must after her, and know the bottom of it.—Don't despair.

[*Exit* LADY BEVERLEY.

Bel. [*Coming out of the arbour.*] Come, see, overcome!—O poor Cæsar!

Mode. [*Humming a tune.*] You think I am disconcerted now?

Bel. Why, really, I should think something of that kind.

Mode. You never were more mistaken in your life.—Egad! 'tis a spirited girl. She and sir John Dorilant were certainly born for one another. I have a good mind to take compassion of them, and let them come together. They must and shall be man and wife, and I will e'en go back to Araminta.

Bel. Thou hast a most astonishing assurance!

Mode. Hush!—She is coming this way!—get into your hole again, and be dumb.——Now you shall see a scene of triumph indeed.

Bel. Have a care, Cæsar! you have the Britons to deal with. [*Retires.*

Enter ARAMINTA.

Ara. What! are they gone, and my wretch here by himself? O that I could dissemble a little! I will, if my heart bursts for it.——O, Mr Modely, I am half ashamed to see you! but my brother has signed those odious writings!

Mode. Then, thus I seize my charmer!

Ara. Agreeable rascal! [*Aside.*]—Be quiet, can't you; you think one so forward, now.

Mode. I cannot, will not be restrained, when the dear object of my wishes meets me with kind compliance in her eyes and voice!———To-morrow!—'Tis an age—why should we wait for that? To-night, my angel! to-night may make us one; and the fair prospect of our halcyon days even from this hour begin.

Ara. Who would not think this fellow, with his blank verse now, was in earnest? But I know him thoroughly. [*Aside.*]—Indeed, Mr Modely, you are too pressing; marriage is a serious thing. Besides, you know, this idle bustle betwixt my brother and Celia, which you seem to think me ignorant of, and which you, in some measure, though undesignedly, I daresay, have occasioned, may obstruct us a little.

Mode. Not at all, my dear; an amusement *en passant;* the mere raillery of gallantry on my side, to oblige her impertinent mother (who, you know, has a *penchant* for sir John herself) was the whole insignificant business.———Perhaps, indeed, I was something blameable in it.

Ara. Why, really, I think so, in your situation. But are you sure it went no further?—nothing else passed between you?

Mode. Nothing in nature.

Ara. Dear me, how mistaken people are! I cannot say that I believed it; but they told me, that you had actually proposed to marry her; that the girl was near consenting; and that the mother was your friend in the affair.

Mode. The mere malice and invention of lady Beverley.

Ara. And there is not a word of truth in it, then?

Mode. Not a syllable——You know my soul is yours.

Ara. O thou villain!—I thought to have kept my temper, and to have treated you with the contempt you deserve; but this insolence is intolerable!—Can you imagine that I am a stranger to your proceedings? a deaf, blind idiot?——O, I could tear this foolish heart, which, cheated by its passion, has encouraged such an insult!——How, how have I deserved this treatment?

[*Bursting into tears.*

Mode. [*Greatly alarmed.*] By holy faith! by every power above! you, and you only, are the passion of my soul!—May every curse———

Ara. Away, deceiver! these tears are the tears of resentment.—My resolution melts not in my eyes. 'Tis fixed unalterably! You might imagine, from the gaiety of my temper, that it had its levity, too: But know, sir, that a woman, who has once been duped, defies all future machinations.

Mode. Hear me, madam!—nay, you shall hear me.———

Ara. Shall!—insufferable insolence!—Go, sir! for any thing which regards me, you are free as

air, free as your licentious principles. Nor shall a thought of what I once esteemed, disturb my future quiet. There are men who think me not contemptible, and under whose protection I may shelter my disgrace.—Unhand me!—This is the last time I shall probably ever see you; and I may tell you, in parting, that you have used me cruelly, and that Celia knows you as perfectly as I do. [*Exit* ARA.—MOD. *stands confounded.*

Enter BELMOUR.

Bel. Cæsar ashamed!——And well he may, 'faith!—Why, man, what is the matter with you? Quite dumb? quite confounded?—Did not I always tell you that you loved her?

Mode. I feel it sensibly.

Bel. And I can tell you another secret——

Mode. What's that?

Bel. That she loves you.

Mode. O that she did!

Bel. Did!—Every word, every motion of passion through her whole conversation, betrayed it involuntarily. I wish it had been otherwise.

Mode. Why?

Bel. Because I had some thoughts of circumventing you. But I find it will be in vain.—Therefore, pursue her properly, and she is yours.

Mode. O never, Belmour, never! I have sinned beyond a possibility of pardon. That she did love me, I have had a thousand proofs, which, like a brainless idiot, I wantonly trifled with.—What a pitiful rascal have I made myself?

Bel. Why, in that I agree with you; but don't despair, man; you may still be happier than you deserve.

Mode. With what face can I approach her? Every circumstance of her former affection now rises in judgment against me. O, Belmour, she has taught me to blush!

Bel. And I assure you it becomes you mightily.

Mode. Where can I apply? How can I address her? All that I can possibly do, will only look like a mean artificial method of patching up my other disappointment.

Bel. More miracles still! She has not only taught you to blush, but has absolutely made a man of honour of you!

Mode. Raillery is out of season.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Mrs Araminta, sir, desires to speak with you.

Mode. [*Eagerly.*] With me?

Ser. No, sir, with Mr Belmour.

Bel. With me?

Ser. Yes, sir.

Bel. Where is she?

Ser. In the close walk by the house, sir.

Bel. And alone?

Ser. Entirely, sir.

Bel. I'll wait upon her this instant.

[*Exit Servant.*

Mode. Belmour, you shall not stir.

Bel. By my faith, but I will, sir!

Mode. She said there were men to whom she could fly for protection. By my soul, she intends to propose herself to you!

Bel. And if she does, I shall certainly accept her offer.

Mode. I'll cut your throat, if you do.

Bel. And do you think to fright me by that? I fancy I can cut throats as well as other people. Your servant. If I cannot succeed for myself, I'll speak a good word for you. [*Exit.*

Mode. What can this mean? I am upon thorns till I know the event. I must watch them. No, that is dishonest. Dishonest! How virtuous does a real passion make one!—Heigh ho! [*Walks about in disorder.*] He seems in great haste to go to her. He has turned into the walk already. That abominable old-fashioned cradle-work makes the hedges so thick, there is no seeing through them. An open lawn has ten thousand times the beauty, and is kept at less expence by half. These cursed unnatural chairs are always in the way, too. [*Stumbling against one of the garden-chairs.*] What a miserable dog am I?—I would give an arm to know what they are talking about. We talk of female coquettes! By my soul, we beat them at their own weapons!—Stay—one stratagem I may yet put in practice, and it is an honest one. The thought was lucky. I will about it instantly. Poor Modely! How has thy vanity reduced thee!

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Scene continues.*

Enter ARAMINTA *and* BELMOUR.

Ara. You find, Mr Belmour, that I have seen your partialities, and, like a woman of honour, I have confessed my own. Your behaviour to your friend is generous beyond comparison, and I could almost join in the little stratagem you propose, merely to see if he deserves it.

Bel. Indeed, madam, you mistake him utterly. Vanity is his ruling vice: an idle affectation of success among the ladies, which makes fools admire, and boys envy him, is the master-passion of his giddy heart. The severe checks he has met with to-day, have sufficiently opened his understanding; and the real possession of one valuable woman, whom he dreads to lose, will soon convince him how despicable his folly has made him.

Ara. I am afraid, Mr Belmour, a man who

has, half his life, been pursuing bubbles, without perceiving their insignificance, will be easily tempted to resume the chase. The possession of one reality will hardly convince him that the rest were shadows. And a woman must be an idiot indeed, who thinks of fixing a man to herself after marriage, whom she could not secure before it. To begin with insensibility!—O fy, Mr Modely!

Bel. You need not fear it, madam; his heart—

Ara. Is as idle as our conversation on the subject. I beg your pardon for the comparison, as I do, for having sent for you in this manner. But I thought it necessary, that both you and Mr Modely should know my real sentiments, undisguised by passion.

Bel. And may I hope you will concur in my proposal?

Ara. I don't know what to say to it; it is a piece of mummery, which I am ill suited for at present. But if an opportunity should offer, I must confess I have enough of the woman in me, not to be insensible to the charms of an innocent revenge. But this other intricate business, if you can assist me in that, you will oblige me beyond measure. They are two hearts, Mr Belmour, worthy to be united! Had my brother a little less honour, and she a little less sensibility---But I know not what to think of it.

Bel. In that, madam, I can certainly assist you.

Ara. How, dear Mr Belmour?

Bel. I have been a witness, unknown to Celia, to such a conversation, as will clear up every doubt sir John can possibly have entertained.

Ara. You charm me when you say so. As I live, here comes my brother! Stay; is not that wretch, Modely, with him? He is actually. What can his assurance be plotting now? Come this way, Mr Belmour; we will watch them at a distance, that no harm may happen between them, and talk to the girl first. The monster!

[*Exeunt.*

Enter SIR JOHN DORTLAND *and* MODELY.

Mode. [*Entering, and looking after Ara. and Bel.*] They are together still! But let me resume my nobler self.

Sir John. Why will you follow me, Mr Modely? I have properly avoided you. My heart swells with indignation. I know not what may be the consequence.

Mode. Upon my honour, sir John——

Sir John. Honour, Mr Modely! 'tis a sacred word. You ought to shoulder when you pronounce it. Honour has no existence but in the house of truth. 'Tis the harmonious result of every virtue combined. You have sense, you have knowledge; but, I can assure you, Mr Modely, though parts and knowledge, without the dictates of justice, or the feelings of humanity, may make a bold and mischievous member of society even courted by the world, they only, in my eye, make him more contemptible.

Mode. This I can bear, sir John——because I have deserved it.

Sir John. You may think, perhaps, it is only an idle affair with a lady, what half mankind are guilty of, and what the conceited wits of your acquaintance will treat with raillery. Faith with a woman! ridiculous!---But let me tell you, Mr Modely, the man who, even slightly, deceives a believing and a trusting woman, can never be a man of honour.

Mode. I own the truth of your assertions. I feel the awful superiority of your real virtue. Nor should any thing have dragged me into your presence, so much I dreaded it, but the sincerest hope of making you happy.

Sir John. Making me happy, Mr Modely!---You have put it out of your own power. [*Walks from him, then turns to him again.*] You mean, I suppose, by a resignation of Celia to me?

Mode. Not of Celia only, but her affections.

Sir John. Vain and impotent proposal!

Mode. Sir John, 'tis not a time for altercation. By all my hopes of bliss here and hereafter, you are the real passion of her soul! Look not so unbelieving: by Heaven 'tis true! and nothing but an artful insinuation of your never intending to marry her, and even concurring in our affair, could ever have made her listen one moment to me.

Sir John. Why do I hear you?—O, Mr Modely, you touch my weakest part!

Mode. Cherish the tender feeling, and be happy.

Sir John. Is it possible that amiable creature can think and talk tenderly of me? I know her generosity; but generosity is not the point.

Mode. Believe me, sir, 'tis more; 'tis real unaffected passion. Her innocent soul speaks through her eyes the honest dictates of her heart. In our last conference, notwithstanding her mother's commands; notwithstanding—what I blush to own—my utmost ardent solicitations to the contrary, she persisted in her integrity, tore the papers which left her choice free, and treated us with an indignation which added charms to virtue.

Sir John. O these flattering sounds!—Would I could believe them!

Mode. Belmour, as well as myself, and lady Beverley, was a witness of the truth of them. I thought it my duty to inform you, as I know your delicacy with regard to her. And indeed I would in some measure endeavour to repair the injuries I have [illegible] to your family, before I leave it for ever——O, sir John, let not an ill-judged nicety debar you from a happiness, which stands with open arms to receive you. Think what my folly has lost in Araminta; and, when your indignation at the affront is a little respited, be blest yourself, and pity me—[*As he goes out,*

he still looks after ARAMINTA *and* BELMOUR.] ——I don't see them now; but I will go round that way to the house. [*Exit* MODELY.

Sir John. What can this mean?——He cannot intend to deceive me; he seems too sincerely affected—I must, I will believe him. The mind, which suspects injustice, is half guilty of it itself ——Talks tenderly of me! tore the papers! treated them with indignation! Heavens! what a flow of tender joy comes over me!——Shall Celia, then, be mine? How my heart dances! O! I could be wondrous foolish!—Well, Jonathan!

Enter STEWARD.

Stew. The gentleman, sir——

Sir John. What of the gentleman? I am ready for any thing.

Stew. Will wait upon your honour to-morrow, as you are not at leisure.

Sir John. With all my heart—Now or then, whenever he pleases.

Stew. I am glad to see your honour in spirits.

Sir John. Spirits, Jonathan! I am light as air —Make a thousand excuses to him——but let it be to-morrow, however, for I see lady Beverley coming this way.

Stew. Heaven bless his good soul! I love to see him merry. [*Exit.*

Enter LADY BEVERLEY.

Lady Bev. If I don't interrupt you, sir John—

Sir John. Interrupt me, madam! 'tis impossible.

Lady Bev. For I would not be guilty of an indecorum even to you.

Sir John. Come, come, lady Beverley, these little bickerings must be laid aside. Give me your hand, lady. Now we are friends. [*Kissing it.*]——How does your lovely daughter?

Lady Bev. You are in a mighty good humour, sir John; perhaps every body may not be so.

Sir John. Every body must be so, madam, where I come: I am joy itself!

"The jolly god that leads the jocund hours."

Lady Bev. What is come to the man!—— Whatever it is, I shall damp it presently—[*Aside.*] —— Do you choose to hear what I have to say, sir John?

Sir John. You can say nothing, madam, but that you consent, and Celia is my own——Yes, you yourself have been a witness to her integrity, Come, indulge me, lady Beverley. Declare it all, and let me listen to my happiness.

Lady Bev. I shall declare nothing, sir John, on that subject: what I have to say is of a very different import——In short, without circumlocution, or any unnecessary embarrassment to entangle the affair, I and my daughter are of opinion, that it is by no means proper for us to continue any longer in your family.

Sir John. Madam!

Lady Bev. This is what I had to declare, sir John.

Sir John. Does Celia, madam, desire to leave me!

Lady Bev. It was a proposal of her own.

Sir John. Confusion!

Lady Bev. And a very sensible one too, in my opinion. For when people are not so easy together, as might be expected, I know no better remedy than parting.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] Sure, this is no trick of Modely's, to get her away from me!—He talked too himself of leaving my family immediately—I shall relapse again.

Lady Bev. I find, sir John, you are somewhat disconcerted: but for my part—

Sir John. O torture!

Lady Bev. I say, for my part, sir John, it might have been altogether as well, perhaps, if we had never met.

Sir John. I am sorry, madam, my behaviour has offended you, but——

Enter ARAMINTA, CELIA, *and* BELMOUR.

Ara. [*To* CELIA, *as she enters.*] Leave the house indeed!—Come, come, you shall speak to him——What is all this disorder for? Pray, brother, has any thing new happened?—That wretch has been beforehand with us. [*Aside to* BEL.

Lady Bev. Nothing at all, Mrs Araminta; I have only made a very reasonable proposal to him, which he is pleased to treat with his and your usual incivility.

Sir John. You wrong us, madam, with the imputation—[*After a pause, and some irresolution, he goes up to* CELIA.]—I thought, Miss Beverley, I had already given up my authority, and that you were perfectly at liberty to follow your own inclinations. I could have wished, indeed, to have still assisted you with my advice; and I flattered myself that my presence would have been no restraint upon your conduct. But I find it is otherwise. My very roof is grown irksome to you, and the innocent pleasure I received in observing your growing virtues, is no longer to be indulged to me.

Celia. O, sir, put not so hard a construction upon what I thought a blameless proceeding. Can it be wondered at, that I should fly from him, who has twice rejected me with disdain?

Sir John. With disdain, Celia?

Celia. Who has withdrawn from me even his parental tenderness, and driven me to the hard necessity of avoiding him, lest I should offend him farther. I know how much my inexperience wants a faithful guide: I know what cruel censures a malicious world will pass upon my conduct—but I must bear them all. For he, who might protect me from myself—protect me from the insults of licentious tongues, abandons me to fortune.

Sir John. O, Celia!——have I, have I abandoned thee?—— Heaven knows my inmost soul: how did it rejoice, but a few moments ago, when Modely told me that your heart was mine!

Ara. Modely!—Did Modely tell you so?—Do you hear that, Mr Belmour?

Sir John. He did, my sister, with every circumstance which could increase his own guilt, and her integrity.

Ara. This was honest, however.

Sir John. I thought it so, and respected him accordingly. O, he breathed comfort to a despairing wretch! but now a thousand, thousand doubts crowd in upon me. He leaves my house this instant; nay, may be gone already. Celia, too, is flying from me—perhaps to join him, and, with her happier lover, smile at my undoing!—

[*Leans on* ARA.

Celia. I burst with indignation!—Can I be suspected of such treachery? Can you, sir, who know my every thought, harbour such a suspicion?—O, madam, this contempt have you brought upon me. A want of deceit was all the little negative praise I had to boast of, and that is now denied me. [*Leans on* L. BEV.

Lady Bev. Come away, child.

Celia. No, madam: I have a harder task still to perform. [*Comes up to* SIR JOHN.] To offer you my hand again, under these circumstances, thus despicable as you have made me, may seem an insult. But I mean it not as such—O, sir, if you ever loved my father, in pity to my orphan state, let me not leave you. Shield me from the world; shield me from the worst of misfortunes, your own unkind suspicions!

Ara. What fooling is here! Help me, Mr Belmour—There, take her hand—And now let it go if you can.

Sir John. [*Grasping her hand.*] O, Celia! may I believe Modely? Is your heart mine?

Celia. It is, and ever shall be.

Sir John. Transporting ecstacy!

[*Turning to* CELIA.

Lady Bev. I should think, sir John, a mother's consent——though Mrs Araminta, I see, has been so very good to take that office upon herself.

Sir John. I beg your pardon, madam; my thoughts were too much engaged—But may I hope for your concurrence?

Lady Bev. I don't know what to say to you; I think you have bewitched the girl amongst you.

Ara. Indeed, lady Beverley, this is quite preposterous. Ha! he here again——Protect me, Mr Belmour.

Enter MODELY.

Mode. Madam, you need fly no where for protection: you have no insolence to fear from me. I am humbled sufficiently, and the post chaise is now at the door to banish me for ever. My sole business, here, is to unite that virtuous man with the most worthy of her sex.

Ara. [*Half aside.*] Thank you for the compliment—— Now, Mr Belmour.

Lady Bev. You may spare yourself the trouble, cousin Modely; the girl is irrecoverably gone already.

Mode. May all the happiness they deserve attend them! [*Going, then looks back at* ARA.]—I cannot leave her.

Sir John. Mr Modely, is there nobody here besides, whom you ought to take leave of?

Mode. I own my parting from that lady [*To* ARAMINTA.] should not be in silence; but a conviction of my guilt stops my tongue from utterance.

Ara. I cannot say I quite believe that; but as our affair may make some noise in the world, for the sake of my own character, I must beg of you to declare, before this company, whether any part of my conduct has given a shadow of excuse for the insult I have received. If it has, be honest, and proclaim it.

Mode. None, by heaven! the crime was all my own, and I suffer for it justly and severely—with shame I speak it, notwithstanding the appearances to the contrary, my heart was ever yours, and ever will be.

Ara. I am satisfied, and will honestly confess, the sole reason of my present appeal was this, that where I had destined my hand, my conduct might appear unblemished.

[*Gives her hand to* BELMOUR.

Mode. Confusion! then, my suspicions were just.

Sir John. Sister!

Celia. Araminta!

Ara. What do you mean? what are ye surprised at? The insinuating Mr Modely can never want mistresses any where. Can he, Mr Belmour? You know him perfectly.

Mode. Distraction! Knows me? Yes, he does know me. The villain! though he triumphs in my sufferings, knows what I feel! You, madam, are just in your severity; from you I have deserved every thing; the anguish, the despair which must attend my future life, comes from you, like Heaven's avenging minister!——But, for him! [SIR JOHN *interposes.*] O, for a sword——But I shall find a time, and a severe one. Let me go, sir John——

Ara. I'll carry on the farce no longer. Rash, inconsiderate madman! The sword, which pierces Mr Belmour's breast, would rob you of the best of friends. This pretended marriage, for it is no more, was merely contrived by him, to convince me of your sincerity. Embrace him as your guardian angel, and learn from him to be virtuous.

Bel. O, madam, let me still plead for him!—Surely, when a man feels himself in the wrong,

you cannot desire him to suffer a greater punishment.

Ara. I have done with fooling. You told me to-day, lady Beverley, that he would never return to me.

Lady Bev. And I told you, at the same time, madam, that if he did—you would take him.

Ara. In both you are mistaken. Mr Modely, your last behaviour to Celia and my brother, shews a generosity of temper I did not think you capable of, and for that I thank you. But to be serious on our own affair, whatever appearance your present change may carry with it, your transactions of to-day have been such, that I can never hereafter have that respect for you, which a wife ought to have for her husband.

Sir John. I am sorry to say it, Mr Modely, her determination is, I fear, too just. Trust to time, however; at least let us part friends, and not abruptly. We should conceal the failings of each other; and, if it must come to that, endeavour to find out specious reasons for breaking off the match, without injuring either party.

Ara. To shew how willing I am to conceal every thing—now I have had my little female revenge—as my brother has promised us the fiddles this evening, Mr Modely, as usual, shall be my partner in the dance.

Mode. I have deserved this ridicule, madam, and am humbled to what you please.

Ara. Why, then, brother, as we all seem in a strange dilemma, why may'nt we have one dance in the garden? it will put us in good humour.

Sir John. As you please, madam. Call the fiddles hither. Don't despair, Mr Modely.

[*Half aside to him.*

Lady Bev. I will not dance, positively.

Bel. Indeed, but you shall, madam; do you think I will be the only disconsolate swain who wants a partner? Besides, you see there are so few of us, that we must call in the butler and the ladies' maids even to help out the figure.

Sir John. Come, lady Beverley, you must lay aside all animosities. If I have behaved improperly to you to-day, I most sincerely ask your pardon, and hope the anxieties I have been under will sufficiently plead my excuse; my future conduct shall be irreproachable. [*Turning to* CELIA.] Here have I placed my happiness, and here expect it. O, Celia! if the seriousness of my behaviour should hereafter offend you, impute it to my infirmity; it can never proceed from want of affection.

A heart, like mine, its own distress contrives,
And feels, most sensibly, the pain it gives;
Then even its frailties candidly approve,
For, if it errs, it errs from too much love.

[*A dance—Exeunt omnes.*

THE

CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.

BY

COLMAN & GARRICK.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

LORD OGLEBY, *an old peer, ridiculously aping the graces of youth, but kind-hearted and benevolent, withal.*
SIR JOHN MELVIL, *nephew to* LORD OGLEBY.
STERLING, *a merchant retired from business.*
LOVEWELL, *privately married to* FANNY.
SERJEANT FLOWER, TRAVERSE, TRUEMAN, } *lawyers.*
CANTON, BRUSH, } *valets to* LORD OGLEBY.

WOMEN.

MRS HEIDELBERG, *sister to* STERLING.
MISS STERLING, *her favourite niece.*
FANNY, *privately married to* LOVEWELL.
BETTY, *maid to* FANNY.
TRUSTY, *maid to* MRS HEIDELBERG.
Chambermaid.

Scene—MR STERLING'S *country house.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A room in* STERLING'S *house.*

MISS FANNY *and* BETTY *meeting.*

Bet. [*Running in.*] MA'AM! Miss Fanny! ma'am!

Fan. What's the matter, Betty?

Bet. Oh la! ma'am! as sure as I am alive, here is your husband———

Fan. Hush! my dear Betty! if any body in the house should hear you, I am ruined.

Bet. Mercy on me! it has frightened me to such a degree, that my heart is come up to my mouth. But, as I was saying, ma'am, here's that dear, sweet—

Fan. Have a care, Betty!

Bet. Lord! I am bewitched, I think. But, as I was a saying, ma'am, here's Mr Lovewell just come from London.

Fan. Indeed!

Bet. Yes, indeed and indeed, ma'am, he is. I saw him crossing the court-yard in his boots.

Fan. I am glad to hear it. But pray now, my dear Betty, be cautious. Don't mention that word again, on any account. You know, we have agreed never to drop any expressions of that sort, for fear of any accident.

Bet. Dear ma'am, you may depend upon me. There is not a more trustier creature on the face of the earth, than I am. Though I say it, I am as secret as the grave—and if it is never told till I tell it, it may remain untold till doom's-day for Betty.

Fan. I know you are faithful—but, in our circumstances, we cannot be too careful.

Bet. Very true, ma'am! and yet I vow and protest, there's more plague than pleasure with a secret; especially if a body may'nt mention it to four or five of one's particular acquaintance.

Fan. Do but keep this secret a little while longer, and then, I hope, you may mention it to any body. Mr Lovewell will acquaint the family with the nature of our situation as soon as possible.

Bet. The sooner the better, I believe: for if he does not tell it, there's a little tell-tale, I know of, will come and tell it for him.

Fan. Fy, Betty! [*Blushing.*

Bet. Ah! you may well blush. But you're not so sick, and so pale, and so wan, and so many qualms——

Fan. Have done! I shall be quite angry with you.

Bet. Angry!—Bless the dear puppet! I am sure I shall love it as much as if it was my own. I meant no harm, Heaven knows.

Fan. Well, say no more of this—It makes me uneasy—All I have to ask of you, is to be faithful and secret, and not to reveal this matter, till we disclose it to the family of ourselves.

Bet. Me reveal it!—If I say a word, I wish I may be burned. I would not do you any harm for the world—And as for Mr Lovewell, I am sure I have loved the dear gentleman ever since he got a tide-waiter's place for my brother—But let me tell you both, you must leave off your soft looks to each other, and your whispers, and your glances, and your always sitting next to one another at dinner, and your long walks together in the evening.—For my part, if I had not been in the secret, I should have known you were a pair of lovers at least, if not man and wife, as—

Fan. See there now again! Pray, be careful.

Bet. Well—well—nobody hears me.—Man and wife.—I'll say no more—what I tell you is very true for all that——

Love. [*Calling within.*] William!

Bet. Hark! I hear your husband——

Fan. What!

Bet. I say, here comes Mr Lovewell—Mind the caution I give you—I'll be whipped now, if you are not the first person he sees or speaks to in the family! However, if you choose it, it's nothing at all to me—as you sow, so you must reap—as you brew, so you must bake.—I'll e'en slip down the back-stairs and leave you together. [*Exit.*

Fan. I see, I see I shall never have a moment's ease, till our marriage is made public. New distresses crowd in upon me every day. The solicitude of my mind sinks my spirits, preys upon my health, and destroys every comfort of my life. It shall be revealed, let what will be the consequence.

Enter LOVEWELL.

Love. My love!—How's this?—In tears?—Indeed, this is too much. You promised me to support your spirits, and to wait the determination of our fortune with patience. For my sake, for your own, be comforted! Why will you study to add to our uneasiness and perplexity?

Fan. Oh, Mr Lovewell! the indelicacy of a secret marriage grows every day more and more shocking to me. I walk about the house like a guilty wretch: I imagine myself the object of the suspicion of the whole family; and am under the perpetual terrors of a shameful detection.

Love. Indeed, indeed, you are to blame. The amiable delicacy of your temper, and your quick sensibility, only serve to make you unhappy.—To clear up this affair properly to Mr Sterling, is the continual employment of my thoughts. Every thing now is in a fair train. It begins to grow ripe for a discovery; and I have no doubt of its concluding to the satisfaction of ourselves, of your father, and the whole family.

Fan. End how it will, I am resolved it shall end soon—very soon. I would not live another week in this agony of mind to be mistress of the universe.

Love. Do not be too violent neither. Do not let us disturb the joy of your sister's marriage with the tumult this matter may occasion—I have brought letters from lord Ogleby and sir John Melvil to Mr Sterling. They will be here this evening—and, I dare say, within this hour.

Fan. I am sorry for it.

Love. Why so?

Fan. No matter—Only let us disclose our marriage immediately!

Love. As soon as possible.

Fan. But directly.

Love. In a few days, you may depend on it.

Fan. To-night—or to-morrow morning.

Love. That, I fear, will be impracticable.

Fan. Nay, but you must.

Love. Must! Why?

Fan. Indeed you must.—I have the most alarming reasons for it.

Love. Alarming, indeed! for they alarm me, even before I am acquainted with them—What are they?

Fan. I cannot tell you.

Love. Not tell me?

Fan. Not at present. When all is settled, you shall be acquainted with every thing.

Love. Sorry they are coming!—Must be discovered!—What can this mean? Is it possible you can have any reasons that need be concealed from me?

Fan. Do not disturb yourself with conjectures—but rest assured, that though you are unable to divine the cause, the consequence of a discovery, be it what it will, cannot be attended with half the miseries of the present interval.

Love. You put me upon the rack.—I would do any thing to make you easy.——But you know your father's temper.—Money (you will excuse my frankness) is the spring of all his actions, which nothing but the idea of acquiring nobility or magnificence, can ever make him forego——

and these he thinks his money will purchase.—You know, too, your aunt's, Mrs Heidelberg's, notions of the splendour of high life; her contempt for every thing that does not relish of what she calls quality; and that, from the vast fortune in her hands, by her late husband, she absolutely governs Mr Sterling and the whole family: now, if they should come to the knowledge of this affair too abruptly, they might, perhaps, be incensed beyond all hopes of reconciliation.

Fan. But if they are made acquainted with it otherwise than by ourselves, it will be ten times worse: and a discovery grows every day more probable. The whole family have long suspected our affection. We are also in the power of a foolish maid-servant; and if we may even depend on her fidelity, we cannot answer for her discretion.—Discover it therefore, immediately, lest some accident should bring it to light, and involve us in additional disgrace.

Love. Well—well—I mean to discover it soon, but would not do it too precipitately. I have more than once sounded Mr Sterling about it, and will attempt him more seriously the next opportunity. But my principal hopes are these: My relationship to lord Ogleby, and his having placed me with your father, have been, you know, the first links in the chain of this connection between the two families; in consequence of which, I am at present in high favour with all parties. While they all remain thus well affected to me, I propose to lay our case before the old lord; and, if I can prevail on him to mediate in this affair, I make no doubt but he will be able to appease your father; and, being a lord, and a man of quality, I am sure he may bring Mrs Heidelberg into good humour at any time. Let me beg you, therefore, to have but a little patience, as, you see, we are upon the very eve of a discovery, that must probably be to our advantage.

Fan. Manage it your own way. I am persuaded.

Love. But, in the mean time, make yourself easy.

Fan. As easy as I can, I will. We had better not remain together any longer at present. Think of this business, and let me know how you proceed.

Love. Depend on my care! But, pray, be cheerful.

Fan. I will.

As she is going out, enter STERLING.

Ster. Hey day! who have we got here?

Fan. [*Confused.*] Mr Lovewell, sir!

Ster. And where are you going, hussy?

Fan. To my sister's chamber, sir. [*Exit* FAN.

Ster. Ah, Lovewell! What! always getting my foolish girl, yonder, into a corner?—Well—well—let us but once see her eldest sister fast married to sir John Melvil, we'll soon provide a good husband for Fanny, I warrant you.

Love. Would to Heaven, sir, you would provide her one of my recommendation!

Ster. Yourself! eh, Lovewell?

Love. With your pleasure, sir.

Ster. Mighty well!

Love. And I flatter myself, that such a proposal would not be very disagreeable to Miss Fanny.

Ster. Better and better!

Love. And if I could but obtain your consent, sir——

Ster. What! you marry Fanny!—no—no—that will never do, Lovewell!——You're a good boy, to be sure—I have a great value for you—but can't think of you for a son-in-law.—There's no stuff in the case; no money, Lovewell!

Love. My pretensions to fortune, indeed, are but moderate; but, though not equal to splendour, sufficient to keep us above distress.—Add to which, that I hope, by diligence, to increase it—and have love, honour——

Ster. But not the stuff, Lovewell!—Add one little round 0 to the sum total of your fortune, and that will be the finest thing you can say to me. You know I've a regard for you—would do any thing to serve you—any thing on the footing of friendship—but——

Love. If you think me worthy of your friendship, sir, be assured, that there is no instance in which I should rate your friendship so highly.

Ster. Psha! psha! that's another thing, you know. Where money or interest is concerned, friendship is quite out of the question.

Love. But where the happiness of a daughter is at stake, you would not scruple, sure, to sacrifice a little to her inclinations?

Ster. Inclinations! why, you would not persuade me that the girl is in love with you—eh, Lovewell?

Love. I cannot absolutely answer for Miss Fanny, sir; but am sure that the chief happiness or misery of my life depends entirely upon her.

Ster. Why, indeed, now, if your kinsman, lord Ogleby, would come down handsomely for you—but that's impossible—No, no—'twill never do—I must hear no more of this—Come, Lovewell, promise me that I shall hear no more of this.

Love. [*Hesitating,*] I am afraid, sir, I should not be able to keep my word with you, if I did promise you.

Ster. Why, you would not offer to marry her without my consent! would you, Lovewell?

Love. Marry her, sir! [*Confused.*

Ster. Ay, marry her, sir!—I know very well that a warm speech or two from such a dangerous young spark as you are, would go much farther towards persuading a silly girl to do what she has more than a month's mind to do, than twenty grave lectures from fathers or mothers, or uncles or aunts, to prevent her. But you would not, sure, be such a base fellow, such a

treacherous young rogue, as to seduce my daughter's affections, and destroy the peace of my family in that manner? I must insist on it, that you give me your word not to marry her without my consent.

Love. Sir—I—I—as to that—I—I—beg, sir, ——Pray, sir, excuse me on this subject at present.

Ster. Promise, then, that you will carry this matter no farther without my approbation.

Love. You may depend on it, sir, that it shall go no further.

Ster. Well—well—that's enough—I'll take care of the rest, I warrant you. Come, come; let's have done with this nonsense!—What's doing in town? Any news upon 'Change?

Love. Nothing material.

Ster. Have you seen the currants, the soap, and Madeira safe in the warehouses? Have you compared the goods with the invoice and bills of lading, and are they all right?

Love. They are, sir.

Ster. And how are stocks?

Love. Fell one and a half this morning.

Ster. Well, well—some good news from America, and they'll be up again.——But how are lord Ogleby and sir John Melvil? When are we to expect them?

Love. Very soon, sir. I came on purpose to bring you their commands. Here are letters from both of them. [*Giving letters.*

Ster. Let me see—let me see—'Slife, how his lordship's letter is perfumed!—It takes my breath away. [*Opening it.*] And French paper, too! with a fine border of flowers and flourishes—and a slippery gloss on it that dazzles one's eyes. 'My 'dear Mr Sterling.' [*Reading.*] Mercy on me! his lordship writes a worse hand than a boy at his exercise.——But how's this?—Eh!—'with you to 'night'—[*Reading.*]—'Lawyers to morrow morn-'ing'—To night!——that's sudden, indeed—— Where's my sister Heidelberg? she should know of this immediately. Here, John! Harry! Thomas! [*Calling the servants.*] Hark ye, Lovewell!

Love. Sir!

Ster. Mind now, how I'll entertain his lordship and sir John—We'll shew your fellows at the other end of the town how we live in the city—They shall eat gold—and drink gold—and lie in gold, Here, cook! butler! [*Calling.*] What signifies your birth, and education, and titles! ——Money, money!—that's the stuff that makes the great man in this country.

Love. Very true, sir.

Ster. True, sir!——Why, then, have done with your nonsense of love and matrimony. You're not rich enough to think of a wife yet. A man of business should mind nothing but his business. ——Where are these fellows?—John! Thomas! [*Calling.*]——Get an estate, and a wife will follow of course.——Ah, Lovewell! an English merchant is the most respectable character in the universe.——'Slife, man, a rich English merchant may make himself a match for the daughter of a nabob.——Where are all my rascals? Here, William! [*Exit* STER. *calling.*

Love. So—as I suspected.——Quite averse to the match, and likely to receive the news of it with great displeasure.———What's best to be done?——Let me see!—Suppose I get sir John Melvil to interest himself in this affair. He may mention it to lord Ogleby with a better grace than I can, and more probably prevail on him to interfere in it. I can open my mind also more freely to sir John. He told me, when I left him in town, that he had something of consequence to communicate, and that I could be of use to him. I am glad of it: for the confidence he reposes in me, and the service I may do him, will ensure me his good offices.—Poor Fanny! It hurts me to see her so uneasy, and her making a mystery of the cause adds to my anxiety.—Something must be done upon her account; for, at all events, her solicitude shall be removed. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to another apartment.*

Enter MISS STERLING *and* MISS FANNY.

Miss Ster. Oh, my dear sister, say no more! This is downright hypocrisy. You shall never convince me that you don't envy me beyond measure. Well, after all, it is extremely natural—It is impossible to be angry with you.

Fan. Indeed, sister, you have no cause.

Miss Ster. And you really pretend not to envy me?

Fan. Not in the least.

Miss Ster. And you don't in the least wish that you was just in my situation?

Fan. No, indeed, I don't. Why should I?

Miss Ster. Why should you! What! on the brink of marriage, fortune, title! But I had forgot—There's that dear sweet creature, Mr Lovewell, in the case. You would not break your faith with your true love now, for the world, I warrant you.

Fan. Mr Lovewell!—Always Mr Lovewell! Lord, what signifies Mr Lovewell, sister?

Miss Ster. Pretty peevish soul! Oh, my dear, grave, romantic sister!—A perfect philosopher in petticoats!—Love and a cottage!—Eh, Fanny? ——Ah, give me indifference, and a coach and six!——

Fan. And why not the coach and six, without the indifference? But, pray, when is this happy marriage of yours to be celebrated? I long to give you joy.

Miss Ster. In a day or two—I cannot tell exactly—Oh, my dear sister! I must mortify her a little.—[*Aside.*]—I know you have a pretty taste. Pray, give me your opinion of my jewels. How do you like the style of this esclavage? [*Shewing jewels.*

Fan. Extremely handsome, indeed; and well fancied.

Miss Ster. What d'ye think of these bracelets? I shall have a miniature of my father set round with diamonds, to one, and sir John's to the other. And this pair of ear-rings! set transparent! here, the tops, you see, will shake off to wear in a morning, or in an undress—how d'ye like them? [*Shews jewels.*

Fan. Very much, I assure you—Bless me, sister, you have a prodigious quantity of jewels!—You'll be the very queen of diamonds!

Miss Ster. Ha, ha, ha! Very well, my dear! I shall be as fine as a little queen, indeed. I have a bouquet to come home to-morrow—made up of diamonds, and rubies, and emeralds, and topazes, and amethysts—jewels of all colours, green, red, blue, yellow, intermixt—the prettiest thing you ever saw in your life! The jeweller says, I shall set out with as many diamonds as any body in town, except lady Brilliant, and Polly What-d'ye call it, lord Squander's kept mistress.

Fan. But what are your wedding-clothes, sister?

Miss Ster. Oh, white and silver, to be sure, you know. I bought them at sir Joseph Lutestring's, and sat above an hour in the parlour behind the shop, consulting lady Lutestring about gold and silver stuffs, on purpose to mortify her.

Fan. Fie, sister! How could you be so abominably provoking?

Miss Ster. Oh, I have no patience with the pride of your city-knights' ladies. Did you ever observe the airs of lady Lutestring, drest in the richest brocade out of her husband's shop, playing crown whist at Haberdasher's Hall—Whilst the civil smirking sir Joseph, with a snug wig trimmed round his broad face, as close as a new-cut yew-hedge, and his shoes so black that they shine again, stands all day in his shop, fastened to his counter like a bad shilling!

Fan. Indeed, indeed, sister, this is too much—If you talk at this rate, you will be absolutely a by-word in the city——You must never venture on the inside of Temple-bar again.

Miss Ster. Never do I desire it—never, my dear Fanny, I promise you. Oh, how I long to be transported to the dear regions of Grosvenor-square—far—far from the dull districts of Aldersgate, Cheap, Candlewick, and Farringdon Without and Within!—My heart goes pit-a-pat at the very idea of being introduced at court!—Gilt chariot!—Pyebald horses!—Laced liveries!—and then the whispers buzzing round the circle—'Who is that young lady? Who is she?'—'Lady Melvil, madam?'—Lady Melvil! My ears tingle at the sound. And then at dinner, instead of my father perpetually asking—'Any news upon 'Change?'—To cry—'Well, sir John, any thing new from Arthur's?'—Or, to say to some other woman of quality—'Was your ladyship at the duchess of Rubber's last night? Did you call in at lady Thunder's? In the immensity of crowd, I swear I did not see you—scarce a soul at the opera last Saturday—shall I see you at Carlisle house next Thursday?'—Oh, the dear beau monde! I was born to move in the sphere of the great world.

Fan. And so, in the midst of all this happiness, you have no compassion for me—no pity for us poor mortals in common life.

Miss Ster. [*Affectedly.*]—You? You're above pity. You would not change conditions with me. You're over head and ears in love, you know. Nay, for that matter, if Mr Lovewell and you come together, as I doubt not you will, you will live very comfortably, I dare say. He will mind his business—you'll employ yourself in the delightful care of your family—and once in a season, perhaps, you'll sit together in a front box at a benefit play, as we used to do at our dancing-master's, you know—and, perhaps, I may meet you in the summer, with some other citizens, at Tunbridge. For my part, I shall always entertain a proper regard for my relations. You shan't want my countenance, I assure you.

Fan. Oh, you're too kind, sister!

Enter Mrs Heidelberg.

Mrs Heid. [*At entering.*]—Here this evening! I vow and protest we shall scarce have time to provide for them——Oh, my dear!—[*To* Miss Ster.]—I am glad to see you're not quite in a dishabille. Lord Ogleby and sir John Melvil will be here to-night.

Miss Ster. To-night, madam?

Mrs Heid. Yes, my dear, to-night. Oh, put on a smarter cap, and change those ordinary ruffles!—Lord, I have such a deal to do, I shall scarce have time to slip on my Italian lutestring. Where is this dawdle of a house-keeper?

Enter Mrs Trusty.

Oh, here, Trusty! Do you know that people of qualaty are expected here this evening?

Trus. Yes, madam.

Mrs Heid. Well—Do you be sure, now, that every thing is done in the most genteelest manner—and to the honour of the famaly.

Trus. Yes, madam.

Mrs Heid. Well—but mind what I say to you.

Trus. Yes, madam.

Mrs Heid. His lordship is to lie in the chintz bed-chamber—d'ye hear? and sir John in the blue damask-room—his lordship's valet-de-shamb in the opposite——

Trus. But Mr Lovewell is come down—and you know that's his room, madam.

Mrs Heid. Well—well—Mr Lovewell may make shift—or get a bed at the George. But hark ye, Trusty!

Trus. Madam!

Mrs Heid. Get the great dining-room in order, as soon as possable. Unpaper the curtains;

take the civers off the couch and the chairs; and put the china figures on the mantle piece immediately.

Trus. Yes, madam.

Mrs Heid. Be gone, then! Fly, this instant! Where's my brother Sterling?

Trus. Talking to the butler, madam.

Mrs Heid. Very well.—[*Exit* TRUSTY.]—Miss Fanny! I pertest I did not see you before—Lord, child, what's the matter with you?

Fan With me! Nothing, madam.

Mrs Heid. Bless me! Why, your face is as pale, and black, and yellow—of fifty colours, I pertest. And then you have drest yourself as loose and as big—I declare there is not such a thing to be seen now, as a young woman with a fine waist——You all make yourselves as round as Mrs Deputy Barter. Go, child! You know the qualaty will be here by and by. Go, and make yourself a little more fit to be seen.—[*Exit* FANNY.]—She is gone away in tears—absolutely crying, I vow and pertest. This ridicalous love! We must put a stop to it. It makes a perfect nataral of the girl.

Miss Ster. Poor soul! She cannot help it.

[*Affectedly.*

Mrs Heid. Well, my dear! Now I shall have an opportoonity of convincing you of the absurdity of what you was telling me concerning sir John's Melvil's behaviour to you.

Miss Ster. Oh, it gives me no manner of uneasiness. But, indeed, madam, I cannot be persuaded but that sir John is an extremely cold lover. Such distant civility, grave looks, and lukewarm professions of esteem for me and the whole family! I have heard of flames and darts; but sir John's is a passion of mere ice and snow.

Mrs Heid. Oh fie, my dear! I am perfectly ashamed of you. That's so like the notions of your poor sister! What you complain of as coldness and indiffarence, is nothing but the extreme gentilaty of his address, an exact pictur of the manners of qualaty.

Miss Ster. Oh, he is the very mirror of complaisance! full of formal bows and set speeches! I declare, if there was any violent passion on my side, I should be quite jealous of him.

Mrs Heid. I say, jealus indeed——Jealus of who, pray?

Miss Ster. My sister Fanny. She seems a much greater favourite than I am, and he pays her infinitely more attention, I assure you.

Mrs Heid. Lord! d'ye think a man of fashion, as he is, cannot distinguish between the genteel and the vulgar part of the famaly?——between you and your sister, for instance—or me and my brother?——Be advised by me, child! It is all puliteness and good-breeding. Nobody knows the qualaty better than I do.

Miss Ster. In my mind, the old lord, his uncle, has ten times more gallantry about him than sir John. He is full of attentions to the ladies, and smiles, and grins, and leers, and ogles, and fills every wrinkle of his old wizen face with comical expressions of tenderness. I think he would make an admirable sweetheart.

Enter STERLING.

Ster. [*At entering.*] No fish?—Why, the pond was dragged but yesterday morning—There's carp and tench in the boat.——Pox on't! if that dog Lovewell had any thought, he would have brought down a turbot, or some of the land-carriage mackrell.

Mrs Heid. Lord, brother, I am afraid his lordship and sir John will not arrive while it is light!

Ster. I warrant you.——But, pray, sister Heidelberg, let the turtle be dressed to-morrow, and some venison——and let the gardener cut some pine-apples—and get out some ice.——I'll answer for wine, I warrant you—I'll give them such a glass of champagne as they never drank in their lives—no, not at a duke's table.

Mrs Heid. Pray now, brother, mind how you behave. I am always in a fright about you with people of qualaty. Take care that you don't fall asleep directly after supper, as you commonly do. Take a good deal of snuff, and that will keep you awake—And don't burst out with your horrible loud horse laughs. It is monstrous vulgar.

Ster. Never fear, sister!—Who have we here?

Mrs Heid. It is Mons. Cantoon, the Swish gentleman, that lives with his lordship, I vow and pertest.

Enter CANTON.

Ster. Ah, mounseer! your servant.—I am very glad to see you, mounseer.

Can. Mosh oblige to Mons. Sterling.—Ma'am, I am yours—Matemoiselle, I am yours.

[*Bowing round.*

Mrs Heid. Your humble servant, Mr Cantoon!

Can. I kiss your hands, matam!

Ster. Well, mounseer!—and what news of your good family?—when are we to see his lordship and sir John?

Can. Mons. Sterling! Milor Ogleby and sir Jean Melville will be here in one quarter-hour.

Ster. I am glad to hear it.

Mrs Heid. O, I am perdigious glad to hear it. Being so late, I was afread of some accident.—Will you please to have any thing, Mr Cantoon, after your journey?

Can. No, I tank you, ma'am.

Mrs Heid. Shall I go and shew you the apartments, sir?

Can. You do me great honeur, ma'am.

Mrs Heid. Come, then!—come, my dear!

[*To* MISS STERLING.—*Exeunt.*

Ster. Pox on't, its almost dark!—It will be too late to go round the garden this evening.—However, I will carry them to take a peep at my fine canal at least, I am determined. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An anti-chamber to* LORD OGLEBY'S *bed-chamber. Table with chocolate, and small case for medicines.*

Enter BRUSH, *my lord's valet-de-chambre, and* STERLING'S *chambermaid.*

Brush. You shall stay, my dear; I insist upon it.

Cham. Nay, pray, sir, don't be so positive; I cannot stay, indeed.

Brush. You shall drink one cup to our better acquaintance.

Cham. I seldom drinks chocolate; and, if I did, one has no satisfaction with such apprehensions about one—If my lord should wake, or the Swish gentleman should see one, or madam Heidelberg should know of it, I should be frighted to death; besides, I have had my tea already this morning.—I am sure I hear my lord! [*In a fright.*

Brush. No, no, madam; don't flutter yourself—the moment my lord wakes, he rings his bell; which I answer, sooner or later, as it suits my convenience.

Cham. But should he come upon us without ringing———

Brush. I'll forgive him if he does—This key [*Takes a phial out of the case.*] locks him up till I please to let him out.

Cham. Law! sir, that's pothecary's stuff.

Brush. It is so—but without this he can no more get out of bed—than he can read without spectacles—[*Sips.*] What with qualms, age, rheumatisms, and a few surfeits in his youth, he must have a great deal of brushing, oiling, screwing, and winding up, to set him a-going for the day.

Cham. [*Sips.*] That's prodigious, indeed——[*Sips.*] My lord seems quite in a decay.

Brush. Yes, he is quite a spectacle, [*Sips.*]—a mere corpse, till he is revived and refreshed from our little magazine here—When the restorative pills, and cordial waters warm his stomach, and get into his head, vanity frisks in his heart; and then he sets up for the lover, the rake, and the fine gentleman.

Cham. [*Sips.*] Poor gentleman! but should the Swish gentleman come upon us.

[*Frightened.*

Brush. Why, then, the English gentleman would be very angry. No foreigner must break in upon my privacy. [*Sips.*] But I can assure you Monsieur Canton is otherwise employed—He is obliged to skim the cream of half a score newspapers for my lord's breakfast—ha, ha! Pray, madam, drink your cup peaceably—My lord's chocolate is remarkably good; he won't touch a drop, but what comes from Italy.

Cham. [*Sipping.*] 'Tis very fine, indeed! [*Sips.*] and charmingly perfumed—it smells for all the world like our young ladies' dressing-boxes.

Brush. You have an excellent taste, madam; and I must beg of you to accept of a few cakes for your own drinking, [*Takes them out of a drawer in the table.*] and, in return, I desire nothing but to taste the perfume of your lips.—[*Kisses her.*] A small return of favours, madam, will make, I hope, this country and retirement agreeable to us both. [*He bows, she curtsies.*]—Your young ladies are fine girls, faith: [*Sips.*] though, upon my soul, I am quite of my old lord's mind about them; and, were I inclined to matrimony, I should take the youngest. [*Sips.*

Cham. Miss Fanny's the most affablest, and the most best natured creter!———

Brush. And the eldest a little haughty or so——

Cham. More haughtier and prouder than Saturn himself——but this I say quite confidential to you; for one would not hurt a young lady's marriage, you know. [*Sips.*

Brush. By no means; but you cannot hurt it with us——we don't consider tempers; we want money, Mrs Nancy. Give us plenty of that, we'll abate you a great deal in other particulars, ha, ha, ha!

Cham. Bless me, here's somebody! [*Bell rings.*] Oh, 'tis my lord! Well, your servant, Mr Brush——I'll clean the cups in the next room.

Brush. Do so———but never mind the bell———I shan't go this half hour. Will you drink tea with me in the afternoon?

Cham. Not for the world, Mr Brush—I'll be here to set all things to rights———But I must not drink tea, indeed———and so your servant.

[*Exit with tea-board. Bell rings.*

Brush. It is impossible to stupify one's self in the country for a week, without some little flirting with the Abigails: this is much the handsomest wench in the house, except the old citizen's youngest daughter, and I have not time enough to lay a plan for her. [*Bell rings.*] And now I'll go to my lord, for I have nothing else to do.

[*Going.*

Enter CANTON, *with newspapers in his hand.*

Can. Monsieur Brush! Maistre Brush! my lor stirra yet?

Brush. He has just rung his bell———I am going to him. [*Exit.*

Can. Depechez vous donc. [*Puts on his spectacles.*] I wish de deveil had all dese papiers——I forget as fast as I read———de Advertise put out of my head de Gazette, de Chronique, and so dey all go l'un aprés l'autre———I must get some nouvelle for my lor, or he'll be enragé contre moi. Voyons! [*Reads the paper.*] Here is nothing but Anti-sejanus & advertise———

Enter Maid with chocolate things.

Vat you want, child?

Maid. Only the chocolate things, sir.

Can. O, ver well; dat is good girl; and very prit, too. [*Exit Maid.*

Lord Ogle. [*Within.*] Canton! he he!——— [*Coughs.*] Canton!———

Can. I come, my lor! vat shall I do? I have no news: he will make great tintamarre!—

Lord Ogle. [*Within.*] Canton! I say, Canton! Where are you?

Enter LORD OGLEBY, *leaning on* BRUSH.

Can. Here, my lor; I ask pardon, my lor; I have not finish de papiers.

Lord Ogle. Damn your pardon, and your papiers; I want you here, Canton.

Can. Den I run, dat is all.

[*Shuffles along.* LORD OGLEBY *leans upon* CANTON, *too, and comes forward.*]

Lord Ogle. You Swiss are the most unaccountable mixture; you have the language and the impertinence of the French, with the laziness of the Dutchmen.

Can. 'Tis very true, my lor; I can't help------

Lord Ogle. [*Cries out.*] O Diavolo!

Can. You are not in pain, I hope, my lor?

Lord Ogle. Indeed, but I am, my lor. That vulgar fellow, Sterling, with his city politeness, would force me down his slope last night to see a clay-coloured ditch, which he calls a canal; and what with the dew, and the east wind, my hips and shoulders are absolutely screwed to my body.

Can. A little veritable eau d'arquibusade vil set all to right again.

[LORD OGLEBY *sits down, and* BRUSH *gives chocolate.*

Lord Ogle. Where are the palsy drops, Brush?

Brush. Here, my lord! [*Pouring out.*

Lord Ogle. Quelle nouvelle avez vous, Canton?

Can. A great deal of papier, but no news at all.

Lord Ogle. What! nothing at all, you stupid fellow?

Can. Yes, my lor, I have little advertise here vil give you more plaisir den all the lies about nothing at all. La voila!

[*Puts on his spectacles.*

Lord Ogle. Come, read it, Canton, with good emphasis, and good discretion.

Can. I vil, my lor. [CANTON *reads.*] 'Dere is 'no question, but that the Cosmetique Royale 'vil utterly take away all heats, pimps, frecks, 'oder eruptions of de skin, and likewise de 'wrinque of old age, &c. &c.' A great deal more, my lor. 'Be sure to ask for de Cosme-'tique Royale, signed by the Docteur own hand. 'Dere is more raison for dis caution dan good 'men vil think.' Eh bien, my lor!

Lord Ogle. Eh bien, Canton! Will you purchase any?

Can. For you, my lor?

Lord Ogle. For me, you old puppy! for what?

Can. My lor!

Lord Ogle. Do I want cosmeticks?

Can. My lor!

Lord Ogle. Look in my face———come, be sincere. Does it want the assistance of art?

Can. [*With his spectacles.*] En verite non—'Tis very smoose and brillian———but tote dat you might take a little by way of prevention.

Lord Ogle. You thought like an old fool, monsieur, as you generally do. The surfeit water, Brush! [BRUSH *pours out.*] What do you think, Brush, of this family we are going to be connected with? Eh!

Brush. Very well to marry in, my lord; but it would never do to live with.

Lord Ogle. You are right, Brush———There is no washing the blackamoor white———Mr Sterling will never get rid of Blackfriars—always taste of the Borachio—and the poor woman, his sister, is so busy, and so notable, to make one welcome, that I have not yet got over her first reception; it almost amounted to suffocation! I think the daughters are tolerable. Where's my cephalic snuff? [BRUSH *gives him a box.*]

Can. Dey tink so of you, my lor, for dey look at no ting else, ma foi.

Lord Ogle. Did they? Why, I think they did a little—Where's my glass? [BRUSH *puts one on the table.*] The youngest is delectable.

[*Takes snuff.*

Can. O oui, my lor, very delect, inteed; she made doux yeux at you, my lor.

Lord Ogle. She was particular. The eldest, my nephew's lady, will be a most valuable wife; she has all the vulgar spirits of her father and aunt, happily blended with the termagant qualities of her deceased mother. Some peppermint water, Brush. How happy is it, Canton, for young ladies in general, that people of quality overlook every thing in a marriage-contract but their fortune.

Can. C'est bien heureux, et commode aussi.

Lord Ogle. Brush, give me that pamphlet by my bed side——[BRUSH *goes for it.*] Canton, do you wait in the anti-chamber, and let nobody interrupt me till I call you.

Can. Mush good may do your lordship.

Lord Ogle. [*To* BRUSH, *who brings the pamphlet.*] And now, Brush, leave me a little to my studies. [*Exit* BRUSH.]——What can I possibly do among these women here, with this confounded rheumatism? It is a most grievous enemy to gallantry and address. [*Gets off his chair.*] He! courage, my lor! by Heavens, I'm another creature! [*Hums and dances a little.*] It will do, faith!——Bravo, my lor! these girls have absolutely inspired me———If they are for a game of romps——Me voila pret! [*Sings and dances.*]

———Oh!—that's an ugly twinge—but its gone ———I have rather too much of the lily this morning in my complexion; a faint tincture of the rose will give a delicate spirit to my eyes for the day. [*Unlocks a drawer at the bottom of the glass, and takes out rouge: while he is painting himself, a knocking at the door.*] Who's there? I won't be disturbed.

Can. [*Without.*] My lor! my lor! here is Monsieur Sterling, to pay his devoir to you this morn in your chambre.

Lord Ogle. [*Softly.*] What a fellow! [*Aloud.*] I am extremely honoured by Mr Sterling—Why don't you see him in, monsieur?—I wish he was at the bottom of his stinking canal. [*Door opens.*] Oh, my dear Mr Sterling, you do me a great deal of honour!

Enter STERLING *and* LOVEWELL.

Ster. I hope, my lord, that your lordship slept well in the night——I believe there are no better beds in Europe than I have—I spare no pains to get them, nor money to buy them——His majesty, God bless him, don't sleep upon a better out of his palace; and if I had said in, too, I hope no treason, my lord.

Lord Ogle. Your beds are like every thing else about you—incomparable!——They not only make one rest well, but give one spirits, Mr Sterling.

Ster. What say you then, my lord, to another walk in the garden? You must see my water by day-light, and my walks, and my slopes, and my clumps, and my bridge, and my flowering trees, and my bed of Dutch tulips—Matters looked but dim last night, my lord. I feel the dew in my great toe—but I would put on a cut shoe, that I might be able to walk you about—I may be laid up to-morrow.

Lord Ogle. I pray Heaven you may! [*Aside.*

Ster. What say you, my lord?

Lord Ogle. I was saying, sir, that I was in hopes of seeing the young ladies at breakfast: Mr Sterling, they are, in my mind, the finest tulips in this part of the world, he, he, he!

Can. Bravissimo, my lor! ha, ha, ha!

Ster. They shall meet your lordship in the garden—we don't lose our walk for them; I'll take you a little round before breakfast, and a larger before dinner, and in the evening you shall go the grand tour, as I call it, ha, ha, ha!

Lord Ogle. Not a foot, I hope, Mr Sterling; consider your gout, my good friend—you'll certainly be laid by the heels for your politeness, he, he, he!

Can. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis admirable, en verite! [*Laughing very heartily.*

Ster. If my young man [*To* Lov.] here would but laugh at my jokes, which he ought to do, as mounseer does at yours, my lord, we should be all life and mirth.

Lord Ogle. What say you, Canton? will you take my kinsman into your tuition? You have certainly the most companionable laugh I ever met with, and never out of tune—

Can. But when your lordship is out of spirits.

Lord Ogle. Well said, Canton! But here comes my nephew, to play his part.

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

Well, sir John, what news from the island of love? Have you been sighing and serenading this morning?

Sir John. I am glad to see your lordship in such spirits this morning.

Lord Ogle. I'm sorry to see you so dull, sir—What poor things, Mr Sterling, these very young fellows are! they make love with faces, as if they were burying the dead—though, indeed, a marriage sometimes may be properly called a burying of the living—eh, Mr Sterling?

Ster. Not if they have enough to live upon, my lord—Ha, ha, ha!

Can. Dat is all Monsieur Sterling tink of.

Sir John. [*Apart.*] Prithee, Lovewell, come with me into the garden; I have something of consequence for you, and I must communicate it directly.

Lov. [*Apart.*] We'll go together——If your lordship and Mr Sterling please, we'll prepare the ladies to attend you in the garden.

[*Exeunt* SIR JOHN *and* LOVEWELL.

Ster. My girls are always ready; I make them rise soon, and to bed early; their husbands shall have them with good constitutions, and good fortunes, if they have nothing else, my lord.

Lord Ogle. Fine things, Mr Sterling!

Ster. Fine things, indeed, my lord!—Ah, my lord, had not you run off your speed in your youth, you had not been so crippled in your age, my lord.

Lord Ogle. Very pleasant, he, he, he!—— [*Forcing a laugh.*

Ster. Here's mounseer now, I suppose, is pretty near your lordship's standing; but, having little to eat, and little to spend in his own country, he'll wear three of your lordship out—eating and drinking kills us all.

Lord Ogle. Very pleasant, I protest!—What a vulgar dog! [*Aside.*

Can. My lor so old as me!—He is chicken to me—and look like a boy to pauvre me.

Ster. Ha, ha, ha! Well said, mounseer—keep to that, and you'll live in any country of the world——Ha, ha, ha!—But, my lord, I will wait upon you in the garden: we have but a little time to breakfast—I'll go for my hat and cane, fetch a little walk with you, my lord, and then for the hot rolls and butter. [*Exit.*

Lord Ogle, I shall attend you with pleasure—Hot rolls and butter in July! I sweat with the thoughts of it—What a strange beast it is!

Can. C'est un barbare.

Lord Ogle. He is a vulgar dog; and if there

was not so much money in the family, which I can't do without, I would leave him and his hot rolls and butter directly——Come along, monsieur! [*Exeunt* LORD OGLEBY *and* CANTON.

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Garden.*

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL, *and* LOVEWELL.

Love. In my room this morning? Impossible!

Sir John. Before five this morning, I promise you.

Love. On what occasion?

Sir John. I was so anxious to disclose my mind to you, that I could not sleep in my bed—but I found that you could not sleep neither—The bird was flown, and the nest long since cold——Where was you, Lovewell?

Love. Pooh! prithee! ridiculous!

Sir John. Come now, which was it? Miss Sterling's maid? a pretty little rogue! or Miss Fanny's Abigail? a sweet soul too—or—

Love. Nay, nay, leave trifling, and tell me your business.

SirJohn. Well, but where was you, Lovewell?

Love. Walking—writing—what signifies where I was?

Sir John. Walking, yes, I dare say. It rained as hard as it could pour. Sweet refreshing showers to walk in! No, no, Lovewell—Now would I give twenty pounds to know which of the maids——

Love. But your business! your business, sir John!

Sir John. Let me a little into the secrets of the family.

Love. Psha!

Sir John. Poor Lovewell! he can't bear it, I see. She charged you not to kiss and tell—Eh, Lovewell? However, though you will not honour me with your confidence, I'll venture to trust you with mine——What do you think of Miss Sterling?

Love. What do I think of Miss Sterling?

Sir John. Ay; what d'ye think of her?

Love. An odd question!---but I think her a smart, lively girl, full of mirth and sprightliness.

Sir John. All mischief and malice, I doubt.

Love. How?

Sir John. But her person---what d'ye think of that?

Love. Pretty and agreeable.

Sir John. A little grisette thing.

Love. What is the meaning of all this?

Sir John. I'll tell you. You must know, Lovewell, that notwithstanding all appearances—[*Seeing* LORD OGLBY, *&c.*] We are interrupted——When they are gone, I'll explain.

Enter LORD OGLEBY, STERLING, MRS HEIDELBERG, MISS STERLING, *and* FANNY.

Lord Ogle. Great improvements indeed, Mr Sterling! wonderful improvements! The Four Seasons in lead, the flying Mercury, and the bason with Neptune in the middle, are all in the very extreme of fine taste. You have as many rich figures as the man at Hyde-Park Corner.

Ster. The chief pleasure of a country-house is to make improvements, you know, my lord. I spare no expence, not I.—— This is quite another guess sort of a place than it was when I first took it, my lord. We were surrounded with trees. I cut down above fifty to make the lawn before the house, and let in the wind and the sun —smack-smooth—as you see.—Then I made a green-house out of the old laundry, and turned the brewhouse into a pinery.—The high octagon summer-house, you see yonder, is raised on the mast of a ship, given me by an East-India captain, who has turned many a thousand of my money. It commands the whole road. All the coaches and chariots, and chaises, pass and repass under your eye. I'll mount you up there in the afternoon, my lord. 'Tis the pleasantest place in the world to take a pipe and a bottle, and so you shall say, my lord.

Lord Ogle. Ay, or a bowl of punch, or a can of flip, Mr Sterling! for it looks like a cabin in the air.——If flying chairs were in use, the captain might make a voyage to the Indies in it still, if he had but a fair wind.

Can. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Heid. My brother's a little comical in his ideas, my lord!—But you'll excuse him.—I have a little Gothic dairy, fitted up entirely in my own taste.—In the evening I shall hope for the honour of your lordship's company to take a dish of tea there, or a sullabub warm from the cow.

Lord Ogle. I have every moment a fresh opportunity of admiring the elegance of Mrs Heidelberg—the very flower of delicacy, and cream of politeness.

Mrs Heid. O, my lord!

[*Leering at* LORD OGLEBY.

Lord Ogle. O, madam!

[*Leering at* MRS HEIDELBERG.

Ster. How d'ye like these close walks, my lord?

Lord Ogle. A most excellent serpentine! It forms a perfect maze, and winds like a true lover's knot.

Ster. Ay, here's none of your straight lines here——but all taste—zig-zag—crinkum-crankum—in and out—right and left—to and again—twisting and turning like a worm, my lord!

Lord Ogle. Admirably laid out indeed, Mr Sterling! one can hardly see an inch beyond one's nose any where in these walks.——You are a most excellent œconomist of your land, and make a little go a great way.——It lies together in as small parcels as if it was placed in pots out at your window in Grace-church street.

Can. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Lord Ogle. What d'ye laugh at, Canton?

Can. Ah! que cette similitude est drole! So clever what you say, mi lor!————

Lord Ogle. [*To* FANNY.] You seem mightily engaged, madam. What are those pretty hands so busily employed about?

Fan. Only making up a nosegay, my lord!—Will your lordship do me the honour of accepting it? [*Presenting it.*

Lord Ogle. I'll wear it next my heart, madam!——I see the young creature dotes on me! [*Apart.*

Miss Ster. Lord, sister! you've loaded his lordship with a bunch of flowers as big as the cook or the nurse carry to town, on a Monday morning, for a beau-pot.——Will your lordship give me leave to present you with this rose and a sprig of sweet-briar?

Lord Ogle. The truest emblems of yourself, madam! all sweetness and poignancy.——A little jealous, poor soul! [*Apart.*

Ster. Now, my lord, if you please, I'll carry you to see my ruins.

Mrs Heid. You'll absolutely fatigue his lordship with over-walking, brother!

Lord Ogle. Not at all, madam! We're in the garden of Eden, you know; in the region of perpetual spring, youth, and beauty.

[*Leering at the women.*

Mrs Heid. Quite the man of qualaty, I pertest. [*Apart.*

Can. Take a my arm, my lor!

[LORD OGLEBY *leans on him.*

Ster. I'll only shew his lordship my ruins, and the cascade, and the Chinese bridge, and then we'll go in to breakfast.

Lord Ogle. Ruins, did you say, Mr Sterling?

Ster. Ay, ruins, my lord! and they are reckoned very fine ones, too. You would think them ready to tumble on your head. It has just cost me a hundred and fifty pounds to put my ruins in thorough repair. This way, if your lordship pleases.

Lord Ogle. [*Going, stops.*] What steeple's that we see yonder?—the parish church, I suppose?

Ster. Ha, ha, ha! that's admirable. It is no church at all, my lord! it is a spire that I have built against a tree, a field or two off, to terminate the prospect. One must always have a church, or an obelisk, or something to terminate the prospect, you know. That's a rule in taste, my lord!

Lord Ogle. Very ingenious, indeed! For my part, I desire no finer prospect than this I see before me. [*Leering at the women.*]—Simple, yet varied; bounded, yet extensive.—Get away, Canton! [*Pushing away* CANTON.] I want no assistance—I'll walk with the ladies.

Ster. This way, my lord!

Lord Ogle. Lead on, sir.——We young folks here will follow you.—— Madam!—Miss Sterling!—Miss Fanny! I attend you.

[*Exit after* STERLING, *gallanting the ladies.*

Can. [*Following.*] He is cock o' de game, ma foy! [*Exit.*

Sir John. At length, thank Heaven, I have an opportunity to unbosom.—I know you are faithful, Lovewell, and flatter myself you would rejoice to serve me.

Love. Be assured you may depend upon me.

Sir John. You must know, then, notwithstanding all appearances, that this treaty of marriage between Miss Sterling and me will come to nothing.

Love. How!

Sir John. It will be no match, Lovewell.

Love. No match?

Sir John. No.

Love. You amaze me! What should prevent it?

Sir John. I.

Love. You! Wherefore?

Sir John. I don't like her.

Love. Very plain, indeed! I never supposed that you was extremely devoted to her from inclination, but thought you always considered it as a matter of convenience, rather than affection.

Sir John. Very true. I came into the family without any impressions on my mind—with an unimpassioned indifference, ready to receive one woman as soon as another. I looked upon love, serious, sober love, as a chimæra, and marriage as a thing of course, as, you know, most people do. But I, who was lately so great an infidel in love, am now one of its sincerest votaries.—In short, my defection from Miss Sterling proceeds from the violence of my attachment to another.

Love. Another! So, so! here will be fine work. And, pray, who is she?

Sir John. Who is she! who can she be? but Fanny, the tender, amiable, engaging Fanny!

Love. Fanny! What Fanny?

Sir John. Fanny Sterling. Her sister—Is not she an angel, Lovewell?

Love. Her sister? Confusion!—You must not think of it, sir John.

Sir John. Not think of it? I can think of nothing else. Nay, tell me, Lovewell, was it possible for me to be indulged in a perpetual intercourse with two such objects as Fanny and her sister, and not find my heart led by insensible attraction towards her?——You seem confounded—Why don't you answer me?

Love. Indeed, sir John, this event gives me infinite concern.

Sir John. Why so?—Is she not an angel, Lovewell?

Love. I foresee, that it must produce the worst consequences. Consider the confusion it must unavoidably create. Let me persuade you to drop these thoughts in time.

Sir John. Never—never, Lovewell.

Love. You have gone too far to recede. A negociation, so nearly concluded, cannot be broken off with any grace. The lawyers, you know, are hourly expected; the preliminaries almost finally

settled between lord Ogleby and Mr Sterling; and Miss Sterling herself ready to receive you as a husband.

Sir John. Why, the banns have been published, and nobody has forbidden them, 'tis true. But, you know, either of the parties may change their minds, even after they enter the church.

Love. You think too lightly of this matter. To carry your addresses so far—and then to desert her—and for her sister, too!——It will be such an affront to the family, that they can never put up with it.

Sir John. I don't think so; for, as to my transferring my passion from her to her sister, so much the better! for then, you know, I don't carry my affection out of the family.

Love. Nay; but, prithee, be serious, and think better of it.

Sir John. I have thought better of it already, you see. Tell me honestly, Lovewell? Can you blame me? Is there any comparison between them?

Love. As to that now—why, that—is just——just as it may strike different people. There are many admirers of Miss Sterling's vivacity.

Sir John. Vivacity! a medley of Cheapside pertness, and Whitechapel pride.—No, no—if I do go so far into the city for a wedding dinner, it shall be upon turtle at least.

Love. But I see no probability of success; for, granting that Mr Sterling would have consented to it at first, he cannot listen to it now. Why did not you break this affair to the family before?

Sir John. Under such embarrassed circumstances as I have been, can you wonder at my irresolution or perplexity! nothing but despair, the fear of losing my dear Fanny, could bring me to a declaration even now; and yet, I think I know Mr Sterling so well, that, strange as my proposal may appear, if I can make it advantageous to him as a money transaction, as I am sure I can, he will certainly come into it.

Love. But, even suppose he should, which I very much doubt, I don't think Fanny herself would listen to your addresses.

Sir John. You are deceived a little in that particular.

Love. You'll find I am in the right.

Sir John. I have some little reason to think otherwise.

Love. You have not declared your passion to her already.

Sir John. Yes, I have.

Love. Indeed!—And—and—and how did she receive it?

Sir John. I think it is not very easy for me to make my addresses to any woman, without receiving some little encouragement.

Love. Encouragement! did she give you any encouragement?

Sir John. I don't know what you call encouragement—but she blushed—and cried—and desired me not to think of it any more:——Upon which I pressed her hand—kissed it—swore she was an angel—and I could see it tickled her to the soul.

Love. And did she express no surprise at your declaration?

Sir John. Why, faith, to say the truth, she was a little surprised——and she got away from me, too, before I could thoroughly explain myself. If I should not meet with an opportunity of speaking to her, I must get you to deliver a letter for me.

Love. I!—a letter!——I had rather have nothing———

Sir John. Nay; you promised me your assistance——and I am sure you cannot scruple to make yourself useful on such an occasion. You may, without suspicion, acquaint her verbally of my determined affection for her, and that I am resolved to ask her father's consent.

Love. As to that, I—your commands, you know ——that is, if she——Indeed, sir John, I think you are in the wrong.

Sir John. Well—well—that's my concern——Ha! there she goes, by Heaven! along that walk yonder, d'ye see! I'll go to her immediately.

Love. You are too precipitate. Consider what you are doing.

Sir John. I would not lose this opportunity for the universe.

Love. Nay, pray don't go! Your violence and eagerness may overcome her spirits. The shock will be too much for her. [*Detaining him.*

Sir John. Nothing shall prevent me.——Ha! now she turns into another walk———Let me go! [*Breaks from him.*] I shall lose her! [*Going, turns back.*] Be sure, now, to keep out of the way! If you interrupt us, I shall never forgive you. [*Exit hastily.*

Love. 'Sdeath! I can't bear this. In love with my wife! acquaint me with his passion for her! make his addresses before my face!——I shall break out before my time.—This was the meaning of Fanny's uneasiness. She could not encourage him—I am sure she could not.——Ha! they are turning into the walk, and coming this way! Shall I leave the place!—Leave him to solicit my wife! I can't submit to it.—They come nearer and nearer—If I stay, it will look suspicious—It may betray us, and incense him—They are here—I must go—I am the most unfortunate fellow in the world! [*Exit.*

Enter FANNY *and* SIR JOHN.

Fan. Leave me, sir John, I beseech you leave me! nay, why will you persist to follow me with idle solicitations, which are an affront to my character, and an injury to your own honour.

Sir John. I know your delicacy, and tremble to offend it: but let the urgency of the occasion be my excuse! Consider, madam, that the future happiness of my life depends on my present ap-

plication to you! consider that this day must determine my fate; and these are, perhaps, the only moments left me to incline you to warrant my passion, and to entreat you not to oppose the proposals I mean to open to your father.

Fan. For shame, for shame, sir John! Think of your previous engagements! Think of your own situation, and think of mine! What have you discovered in my conduct, that might encourage you to so bold a declaration? I am shocked that you should venture to say so much, and blush that I should even dare to give it a hearing.———Let me be gone!

Sir John. Nay; stay, madam, but one moment———Your sensibility is too great.——Engagements! what engagements have been pretended on either side more than those of family convenience? I went on in the trammels of matrimonial negociation with a blind submission to your father and lord Ogleby; but my heart soon claimed a right to be consulted. It has devoted itself to you, and obliges me to plead earnestly for the same tender interest in yours.

Fan. Have a care, sir John! do not mistake a depraved will for a virtuous inclination. By these common pretences of the heart, half our sex are made fools, and a greater part of yours despise them for it.

Sir John. Affection, you will allow, is involuntary. We cannot always direct it to the object on which it should fix—But when it is once inviolably attached—inviolably as mine is to you, it often creates reciprocal affection.——When I last urged you on this subject, you heard me with more temper, and, I hoped, with some compassion.

Fan. You deceived yourself. If I forbore to exert a proper spirit; nay, if I did not even express the quickest resentment of your behaviour, it was only in consideration of that respect I wish to pay you, in honour to my sister: and, be assured, sir, woman as I am, that my vanity could reap no pleasure from a triumph, that must result from the blackest treachery to her. [*Going.*

Sir John. One word, and I have done. [*Stopping her.*] Your impatience and anxiety, and the urgency of the occasion, oblige me to be brief and explicit with you.——I appeal, therefore, from your delicacy to your justice.——Your sister, I verily believe, neither entertains any real affection for me, or tenderness for you. Your father, I am inclined to think, is not much concerned by means of which of his daughters the families are united.—Now, as they cannot, shall not, be connected, otherwise than by my union with you, why will you, from a false delicacy, oppose a measure so conducive to my happiness, and, I hope, your own? I love you, most passionately and sincerely love you——and hope to propose terms agreeable to Mr Sterling:——If, then, you don't absolutely loath, abhor, and scorn me—— if there is no other happier man———

Fan. Hear me, sir; hear my final determination. Were my father and sister as insensible as you are pleased to represent them; were my heart for ever to remain disengaged to any other, I could not listen to your proposals. What! You, on the very eve of a marriage with my sister; I living under the same roof with her, bound, not only by the laws of friendship and hospitality, but even the ties of blood, to contribute to her happiness, and not to conspire against her peace, the peace of a whole family, and that of my own too!—Away, away, sir John!—At such a time, and in such circumstances, your addresses only inspire me with horror. Nay, you must detain me no longer—I will go.

Sir John. Do not leave me in absolute despair! Give me a glimpse of hope!

[*Falling on his knees.*

Fan. I cannot. Pray, sir John!

[*Struggling to go.*

Sir John. Shall this hand be given to another?—[*Kissing her hand.*]—No; I cannot endure it. My whole soul is yours, and the whole happiness of my life is in your power.

Enter MISS STERLING.

Fan. Ha! my sister is here. Rise, for shame, sir John!

Sir John. Miss Sterling! [*Rising.*

Miss Ster. I beg pardon, sir; you'll excuse me, madam! I have broke in upon you a little unopportunely, I believe—but I did not mean to interrupt you—I only came, sir, to let you know that breakfast waits, if you have finished your morning's devotions.

Sir John. I am very sensible, Miss Sterling, that this may appear particular, but———

Miss Ster. O dear, sir John, don't put yourself to the trouble of an apology—the thing explains itself.

Sir John. It will soon, madam. In the mean time, I can only assure you of my profound respect and esteem for you, and make no doubt of convincing Mr Sterling of the honour and integrity of my intentions. And—and—your humble servant, madam!

[*Exit* SIR JOHN *in confusion.*

Miss Ster. Respect! Insolence! Esteem! Very fine, truly!—And you, madam! my sweet, delicate, innocent, sentimental sister! Will you convince my papa, too, of the integrity of your intentions?

Fan. Do not upbraid me, my dear sister! Indeed, I don't deserve it. Believe me, you cannot be more offended at his behaviour than I am, and I am sure it cannot make you half so miserable.

Miss Ster. Make me miserable! You are mightily deceived, madam; it gives me no sort of uneasiness, I assure you. A base fellow! As for you, miss! the pretended softness of your disposition, your artful good-nature, never im-

posed upon me. I always knew you to be sly, and envious, and deceitful.

Fan. Indeed, you wrong me.

Miss Ster. Oh, you are all goodness, to be sure! Did not I find him on his knees before you? Did not I see him kiss your sweet hand? Did not I hear his protestations? Was not I a witness of your dissembled modesty? No, no, my dear! don't imagine that you can make a fool of your elder sister so easily.

Fan. Sir John, I own, is to blame; but I am above the thoughts of doing you the least injury.

Miss Ster. We shall try that, madam. I hope, miss, you'll be able to give a better account to my papa and my aunt, for they shall both know of this matter, I promise you. [*Exit* MISS STER.

Fan. How unhappy I am! My distresses multiply upon me. Mr Lovewell must now become acquainted with sir John's behaviour to me, and in a manner that may add to his uneasiness. My father, instead of being disposed, by fortunate circumstances, to forgive any transgression, will be previously incensed against me. My sister and my aunt will become irreconcileably my enemies, and rejoice in my disgrace. Yet, in all events, I am determined on a discovery. I dread it, and am resolved to hasten it. It is surrounded with more horrors every instant, as it appears every instant more necessary. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A hall.*

Enter a Servant, leading in SERJEANT FLOWER, *and* COUNSELLORS TRAVERSE *and* TRUEMAN, *all booted.*

Ser. THIS way, if you please, gentlemen; my master is at breakfast with the family at present, but I'll let him know, and he will wait on you immediately.

Flow. Mighty well, young man: mighty well.

Ser. Please to favour me with your names, gentlemen.

Flow. Let Mr Sterling know, that Mr Serjeant Flower, and two other gentlemen of the bar, are come to wait on him, according to his appointment.

Ser. I will, sir. [*Going.*

Flow. And hark'e, young man—[*Servant returns.*]—desire my servant—Mr Serjeant Flower's servant, to bring in my green and gold saddle-cloth and pistols, and lay them down here in the hall with my portmanteau.

Ser. I will, sir. [*Exit Ser.*

Flow. Well, gentlemen! the settling these marriage articles falls conveniently enough, almost just on the eve of the circuits. Let me see—the Home, the Midland, and Western; ay, we can all cross the country well enough to our several destinations. Traverse, when do you begin at Hertford?

Tra. The day after to-morrow.

Flow. That is commission-day with us at Warwick, too. But my clerk has retainers for every cause in the paper, so it will be time enough if I am there the next morning. Besides, I have about half a dozen cases that have lain by me ever since the spring assizes, and I must tack opinions to them before I see my country clients again; so I will take the evening before me, and then *currente calamo*, as I say—eh, Traverse?

Tra. True, Mr Serjeant; and the easiest thing in the world, too; for those country attornies are such ignorant dogs, that in case of the devise of an estate to A, and his heirs for ever, they'll make a query whether he takes in fee or in tail!

Flow. Do you expect to have much to do on the Home Circuit these assizes?

Tra. Not much *nisi prius* business, but a good deal on the crown side, I believe. The gaols are brim-full, and some of the felons in good circumstances, and likely to be tolerable clients. Let me see! I am engaged for three highway robberies, two murders, one forgery, and half a dozen larcenies, at Kingston.

Flow. A pretty decent gaol-delivery!—Do you expect to bring off Darkin, for the robbery on Putney-Common? Can you make out your alibi?

Tra. Oh! no! the crown-witnesses are sure to prove our identity. We shall certainly be hanged: but that don't signify. But, Mr Serjeant, have you much to do? Any remarkable cause on the midland this circuit?

Flow. Nothing very remarkable——except two rapes, and Rider and Western at Nottingham, for crim. con.——but, on the whole, I believe a good deal of business. Our associate tells me, there are above thirty *venires* for Warwick.

Tra. Pray, Mr Serjeant, are you concerned in Jones and Thomas at Lincoln?

Flow. I am-----for the plaintiff.

Tra. And what do you think on't?

Flow. A nonsuit.

Tra. I thought so.

Flow. Oh, no manner of doubt on't——*luce clarius*—we have no right in us——we have but one chance.

Tra. What's that?

Flow. Why, my Lord Chief does not go the circuit this time, and my brother Puzzle being in the commission, the cause will come on before him.

True. Ay, that may do indeed, if you can but throw dust in the eyes of the defendant's counsel.

Flow. True. Mr Trueman, I think you are concerned for Lord Ogleby in this affair?

[*To* TRUE.

True. I am, sir—I have the honour to be related to his lordship, and hold some courts for him in Somersetshire—go the Western circuit—and attend the sessions at Exeter, merely because his lordship's interests and property lie in that part of the kingdom.

Flow. Ha!—and pray, Mr Trueman, how long have you been called to the bar?

True. About nine years and three quarters.

Flow. Ha!—I don't know that I ever had the pleasure of seeing you before. I wish you success, young gentleman!

Enter STERLING.

Ster. Oh, Mr Serjeant Flower, I am glad to see you—Your servant, Mr Serjeant! gentlemen, your servant!—Well, are all matters concluded? Has that snail-paced conveyancer, old Ferret, of Gray's-Inn, settled the articles at last? Do you approve of what he has done? Will his tackle hold, tight and strong? Eh, master Serjeant?

Flow. My friend Ferret's slow and sure, sir—But then, *serius aut citius*, as we say, sooner or later, Mr Sterling, he is sure to put his business out of hand as he should do. My clerk has brought the writings, and all other instruments, along with him, and the settlement is, I believe, as good a settlement as any settlement on the face of the earth!

Ster. But that damned mortgage of 60,000l.—There don't appear to be any other incumbrances, I hope?

Tra. I can answer for that, sir—and that will be cleared off immediately on the payment of the first part of Miss Sterling's proportion.——You agree, on your part, to come down with 80,000l.?

Ster. Down on the nail. Ay, ay, my money is ready to-morrow if he pleases—he shall have it in India-bonds, or notes, or how he chooses.—Your lords, and your dukes, and your people at the court end of the town, stick at payments sometimes—debts unpaid, no credit lost with them—but no fear of us substantial fellows——Eh, Mr Serjeant?

Flow. Sir John having last term, according to agreement, levied a fine, and suffered a recovery, has hitherto cut off the entail of the Ogleby estate, for the better effecting the purposes of the present intended marriage; on which above-mentioned Ogleby estate, a jointure of 2000l. per annum is secured to your eldest daughter, now Elizabeth Sterling, spinster; and the whole estate, after the death of the aforesaid earl, descends to the heirs-male of sir John Melvil, on the body of the aforesaid Elizabeth Sterling, lawfully to be begotten.

Tra. Very true——and sir John is to be put in immediate possession of as much of his lordship's Somersetshire estate, as lies in the manors of Hogmore and Cranford, amounting to between two and three thousand per annum; and at the death of Mr Sterling, a further sum of seventy thousand——

Enter SIR JOHN MELVILL.

Ster. Ah, sir John! Here we are—hard at it—paving the road to matrimony—First the lawyers, then comes the doctor—Let us but dispatch the long robe, we shall soon get pudding-sleeves to work, I warrant you.

Sir John. I am sorry to interrupt you, sir——but I hope that both you and these gentlemen will excuse me——Having something very particular for your private ear, I took the liberty of following you, and beg you will oblige me with an audience immediately.

Ster. Ay, with all my heart!—Gentlemen, Mr Serjeant, you'll excuse it—Business must be done, you know. The writings will keep cold till to-morrow morning.

Flow. I must be at Warwick, Mr Sterling, the day after.

Ster. Nay, nay, I shan't part with you to-night, gentlemen, I promise you. My house is very full, but I have beds for you all, beds for your servants, and stabling for all your horses. Will you take a turn in the garden, and view some of my improvements, before dinner? Or will you amuse yourselves on the green, with a game of bowls, and a cool tankard? My servants shall attend you. Do you chuse any other refreshment? Call for what you please; do as you please; make yourselves quite at home, I beg of you.—Here, Thomas! Harry! William! wait on these gentlemen! [*Follows the lawyers out, hauling and talking, and then returns to* SIR JOHN.]—And now, sir, I am entirely at your service. What are your commands with me, sir John?

Sir John. After having carried the negociation between our families to so great a length; after having assented so readily to all your proposals, as well as received so many instances of your cheerful compliance with the demands made on our part, I am extremely concerned, Mr Sterling, to be the involuntary cause of any uneasiness.

Ster. Uneasiness! what uneasiness? Where business is transacted as it ought to be, and the parties understand one another, there can be no uneasiness. You agree, on such and such conditions, to receive my daughter for a wife; on the same conditions, I agree to receive you as a son-in-law; and as to all the rest, it follows of course, you know, as regularly as the payment of a bill after acceptance.

Sir John. Pardon me, sir, more uneasiness has arisen than you are aware of. I am myself, at this instant, in a state of inexpressible embarrassment; Miss Sterling, I know, is extremely disconcerted, too; and, unless you will oblige me with the assistance of your friendship, I foresee

the speedy progress of discontent and animosity through the whole family.

Ster. What the deuce is all this? I don't understand a single syllable.

Sir John. In one word then—it will be absolutely impossible for me to fulfil my engagements in regard to Miss Sterling.

Ster. How, sir John! Do you mean to put an affront upon my family? What? refuse to—

Sir John. Be assured, sir, that I neither mean to affront, nor forsake your family. My only fear is, that you should desert me; for the whole happiness of my life depends on my being connected with your family, by the nearest and tenderest ties in the world.

Ster. Why, did not you tell me, but a moment ago, that it was absolutely impossible for you to marry my daughter?

Sir John. True. But you have another daughter, sir—

Ster. Well!

Sir John. Who has obtained the most absolute dominion over my heart. I have already declared my passion to her; nay, Miss Sterling herself is also apprised of it; and if you will but give a sanction to my present addresses, the uncommon merit of Miss Sterling will, no doubt, recommend her to a person of equal, if not superior, rank to myself, and our families may still be allied by my union with Miss Fanny.

Ster. Mighty fine, truly! Why, what the plague do you make of us, sir John? Do you come to market for my daughters, like servants at a statute-fair? Do you think that I will suffer you, or any man in the world, to come into my house, like the grand signior, and throw the handkerchief first to one, and then to t'other, just as he pleases? Do you think I drive a kind of African slave-trade with them? and———

Sir John. A moment's patience, sir! Nothing but the excess of my passion for Miss Fanny should have induced me to take any step that had the least appearance of disrespect to any part of your family; and, even now, I am desirous to atone for my transgression, by making the most adequate compensation that lies in my power.

Ster. Compensation! what compensation can you possibly make in such a case as this, sir John?

Sir John. Come, come, Mr Sterling; I know you to be a man of sense, a man of business, a man of the world. I'll deal frankly with you; and you shall see, that I don't desire a change of measures for my own gratification, without endeavouring to make it advantageous to you.

Ster. What advantage can your inconstancy be to me, sir John?

Sir John. I'll tell you, sir. You know, that, by the articles at present subsisting between us, on the day of my marriage with Miss Sterling, you agree to pay down the gross sum of eighty thousand pounds.

Ster. Well!

Sir John. Now if you will but consent to my waving that marriage———

Ster. I agree to your waving that marriage! Impossible, sir John!

Sir John. I hope not, sir; as, on my part, I will agree to wave my right to thirty thousand pounds of the fortune I was to receive with her.

Ster. Thirty thousand, d'ye say?

Sir John. Yes, sir; and accept of Miss Fanny with fifty thousand, instead of fourscore.

Ster. Fifty thousand——— [*Pausing.*

Sir John. Instead of fourscore.

Ster. Why—why—there may be something in that.—Let me see—Fanny with fifty thousand, instead of Betsy with fourscore.—But how can this be, sir John? For you know I am to pay this money into the hands of my lord Ogleby, who, I believe, between you and me, sir John, is not overstocked with ready money at present; and threescore thousand of it, you know, is to go to pay off the present incumbrances on the estate, sir John.

Sir John. That objection is easily obviated.—Ten of the twenty thousand, which would remain as a surplus of the fourscore, after paying off the mortgage, was intended by his lordship for my use, that we might set off with some little eclat on our marriage, and the other ten for his own.—Ten thousand pounds, therefore, I shall be able to pay you immediately; and for the remaining twenty thousand, you shall have a mortgage on that part of the estate which is to be made over to me, with whatever security you shall require for the regular payment of the interest, till the principal is duly discharged.

Ster. Why—to do you justice, sir John, there is something fair and open in your proposal; and since I find you do not mean to put an affront upon the family——

Sir John. Nothing was ever farther from my thoughts, Mr Sterling.—And, after all, the whole affair is nothing extraordinary—such things happen every day; and, as the world has only heard generally of a treaty between the families, when this marriage takes place, nobody will be the wiser, if we have but discretion enough to keep our own counsel.

Ster. True, true; and, since you only transfer from one girl to the other, it is no more than transferring so much stock, you know.

Sir John. The very thing!

Ster. Odso! I had forgot.—We are reckoning without our host here—there is another difficulty———

Sir John. You alarm me! What can that be?

Ster. I can't stir a step in this business without consulting my sister Heidelberg.—The family has very great expectations from her, and we must not give her any offence.

Sir John. But if you come into this measure, surely she will be so kind as to consent——

Ster. I don't know that—Betsy is her darling, and I can't tell how far she may resent any slight that seems to be offered to her favourite niece. However, I'll do the best I can for you. You shall go and break the matter to her first; and by that time I may suppose that your rhetoric has prevailed on her to listen to reason, I will step in to reinforce your arguments.

Sir John. I'll fly to her immediately; you promise me your assistance?

Ster. I do.

Sir John. Ten thousand thanks for it! and now, success attend me! [*Going.*

Ster. Hark'e, sir John! [SIR JOHN *returns.*] Not a word of the thirty thousand to my sister, sir John?

Sir John. Oh, I am dumb, I am dumb, sir. [*Going.*

Ster. You'll remember it is thirty thousand?

Sir John. To be sure I do.

Ster. But, sir John! one thing more. [SIR JOHN *returns.*] My lord must know nothing of this stroke of friendship between us.

Sir John. Not for the world. Let me alone! let me alone! [*Offering to go.*

Ster. [*Holding him.*] And when every thing is agreed, we must give each other a bond, to be held fast to the bargain.

Sir John. To be sure. A bond by all means! a bond, or whatever you please. [*Exit* SIR JOHN *hastily.*

Ster. I should have thought of more conditions—he's in a humour to give me every thing—Why, what mere children are your fellows of quality, that cry for a plaything one minute, and throw it by the next! as changeable as the weather, and as uncertain as the stocks! Special fellows to drive a bargain! and yet they are to take care of the interest of the nation truly! Here does this whirligig man of fashion offer to give up thirty thousand pounds in hard money, with as much indifference as if it was a china orange. By this mortgage, I shall have a hold on his *terra firma*; and, if he wants more money, as he certainly will—let him have children by my daughter or no, I shall have his whole estate in a net for the benefit of my family. Well, thus it is, that the children of citizens, who have acquired fortunes, prove persons of fashion; and thus it is, that persons of fashion, who have ruined their fortunes, reduce the next generation to cits. [*Exit* STER.

SCENE II.—*Changes to another apartment.*

Enter MRS HEIDELBERG, *and* MISS STERLING.

Miss Ster. This is your gentle-looking, soft-speaking, sweet-smiling, affable Miss Fanny for you!

Mrs Heid. My Miss Fanny! I disclaim her. With all her arts she never could insinuate herself into my good graces; and yet she has a way with her, that deceives man, woman, and child, except you and me, niece.

Miss Ster. O ay; she wants nothing but a crook in her hand, and a lamb under her arm, to be a perfect picture of innocence and simplicity.

Mrs Heid. Just as I was drawn at Amsterdam, when I went over to visit my husband's relations.

Miss Ster. And then, she's so mighty good to servants—'pray, John, do this—pray, Tom, do 'that—thank you, Jenny;' and then, so humble to her relations—'to be sure, papa!—as my aunt 'pleases—my sister knows best.'—But, with all her demureness and humility, she has no objection to be lady Melvil, it seems, nor to any wickedness that can make her so.

Mrs Heid. She lady Melvil! Compose yourself, niece! I'll ladyship her, indeed: a little creepin, cantin——She shan't be the better for a farden of my money. But tell me, child, how does this intriguing with sir John correspond with her partiality to Lovewell? I don't see a concatunation here.

Miss Ster. There I was deceived, madam. I took all their whisperings and stealing into corners to be the mere attraction of vulgar minds; but, behold! their private meetings were not to contrive their own insipid happiness, but to conspire against mine. But I know whence proceeds Mr Lovewell's resentment to me. I could not stoop to be familiar with my father's clerk, and so I have lost his interest.

Mrs Heid. My spirit to a T! My dear child! [*Kisses her.*] Mr Heidelberg lost his election for member of Parliament, because I would not demean myself to be slobbered about by drunken shoemakers, beastly cheesemongers, and greasy butchers and tallow-chandlers. However, niece, I can't help diffuring a little in opinion from you in this matter. My experunce and sagacity makes me still suspect, that there is something more between her and that Lovewell, notwithstanding this affair of sir John. I had my eye upon them the whole time of breakfast. Sir John, I observed, looked a little confounded, indeed, though I knew nothing of what had passed in the garden. You seemed to sit upon thorns, too: But Fanny and Mr Lovewell made quite another guess-sort of a figur, and were as perfect a pictur of two distrest lovers, as if it had been drawn by Raphael Angelo. As to sir John and Fanny, I want a matter of fact.

Miss Ster. Matter of fact, madam! Did not I come unexpectedly upon them? Was not sir John kneeling at her feet, and kissing her hand? Did not he look all love, and she all confusion? Is not that matter of fact? and did not sir John, the moment that papa was called out of the room to the lawyer-men, get up from breakfast,

and follow him immediately? And I warrant you that, by this time, he has made proposals to him to marry my sister———Oh, that some other person, an earl, or a duke, would make his addresses to me, that I might be revenged on this monster!

Mrs Heid. Be cool, child! you shall be lady Melvil, in spite of all their caballins, if it costs me ten thousand pounds to turn the scale. Sir John may apply to my brother, indeed; but I'll make them all know who governs in this fammaly.

Miss Ster. As I live, madam, yonder comes sir John! A base man! I can't endure the sight of him. I'll leave the room this instant.

[*Disordered.*

Mrs Heid. Poor thing! Well, retire to your own chamber, child; I'll give it him, I warrant you; and, by and by, I'll come and let you know all that has past between us.

Miss Ster. Pray do, madam. [*Looking back.*] A vile wretch! [*Exit in a rage.*

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

Sir John. Your most obedient humble servant, madam. [*Bowing very respectfully.*

Mrs Heid. Your servant, sir John.

[*Dropping a half curtsey, and pouting.*

Sir John. Miss Sterling's manner of quitting the room, on my approach, and the visible coolness of your behaviour to me, madam, convince me that she has acquainted you with what past this morning.

Mrs Heid. I am very sorry, sir John, to be made acquainted with any thing that should induce me to change the opinion which I would always wish to entertain of a person of qualaty.

[*Pouting.*

Sir John. It has always been my ambition to merit the best opinion from Mrs Heidelberg; and when she comes to weigh all circumstances, I flatter myself———

Mrs Heid. You do flatter yourself, if you imagine that I can approve of your behaviour to my niece, sir John. And give me leave to tell you, sir John, that you have been drawn into an action much beneath you, sir John; and that I look upon every injury offered to Miss Betty Sterling, as an affront to myself, sir John.

[*Warmly.*

Sir John. I would not offend you for the world, madam; but when I am influenced by a partiality for another, however ill-founded, I hope your discernment and good sense will think it rather a point of honour to renounce engagements, which I could not fulfil so strictly as I ought; and that you will excuse the change in my inclinations, since the new object, as well as the first, has the honour of being your niece, madam.

Mrs Heid. I disclaim her as a niece, sir John; Miss Sterling disclaims her as a sister, and the whole fammaly must disclaim her, for her monstrous basenss and treachery.

Sir John. Indeed, she has been guilty of none, madam. Her hand and her heart are, I am sure, entirely at the disposal of yourself and Mr Sterling.

Enter STERLING, *behind.*

And if you should not oppose my inclinations, I am sure of Mr Sterling's consent, madam.

Mrs Heid. Indeed!

Sir John. Quite certain, madam.

Ster. [*Behind.*] So! they seem to be coming to terms already. I may venture to make my appearance.

Mrs Heid. To marry Fanny?

[STERLING *advances by degrees.*

Sir John. Yes, madam.

Mrs Heid. My brother has given his consent, you say?

Sir John. In the most ample manner, with no other restriction than the failure of your concurrence, madam. [*Sees* STERLING.] Oh, here's Mr Sterling, who will confirm what I have told you.

Mrs Heid. What! have you consented to give up your own daughter in this manner, brother?

Ster. Give her up! no, not give her up, sister; only in case that you——Zounds, I am afraid you have said too much, sir John.

[*Apart to* SIR JOHN.

Mrs Heid. Yes, yes. I see now that it is true enough what my niece told me. You are all plottin and caballin against her. Pray, does lord Ogleby know of this affair?

Sir John. I have not yet made him acquainted with it, madam.

Mrs Heid. No, I warrant you. I thought so. And so his lordship and myself, truly, are not to be consulted till the last.

Ster. What! did not you consult my lord? Oh, fy for shame, sir John!

Sir John. Nay, but Mr Sterling——

Mrs Heid. We, who are the persons of most consequence and experunce in the two fammalies, are to know nothing of the mattur, 'till the whole is as good as concluded upon. But his lordship, I am sure, will have more generosaty than to countenance such a perceding. And I could not have expected such behaviour from a person of your qualaty, sir John. And, as for you, brother——

Ster. Nay, nay, but hear me, sister.

Mrs Heid. I am perfectly ashamed of you. Have you no spurrit? no more concern for the honour of our fammaly than to consent———

Ster. Consent! I consent! As I hope for mercy, I never gave my consent! Did I consent, sir John?

Sir John. Not absolutely, without Mrs Hei-

delberg's concurrence. But, in case of her approbation———

Ster. Ay, I grant you, if my sister approved. But that's quite another thing, you know———

[*To* MRS HEIDELBERG.

Mrs Heid. Your sister approve, indeed! I thought you knew her better, brother Sterling! What! approve of having your eldest daughter returned upon your hands, and exchanged for the younger! I am surprised how you could listen to such a scandalous proposal.

Ster. I tell you, I never did listen to it. Did not I say, that I would be entirely governed by my sister, sir John? And, unless she agreed to your marrying Fanny———

Mrs Heid. I agree to his marrying Fanny!—abominable! The man is absolutely out of his senses. Can't that wise head of yours foresee the consequence of all this, brother Sterling?—Will sir John take Fanny without a fortune?—No! After you have settled the largest part of your property on your youngest daughter, can there be an equal portion left for the eldest?—No! Does not this overturn the whole systum of the fammaly? Yes, yes, yes! You know I was always for my niece Betsey's marrying a person of the very first qualaty. That was my maxum: and, therefore, much the largest settlement was, of course, to be made upon her. As for Fanny, if she could, with a fortune of twenty or thirty thousand pounds, get a knight, or a member of parliament, or a rich common council-man for a husband, I thought it might do very well.

Sir John. But if a better match should offer itself, why should it not be accepted, madam?

Mrs Heid. What! at the expence of her elder sister? O fie, sir John! How could you bear to hear such an indignity, brother Sterling?

Ster. I! Nay, I shan't hear of it, I promise you———I can't hear of it, indeed, sir John.

Mrs Heid. But you have heard of it, brother Sterling.—You know you have; and sent sir John to propose it to me. But if you can give up your daughter, I shan't forsake my niece, I assure you. Ah! if my poor dear Mr Heidelberg and our sweet babes had been alive, he would not have behaved so.

Ster. Did I, sir John?——Nay, speak!——Bring me off, or we are ruined.

[*Apart to* SIR JOHN.

Sir John. Why, to be sure, to speak the truth—

Mrs Heid. To speak the truth, I'm ashamed of you both. But have a care what you are about, I tell you! have a care, I say. The counsellors are in the house, I hear; and if every thing is not settled to my liking, I'll have nothing more to say to you, if I live these hundred years.——I'll go over to Holland, and settle with Mr Vanderspracken, my poor husband's first cousin, and my own money shall never be the better for a farthing of my money. I promise you. [*Exit.*

Ster. I thought so. I knew she never would agree to it.

Sir John. 'Sdeath, how unfortunate! What can we do, Mr Sterling?

Ster. Nothing.

Sir John. What! must our agreement break off the moment it is made, then?

Ster. It can't be helped, sir John. The family, as I told you before, have great expectations from my sister; and if this matter proceeds, you hear yourself, that she threatens to leave us.—My brother Heidelberg was a warm man—a very warm man; and died worth a plumb at least; a plumb! ay, I warrant you, he died worth a plumb and a half.

Sir John. Well; but if I———

Ster. And then, my sister has three or four very good mortgages, a deal of money in the three per cents, and old South-Sea annuities; besides large concerns in the Dutch and French funds. The greatest part of all this she means to leave to our family.

Sir John. I can only say, sir———

Ster. Why, your offer of the difference of thirty thousand was very fair and handsome, to be sure, sir John.

Sir John. Nay, but I am even willing to———

Ster. Ay, but if I was to accept it against her will, I might lose above a hundred thousand; so, you see the balance is against you, sir John.

Sir John. But is there no way, do you think, of prevailing on Mrs Heidelberg to grant her consent?

Ster. I am afraid not.———However, when her passion is a little abated—for she's very passionate—you may try what can be done: but you must not use my name any more, sir John.

Sir John. Suppose I was to prevail on Lord Ogleby to apply to her, do you think that would have any influence over her?

Ster. I think he would be more likely to persuade her to it than any other person in the family. She has a great respect for Lord Ogleby. She loves a lord.

Sir John. I'll apply to him this very day.—And if he should prevail on Mrs Heidelberg, I may depend on your friendship, Mr Sterling?

Ster. Ay, ay; I shall be glad to oblige you, when it is in my power; but, as the account stands now, you see it is not upon the figures. And so, your servant, sir John. [*Exit.*

Sir John. What a situation am I in!—Breaking off with her whom I was bound by treaty to marry; rejected by the object of my affections; and embroiled with this turbulent woman, who governs the whole family. And yet opposition, instead of smothering, increases my inclination. I must have her. I'll apply immediately to lord Ogleby; and if he can but bring over the aunt to our party, her influence will overcome the scruples and delicacy of my dear Fanny, and I shall be the happiest of mankind. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A Room.*

Enter MR STERLING, MRS HEIDELBERG, *and* MISS STERLING.

Ster. What! will you send Fanny to town, sister?

Mrs Heid. To-morrow evening. I've given orders about it already.

Ster. Indeed!

Mrs Heid. Posatively.

Ster. But consider, sister, at such a time as this, what an odd appearance it will have.

Mrs Heid. Not half so odd as her behaviour, brother. This time was intended for happiness, and I'll keep no incendiaries here to destroy it. I insist on her going off to-morrow morning.

Ster. I'm afraid this is all your doing, Betsy.

Miss Ster. No, indeed, papa. My aunt knows that it is not. For all Fanny's baseness to me, I am sure I would not do or say any thing to hurt her with you or my aunt for the world.

Mrs Heid. Hold your tongue, Betsey; I will have my way. When she is packed off, every thing will go on as it should do.———Since they are at their intrigues, I'll let them see that we can act with vigour on our part; and the sending her out of the way, shall be the purliminary step to all the rest of my perceedings.

Ster. Well, but sister———

Mrs Heid. It does not signify talking, brother Sterling; for I'm resolved to be rid of her, and I will.——Come along, child. [*To* MISS STERLING.] The post-shay shall be at the door by six o'clock in the morning; and if Miss Fanny does not get into it, why, I will—and so there's an end of the matter. [*Bounces out with* MISS STERLING; *then returns.*] One word more, brother Sterling. I expect that you will take your eldest daughter in your hand, and make a formal complaint to Lord Ogleby, of sir John Melvil's behaviour.—Do this, brother;—shew a proper regard for the honour of your fammaly yourself, and I shall throw in my mite to the raising of it. If not——but now you know my mind. So act as you please, and take the consequences.

[*Exit.*

Ster. The devil's in the women for tyranny! ——Mothers, wives, mistresses, or sisters, they always will govern us.——As to my sister Heidelberg, she knows the strength of her purse, and domineers upon the credit of it.——'I will do this,' and 'you shall do that,' and 'you shall do t'other,—or else the fammaly sha'n't have a farden'—[*Mimicking.*]——So absolute with her money!—But, to say the truth, nothing but money can make us absolute; and so we must e'en make the best of her. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Garden.*

Enter LORD OGLEBY, *and* CANTON.

Lord Ogle. What! Mademoiselle Fanny to be sent away!—Why?—Wherefore?—What's the meaning of all this?

Can. Je ne sçais pas—I know nothing of it.

Lord Ogle. It can't be—it shan't be:—I protest against the measure. She's a fine girl, and I had much rather that the rest of the family were annihilated, than that she should leave us. ——Her vulgar father, that's the very abstract of 'Change-alley—the aunt, that's always endeavouring to be a fine lady—and the pert sister, for ever shewing that she is one, are horrid company indeed, and, without her, would be intolerable. Ah, la petite Fanchon! she's the thing: Isn't she, Canton?

Can. Dere is very good sympatie entre vous and dat young lady, mi lor.

Lord Ogle. I'll not be left among these Goths and Vandals, your Sterlings, your Heidelbergs, and Devilbergs——if she goes, I'll positively go, too.

Can. In de same post-chay, mi lor? You have no objection to dat, I believe, nor mademoiselle neither, too—ha, ha, ha!

Lord Ogle. Prithee, hold thy foolish tongue, Canton. Does thy Swiss stupidity imagine that I can see and talk with a fine girl without desires! My eyes are involuntarily attracted by beautiful objects—I fly as naturally to a fine girl——

Can. As de fine girl to you, my lor, ha, ha, ha! You alway fly togedere like un pair de pigeons—

Lord Ogle. Like un pair de pigeons—[*Mocks him.*]—Vous etes un sot, Mons. Canton—Thou art always dreaming of my intrigues, and never seest me badiner, but you suspect mischief, you old fool, you.

Can. I am fool, I confess, but not always fool in dat, my lor, he, he, he!

Lord Ogle. He, he, he! Thou art incorrigible, but thy absurdities amuse one. Thou art like my rappee here,—[*Takes out his box.*]—a most ridiculous superfluity, but a pinch of thee, now and then, is a most delicious treat.

Can. You do me great honeur, mi lor.

Lord Ogle. 'Tis fact, upon my soul! Thou art properly my cephalic snuff, and art no bad medicine against megrims, vertigoes, and profound thinking—Ha, ha, ha!

Can. Your flatterie, my lor, vil make me too prode.

Lord Ogle. The girl has some little partiality for me, to be sure: but prithee, Canton, is not that Miss Fanny yonder?

Can. [*Looking with a glass.*]—En verité, 'tis

she, my lor---'tis one of de pigeons---de pigeons d'amour!

Lord Ogle. Don't be ridiculous, you old monkey. [*Smiling.*

Can. I am monkee, I am ole, but I have eye, I have ear, and a little understand, now and den.

Lord Ogle. Taisez vous, bête.

Can. Elle vous attend, my lor. She vil make a love to you.

Lord Ogle. Will she? Have at her, then! A fine girl cannot oblige me more---Egad, I find myself a little enjoué---Come along, Cant! she is but in the next walk---but there is such a deal of this damned crinkum-crankum, as Sterling calls it, that one sees people for half an hour before one can get to them—Allons, Mons. Canton, allons, donc!

[*Exeunt, singing in French.*

SCENE III.---*Another part of the garden.*

Enter LOVEWELL *and* FANNY.

Love. My dear Fanny, I cannot bear your distress! It overcomes all my resolutions, and I am prepared for the discovery.

Fan. But how can it be effected before my departure?

Love. I'll tell you. Lord Ogleby seems to entertain a visible partiality for you; and, notwithstanding the peculiarities of his behaviour, I am sure that he is humane at the bottom. He is vain to an excess; but, withal, extremely good-natured, and would do any thing to recommend himself to a lady. Do you open the whole affair of our marriage to him immediately. It will come with more irresistible persuasion from you, than from myself; and I doubt not but you'll gain his friendship and protection at once. His influence and authority will put an end to sir John's solicitations, remove your aunt's and sister's unkindness and suspicions, and, I hope, reconcile your father and the whole family to our marriage.

Fan. Heaven grant it! Where is my lord?

Love. I have heard him and Canton, since dinner, singing French songs under the great walnut tree, by the parlour-door. If you meet with him in the garden, you may disclose the whole immediately.

Fan. Dreadful as the task is, I'll do it. Any thing is better than this continual anxiety.

Love. By that time the discovery is made, I will appear to second you. Ha! here comes my lord. Now, my dear Fanny, summon up all your spirits, plead our cause powerfully, and be sure of success. [*Going.*

Fan. Ah, don't leave me!

Love. Nay, you must let me.

Fan. Well, since it must be so, I'll obey you, if I have the power. Oh, Lovewell!

Love. Consider, our situation is very critical. To-morrow morning is fixed for your departure, and, if we lose this opportunity, we may wish in vain for another. He approaches---I must retire. Speak, my dear Fanny; speak, and make us happy!

[*Exit* LOVEWELL.

Fan. Good Heaven! What a situation am I in! What shall I do? What shall I say to him? I am all confusion.

Enter LORD OGLEBY *and* CANTON.

Lord Ogle. To see so much beauty so solitary, madam, is a satire upon mankind, and 'tis fortunate that one man has broke in upon your reverie, for the credit of our sex. I see one, madam; for poor Canton here, from age and infirmities, stands for nothing.

Can. Noting at all, indeed.

Fan. Your lordship does me great honour. I had a favour to request, my lord!

Lord Ogle. A favour, madam! To be honoured with your commands, is an inexpressible favour done to me, madam.

Fan. If your lordship could indulge me with the honour of a moment's---What is the matter with me? [*Aside.*

Lord Ogle. The girl's confused!---he!---here's something in the wind, faith---I'll have a tete-à-tete with her---Allez vous en!

[*To* CANTON.

Can. I go—Ah, pauvre Mademoiselle! my lor, have pitie upon the poor pigeone!

Lord Ogle. I'll knock you down, Cant. if you're impertinent. [*Smiling.*

Can. Den I mus away—[*Shuffles along.*]—You are mosh please, for all dat.

[*Aside, and exit.*

Fan. I shall sink with apprehension. [*Aside.*

Lord Ogle. What a sweet girl——she's a civilized being, and atones for the barbarism of the rest of the family.

Fan. My lord!—I———

[*She curtsies, and blushes.*

Lord Ogle. [*Addressing her.*]—I look upon it, madam, to be one of the luckiest circumstances of my life, that I have this moment the honour of receiving your commands, and the satisfaction of confirming, with my tongue, what my eyes perhaps, have but too weakly expressed—that I am literally—the humblest of your servants.

Fan. I think myself greatly honoured by your lordship's partiality to me; but it distresses me, that I am obliged, in my present situation, to apply to it for protection.

Lord Ogle. I am happy in your distress, madam, because it gives me an opportunity to shew my zeal. Beauty, to me, is a religion in which I was born and bred a bigot, and would die a martyr. I am in tolerable spirits, faith!

[*Aside.*

Fan. There is not, perhaps, at this moment, a more distressed creature than myself. Action,

duty, hope, despair, and a thousand different sentiments, are struggling in my bosom; and even the presence of your lordship, to whom I have flown for protection, adds to my perplexity.

Lord Ogle. Does it, madam?—Venus forbid! —My old fault; the devil's in me, I think, for perplexing young women.—[*Aside, and smiling.*] —Take courage, madam! dear Miss Fanny, explain. You have a powerful advocate in my breast, I assure you—My heart, madam—I am attached to you by all the laws of sympathy and delicacy. By my honour, I am!

Fan. Then I will venture to unburthen my mind—Sir John Melvil, my lord, by the most misplaced and mistimed declaration of affection for me, has made me the unhappiest of women.

Lord Ogle. How, madam! Has sir John made his addresses to you?

Fan. He has, my lord, in the strongest terms. But I hope it is needless to say, that my duty to my father, love to my sister, and regard to the whole family, as well as the great respect I entertain for your lordship, [*Curtseying.*] made me shudder at his addresses.

Lord Ogle. Charming girl! Proceed, my dear Miss Fanny, proceed!

Fan. In a moment——give me leave, my lord! ——But if what I have to disclose should be received with anger or displeasure———

Lord Ogle. Impossible, by all the tender powers!—Speak, I beseech you, or I shall divine the cause before you utter it.

Fan. Then, my lord, sir John's addresses are not only shocking to me in themselves, but are more particularly disagreeable to me at this time —as—as— [*Hesitating.*

Lord Ogle. As what, madam?

Fan. As—pardon my confusion—I am entirely devoted to another.

Lord Ogle. If this is not plain, the devil's in it——[*Aside.*] But tell me, my dear Miss Fanny, for I must know; tell me the how, the when, and the where———Tell me———

Enter CANTON *hastily.*

Can. My lor, my lor, my lor!

Lord Ogle. Damn your Swiss impertinence! how durst you interrupt me in the most critical melting moment that ever love and beauty honoured me with?

Can. I demande pardonne, my lor! Sir John Melvil, my lor, sent me to beg you do him de honeur to speak a little to your lordship.

Lord Ogle. I'm not at leisure—I am busy—Get away, you stupid old dog, you Swiss rascal, or I'll———

Can. Fort bien, my lor.

[CANTON *goes out on tiptoe.*

Lord Ogle. By the laws of gallantry, madam, this interruption should be death: but, as no punishment ought to disturb the triumph of the softer passions, the criminal is pardoned and dismissed. Let us return, madam, to the highest luxury of exalted minds—a declaration of love from the lips of beauty.

Fan. The entrance of a third person has a little relieved me, but I cannot go through with it; and yet I must open my heart with a discovery, or it will break with its burthen.

Lord Ogle. What passion in her eyes! I am alarmed to agitation! [*Aside.*] I presume, madam, (and as you have flattered me, by making me a party concerned, I hope you'll excuse the presumption) that———

Fan. Do you excuse my making you a party concerned, my lord, and let me interest your heart in my behalf, as my future happiness or misery in a great measure depend—

Lord Ogle. Upon me, madam?

Fan. Upon you, my lord. [*Sighs.*

Lord Ogle. There's no standing this. I have caught the infection—her tenderness dissolves me. [*Sighs.*

Fan. And should you too severely judge of a rash action which passion prompted, and modesty has long concealed——

Lord Ogle. [*Taking her hand.*] Thou amiable creature, command my heart, for it is vanquished! Speak but thy virtuous wishes, and enjoy them.

Fan. I cannot, my lord; indeed, I cannot. Mr Lovewell must tell you my distresses; and when you know them, pity and protect me.

[*Exit in tears.*

Lord Ogle. How the devil could I bring her to this? It is too much—too much—I can't bear it—I must give way to this amiable weakness. [*Wipes his eyes.*] My heart overflows with sympathy, and I feel every tenderness I have inspired. [*Stifles a tear.*] How blind have I been to the desolation I have made! How could I possibly imagine that a little partial attention and tender civilities to this young creature should have gathered to this burst of passion! Can I be a man, and withstand it? No—I'll sacrifice the whole sex to her. But here comes the father, quite apropos. I'll open the matter immediately, settle the business with him, and take the sweet girl down to Ogleby House to-morrow morning. But what the devil! Miss Sterling, too! What mischief's in the wind now?

Enter MR STERLING *and* MISS STERLING.

Ster. My lord, your servant! I am attending my daughter here upon rather a disagreeable affair. Speak to his lordship, Betsey.

Lord Ogle. Your eyes, Miss Sterling—for I always read the eyes of a young lady—betray some little emotion. What are your commands, madam?

Miss Ster. I have but too much cause for my emotion, my lord!

Lord Ogle. I cannot commend my kinsman's behaviour, madam. He has behaved like a false

knight, I must confess. I have heard of his apostasy. Miss Fanny has informed me of it.

Miss Ster. Miss Fanny's baseness has been the cause of sir John's inconstancy.

Lord Ogle. Nay, now, my dear Miss Sterling, your passion transports you too far. Sir John may have entertained a passion for Miss Fanny; but, believe me, my dear Miss Sterling, believe me, Miss Fanny has no passion for sir John. She has a passion, indeed, a most tender passion. She has opened her whole soul to me, and I know where her affections are placed.

[*Conceitedly.*

Miss Ster. Not upon Mr Lovewell, my lord; for I have great reason to think that her seeming attachment to him, is, by his consent, made use of as a blind to cover her designs upon sir John.

Lord Ogle. Lovewell! No, poor lad! she does not think of him. [*Smiling.*

Miss Ster. Have a care, my lord, that both the families are not made the dupes of sir John's artifice, and my sister's dissimulation! You don't know her; indeed, my lord, you don't know her; a base, insinuating, perfidious—It is too much—She has been beforehand with me, I perceive. Such unnatural behaviour to me! But since I see I can have no redress, I am resolved that some way or other I will have revenge. [*Exit.*

Ster. This is foolish work, my lord!

Lord Ogle. I have too much sensibility to bear the tears of beauty.

Ster. It is touching, indeed, my lord; and very moving for a father.

Lord Ogle. To be sure, sir! You must be distressed beyond measure! Wherefore, to divert your too exquisite feeling, suppose we change the subject, and proceed to business.

Ster. With all my heart, my lord.

Lord Ogle. You see, Mr Sterling, we can make no union in our families by the proposed marriage.

Ster. And I am very sorry to see it, my lord.

Lord Ogle. Have you set your heart upon being allied to our house, Mr Sterling?

Ster. 'Tis my only wish at present, my omnium, as I may call it.

Lord Ogle. Your wishes shall be fulfilled.

Ster. Shall they, my lord! but how—how?

Lord Ogle. I'll marry in your family.

Ster. What! my sister Heidelberg?

Lord Ogle. You throw me into a cold sweat, Mr Sterling! No, not your sister; but your daughter.

Ster. My daughter!

Lord Ogle. Fanny!—Now the murder's out!

Ster. What! you, my lord?

Lord Ogle. Yes, I; I, Mr Sterling!

Ster. No, no, my lord; that's too much.

[*Smiling.*

Lord Ogle. Too much! I don't comprehend you.

Ster. What, you, my lord, marry my Fanny! Bless me, what will the folks say?

Lord Ogle. Why, what will they say!

Ster. That you're a bold man, my lord; that's all.

Lord Ogle. Mr Sterling, this may be city wit, for aught I know. Do you court my alliance?

Ster. To be sure, my lord.

Lord Ogle. Then I'll explain—My nephew won't marry your eldest daughter: nor I neither ——Your youngest daughter won't marry him: I will marry your youngest daughter.

Ster. What! with a youngest daughter's fortune, my lord?

Lord Ogle. With any fortune, or no fortune at all, sir. Love is the idol of my heart, and the demon, Interest, sinks before him. So, sir, as I said before, I will marry your youngest daughter; your youngest daughter will marry me.

Ster. Who told you so, my lord?

Lord Ogle. Her own sweet self, sir.

Ster. Indeed!

Lord Ogle. Yes, sir; our affection is mutual; your advantage double and treble; your daughter will be a countess directly—I shall be the happiest of beings; and you'll be father to an earl instead of a baronet.

Ster. But what will my sister say? and my daughter?

Lord Ogle. I'll manage that matter; nay, if they won't consent, I'll run away with your daughter in spite of you.

Ster. Well said, my lord! your spirit's good; I wish you had my constitution! but if you'll venture, I have no objection, if my sister has none.

Lord Ogle. I'll answer for your sister, sir—Apropos! the lawyers are in the house. I'll have articles drawn, and the whole affair concluded to-morrow morning.

Ster. Very well! and I'll dispatch Lovewell to London immediately for some fresh papers I shall want, and I shall leave you to manage matters with my sister. You must excuse me, my lord, but I can't help laughing at the match—He, he, he! what will the folks say? [*Exit.*

Lord Ogle. What a fellow am I going to make a father of? He has no more feeling than the post in his warehouse—But Fanny's virtues tune me to rapture again, and I won't think of the rest of the family.

Enter LOVEWELL, *hastily.*

Love. I beg your lordship's pardon, my lord: are you alone, my lord?

Lord Ogle. No, my lord, I am not alone; I am in company, the best company.

Love. My lord!

Lord Ogle. I never was in such exquisite enchanting company since my heart first conceived, or my senses tasted pleasure.

Love. Where are they, my lord?

[*Looking about.*

Lord Ogle. In my mind, sir.

Love. What company have you there, my lord? [*Smiling.*

Lord Ogle. My own ideas, sir, which so crowd upon my imagination, and kindle in it such a delirium of ecstacy, that wit, wine, music, poetry, all combined, and each perfection, are but mere mortal shadows of my felicity.

Love. I see that your lordship is happy, and I rejoice at it.

Lord Ogle. You shall rejoice at it, sir; my felicity shall not selfishly be confined, but shall spread its influence to the whole circle of my friends. I need not say, Lovewell, that you shall have your share of it.

Love. Shall I, my lord?—Then I understand you; you have heard—Miss Fanny has informed you———

Lord Ogle. She has; I have heard, and she shall be happy; 'tis determined.

Love. Then I have reached the summit of my wishes. And will your lordship pardon the folly?

Lord Ogle. O yes; poor creature, how could she help it? 'Twas unavoidable—Fate and necessity.

Love. It was, indeed, my lord. Your kindness distracts me.

Lord Ogle. And so did the poor girl, faith!

Love. She trembled to disclose the secret, and declare her affections?

Lord Ogle. The world, I believe, will not think her affections ill placed.

Love. [*Bowing.*] You are too good, my lord. And do you really excuse the rashness of the action?

Lord Ogle. From my very soul, Lovewell.

Love. Your generosity overpowers me. [*Bowing.*] I was afraid of her meeting with a cold reception.

Lord Ogle. More fool you, then.

'Who pleads her cause with never-failing beauty,
'Here finds a full redress.' [*Strikes his breast.*

She's a fine girl, Lovewell.

Love. Her beauty, my lord, is her least merit. She has an understanding———

Lord Ogle. Her choice convinces me of that.

Love. [*Bowing.*] That's your lordship's goodness. Her choice was a disinterested one.

Lord Ogle. No, no; not altogether; it began with interest, and ended in passion.

Love. Indeed, my lord, if you were acquainted with her goodness of heart, and generosity of mind, as well as you are acquainted with the inferior beauties of her face and person———

Lord Ogle. I am so perfectly convinced of their existence, and so totally of your mind, touching every amiable particular of that sweet girl, that, were it not for the cold unfeeling impediments of the law, I would marry her to-morrow morning.

Love. My lord!

Lord Ogle. I would, by all that's honourable in man, and amiable in woman.

Love. Marry her!—What do you mean, my lord!

Lord Ogle. Miss Fanny Sterling that is; the countess of Ogleby that shall be.

Love. I am astonished!

Lord Ogle. Why, could you expect less from me?

Love. I did not expect this, my lord.

Lord Ogle. Trade and accounts have destroyed your feeling.

Love. No, indeed, my lord. [*Sighs.*

Lord Ogle. The moment that love and pity entered my breast, I was resolved to plunge into matrimony, and shorten the girl's tortures—I never do any thing by halves; do I, Lovewell?

Love. No, indeed, my lord. [*Sighs.*] What an accident!

Lord Ogle. What's the matter, Lovewell? thou seem'st to have lost thy faculties! Why don't you wish me joy, man?

Love. O, I do, my lord. [*Sighs.*

Lord Ogle. She said that you would explain what she had not power to utter; but I wanted no interpreter for the language of love.

Love. But has your lordship considered the consequences of your resolution!

Lord Ogle. No, sir, I am above consideration, when my desires are kindled.

Love. But, consider the consequences, my lord, to your nephew, sir John.

Lord Ogle. Sir John has considered no consequences himself, Mr Lovewell.

Love. Mr Sterling, my lord, will certainly refuse his daughter to sir John.

Lord Ogle. Sir John has already refused Mr Sterling's daughter.

Love. But what will become of Miss Sterling, my lord?

Lord Ogle. What's that to you?——You may have her, if you will. I depend upon Mr Sterling's city-philosophy, to be reconciled to lord Ogleby's being his son-in-law, instead of sir John Melvil, baronet. Don't you think that your master may be brought to that, without having recourse to his calculations! Eh, Lovewell?

Love. But, my lord, that is not the question.

Lord Ogle. Whatever is the question, I'll tell you my answer.——I am in love with a fine girl, whom I resolve to marry.

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

What news with you, sir John?—You look all hurry and impatience—like a messenger after a battle.

Sir John. After a battle, indeed, my lord! I have this day had a severe engagement, and, wanting your lordship as an auxiliary, I have at last mustered up resolution to declare what my duty to you and to myself have demanded from me some time.

Lord Ogle. To the business, then, and be as concise as possible, for I am upon the wing—eh, Lovewell? [*He smiles, and* LOVEWELL *bows.*

Sir John. I find 'tis in vain, my lord, to struggle against the force of inclination.

Lord Ogle. Very true, nephew; I am your witness, and will second the motion——shan't I, Lovewell? [*Smiles, and* LOVEWELL *bows.*

Sir John. Your lordship's generosity encourages me to tell you, that I cannot marry Miss Sterling.

Lord Ogle. I am not at all surprised at it—she's a bitter potion, that's the truth of it; but as you were to swallow it, and not I, it was your business, and not mine——Any thing more?

Sir John. But this, my lord; that I may be permitted to make my addresses to the other sister.

Lord Ogle. O yes; by all means——have you any hopes there, nephew?—Do you think he'll succeed, Lovewell?

[*Smiles, and winks at* LOVEWELL.

Love. I think not, my lord. [*Gravely.*

Lord Ogle. I think so, too; but let the fool try.

Sir John. Will your lordship favour me with your good offices to remove the chief obstacle to the match, the repugnance of Mrs Heidelberg?

Lord Ogle. Mrs Heidelberg! Had not you better begin with the young lady first? It will save you a great deal of trouble: won't it, Lovewell? [*Smiles.*] But do what you please, it will be the same thing to me: won't it, Lovewell? [*Conceitedly.*] Why don't you laugh at him?

Love. I do, my lord. [*Forces a smile.*

Sir John. And your lordship will endeavour to prevail on Mrs Heidelberg to consent to my marriage with Miss Fanny?

Lord Ogle. I'll speak to Mrs Heidelberg about the adorable Fanny as soon as possible.

Sir John. Your generosity transports me!

Lord Ogle. Poor fellow, what a dupe! he little thinks who's in possession of the town.

[*Aside.*

Sir John. And your lordship is not in the least offended at this seeming inconstancy?

Lord Ogle. Not in the least. Miss Fanny's charms will even excuse infidelity. I look upon women as the *feræ naturæ*—lawful game—and every man who is qualified, has a natural right to pursue them;—Lovewell as well as you, and I as well as either of you. Every man shall do his best, without offence to any——what say you, kinsmen?

Sir John. You have made me happy, my lord.

Love. And me, I assure you, my lord!

Lord Ogle. And I am superlatively so—*allons donc!* to horse and away, boys!—you to your affairs, and I to mine——*suivons l'amour.* [*Sings.*

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—FANNY'S *apartment.*

Enter LOVEWELL *and* FANNY, *followed by* BETTY.

Fan. WHY did you come so soon, Mr Lovewell? the family is not yet in bed, and Betty certainly heard somebody listening near the chamber-door.

Bet. My mistress is right, sir! evil spirits are abroad; and I am sure you are both too good, not to expect mischief from them.

Love. But who can be so curious, or so wicked?

Bet. I think we have wickedness and curiosity enough in this family, sir, to expect the worst.

Fan. I do expect the worst.——Prithee, Betty, return to the outward door, and listen if you hear any body in the gallery; and let us know directly.

Bet. I warrant you, madam—the lord bless you both! [*Exit* BET.

Fan. What did my father want with you this evening?

Love. He gave me the key of his closet, with orders to bring from London some papers relating to lord Ogleby.

Fan. And why did you not obey him?

Love. Because I am certain that his lordship has opened his heart to him about you, and those papers are wanted merely on that account—but as we shall discover all to-morrow, there will be no occasion for them, and it would be idle in me to go.

Fan. Hark!—hark! bless me, how I tremble!——I feel the terrors of guilt——indeed, Mr Lovewell, this is too much for me.

Love. And for me, too, my sweet Fanny! Your apprehensions make a coward of me. But what can alarm you? your aunt and sister are in their chambers, and you have nothing to fear from the rest of the family.

Fan. I fear every body, and every thing, and every moment——My mind is in continual agitation and dread; indeed, Mr Lovewell, this situation may have very unhappy consequences.

[*Weeps.*

Love. But it shan't——I would rather tell our story this moment to all the house, and run the risk of maintaining you by the hardest labour, than suffer you to remain in this dangerous perplexity.—What! shall I sacrifice all my best hopes and affections, in your dear health and safety, for the mean, and, in such case, the meanest consideration—of your fortune!—Were we to be abandoned by all our relations, we have that in our hearts and minds will weigh against the most affluent circumstances. I should not have proposed the secrecy of our marriage, but

for your sake; and with hopes that the most generous sacrifice you have made to love and me, might be less injurious to you, by waiting a lucky moment of reconciliation.

Fan. Hush! hush! for Heaven's sake, my dear Lovewell, don't be so warm! your generosity gets the better of your prudence; you will be heard, and we shall be discovered.——I am satisfied—indeed I am———Excuse this weakness, this delicacy, this what you will.——My mind's at peace—indeed it is—think no more of it, if you love me!

Love. That one word has charmed me, as it always does, to the most implicit obedience: it would be the worst of ingratitude in me to distress you a moment. [*Kisses her.*

Re-enter BETTY.

Bet. [*In a low voice.*] I'm sorry to disturb you.

Fan. Ha! what's the matter?

Love. Have you heard any body?

Bet. Yes, yes, I have; and they have heard you, too, or I'm mistaken—if they had seen you, too, we should have been in a fine quandary!

Fan. Prithee, don't prate now, Betty!

Love. What did you hear?

Bet. I was preparing myself, as usual, to take me a little nap———

Love. A nap!

Bet. Yes, sir, a nap; for I watch much better so than wide awake; and, when I had wrapped this handkerchief round my head, for fear of the ear-ach from the key-hole, I thought I heard a kind of a sort of a buzzing, which I first took for a gnat, and shook my head two or three times, and went so with my hand.

Fan. Well—well—and so———

Bet. And so, madam, when I heard Mr Lovewell a little loud, I heard the buzzing louder, too——and pulling off my handkerchief softly, I could hear this sort of noise———

[*Makes an indistinct sort of noise, like speaking.*

Fan. Well, and what did they say?

Bet. O! I could not understand a word of what was said.

Love. The outward door is locked?

Bet. Yes; and I bolted it, too, for fear of the worst.

Fan. Why did you? they must have heard you, if they were near.

Bet. And I did it on purpose, madam, and coughed a little, too, that they might not hear Mr Lovewell's voice—when I was silent, they were silent, and so I came to tell you.

Fan. What shall we do?

Love. Fear nothing; we know the worst; it will only bring on our catastrophe a little too soon—but Betty might fancy this noise—she's in the conspiracy, and can make a man a mouse at any time.

Bet. I can distinguish a man from a mouse as well as my betters—I'm sorry you think so ill of me, sir.

Fan. He compliments you; don't be a fool!—Now you have set her tongue a running, she'll mutter for an hour. [*To* LOVEWELL.] I'll go and hearken myself. [*Exit* FAN.

Bet. I'll turn my back upon no girl for sincerity and service. [*Half aside, and muttering.*

Love. Thou art the first in the world for both; and I will reward you soon, Betty, for one and the other.

Bet. I am not mercenary, neither—I can live on a little, with a good carreter.

Re-enter FANNY.

Fan. All seems quiet—suppose, my dear, you go to your own room—I shall be much easier then—and to-morrow we will be prepared for the discovery.

Bet. You may discover, if you please; but, for my part, I shall still be secret.

[*Half aside, and muttering.*

Love. Should I leave you now, if they still are upon the watch, we shall lose the advantage of our delay. Besides, we should consult upon to-morrow's business. Let Betty go to her own room, and lock the outward door after her; we can fasten this; and when she thinks all safe, she may return and let me out as usual.

Bet. Shall I, madam?

Fan. Do! let me have my way to-night, and you shall command me ever after. I would not have you surprised here for the world. Pray, leave me! I shall be quite myself again, if you will oblige me.

Love. I live only to oblige you, my sweet Fanny! I'll be gone this moment. [*Going.*

Fan. Let us listen first at the door, that you may not be intercepted. Betty shall go first, and, if they lay hold of her———

Bet. They'll have the wrong sow by the ear, I can tell them that. [*Going hastily.*

Fan. Softly—softly—Betty! don't venture out, if you hear a noise. Softly, I beg of you! see, Mr Lovewell, the effects of indiscretion!

Love. But love, Fanny, makes amends for all.

[*Exeunt all, softly.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to a gallery, which leads to several bed-chambers.*

Enter MISS STERLING, *leading* MRS HEIDELBERG *in a night-cap.*

Miss Ster. This way, dear madam; and then I'll tell you all.

Mrs Heid. Nay, but niece—consider a little ——don't drag me out this figure; let me put on my fly-cap!—if any of my lord's fammaly, or the counsellors at law, should be stirring, I should be perdigus disconcerted.

Miss Ster. But, my dear madam, a moment is an age, in my situation. I am sure my sister has been plotting my disgrace and ruin in that chamber——O! she's all craft and wickedness.

Mrs Heid. Well, but softly, Betsey!—you are all in emotion—your mind is too much flustrated—you can neither eat, nor drink, nor take your natural rest—compose yourself, child; if we are not as warysome as they are wicked, we shall disgrace ourselves and the whole fammaly.

Miss Ster. We are disgraced already, madam. Sir John Melvil has forsaken me; my lord cares for nobody but himself; or, if any body, it is my sister; my father, for the sake of a better bargain, would marry me to a 'Change broker; so that if you, madam, don't continue my friend—if you forsake me—if I am to lose my best hopes and consolation—in your tenderness—and affections—I had better—at once—give up the matter—and let my sister enjoy—the fruits of her treachery—trample with scorn upon the rights of her elder sister, the will of the best of aunts and the weakness of a too interested father.

[*She pretends to be bursting into tears all this speech.*

Mrs Heid. Don't, Betsey—keep up your spurrit—I hate whimpering—I am your friend—depend upon me in every particular—but be composed, and tell me what new mischief you have discovered?

Miss Ster. I had no desire to sleep, and would not undress myself, knowing that my Machiavel sister would not rest till she had broke my heart:—I was so uneasy that I could not stay in my room; but when I thought that all the house was quiet, I sent my maid to discover what was going forward; she immediately came back, and told me that they were in high consultation; that she had heard only, for it was in the dark, my sister's maid conduct sir John Melvil to her mistress, and then lock the door.

Mrs Heid. And how did you conduct yourself in this dainmna?

Miss Ster. I returned with her, and could hear a man's voice, though nothing that they said, distinctly; and you may depend upon it, that sir John is now in that room, that they have settled the matter, and will run away together before morning, if we don't prevent them.

Mrs Heid. Why, the brazen slut! she has got her sister's husband (that is to be) locked up in her chamber! at night, too!—I tremble at the thoughts!

Miss Ster. Hush, madam! I hear something.

Mrs Heid. You frighten me—let me put on my fly-cap——I would not be seen in this figur for the world.

Miss Ster. 'Tis dark, madam; you can't be seen.

Mrs Heid. I protest there's a candle coming, and a man, too!

Miss Ster. Nothing but servants; let us retire a moment! [*They retire.*

Enter BRUSH, *half drunk, laying hold of the Chamber-maid, who has a candle in her hand.*

Cham. Be quiet, Mr Brush; I shall drop down with terror!

Brush. But my sweet, and most amiable chambermaid, if you have no love, you may hearken to a little reason; that cannot possibly do your virtue any harm.

Cham. But you may do me harm, Mr Brush, and a great deal of harm, too; pray let me go; I am ruined if they hear you; I tremble like an asp.

Brush. But they shan't hear us; and if you have a mind to be ruined, it shall be the making of your fortune, you little slut, you! therefore, I say it again, if you have no love, hear a little reason!

Cham. I wonder at your impurence, Mr Brush, to use me in this manner; this is not the way to keep me company, I assure you. You are a town-rake, I see; and now you are a little in liquor, you fear nothing.

Brush. Nothing, by Heavens, but your frowns, most amiable chamber-maid! I am a little electrified, that's the truth on't; I am not used to drink port, and your master's is so heady, that a pint of it oversets a claret-drinker.

Cham. Don't be rude! bless me!—I shall be ruined—what will become of me?

Brush. I'll take care of you, by all that's honourable!

Cham. You are a base man to use me so—I'll cry out, if you don't let me go. That is Miss Sterling's chamber, that Miss Fanny's, and that Madam Heidelberg's.

Brush. And that my lord Ogleby's, and that my lady What-d'ye-call-'em's: I don't mind such folks when I'm sober, much less when I am whimsical—rather above that, too.

Cham. More shame for you, Mr Brush!—you terrify me—you have no modesty.

Brush. O, but I have, my sweet spider-brusher!—for instance; I reverence Miss Fanny—she's a most delicious morsel, and fit for a prince.——With all my horrors of matrimony, I could marry her myself—but for her sister——

Miss Ster. There, there, madam, all in a story!

Cham. Bless me, Mr Brush!—I heard something!

Brush. Rats, I suppose, that are gnawing the old timbers of this execrable old dungeon—If it was mine, I would pull it down, and fill your fine canal up with the rubbish; and then I should get rid of two damned things at once.

Cham. Law! law! how you blaspheme!—we shall have the house upon our heads for it.

Brush. No, no; it will last our time—but, as I was saying, the eldest sister—Miss Jezebel——

Cham. Is a fine young lady, for all your evil tongue.

Brush. No——we have smoaked her already; and unless she marries our old Swiss, she can have none of us——no, no, she won't do—we are a little too nice.

Cham. You're a monstrous rake, Mr Brush, and don't care what you say.

Brush. Why, for that matter, my dear, I am a little inclined to mischief; and if you don't have pity upon me, I will break open that door, and ravish Mrs Heidelberg.

Mrs Heid. [*Coming forward.*] There's no bearing this—you profligate monster!

Cham. Ha! I am undone!

Brush. Zounds! here she is, by all that's monstrous! [*Runs off.*

Miss Ster. A fine discourse you have had with that fellow!

Mrs Heid. And a fine time of night it is to be here with that drunken monster!

Miss Ster. What have you to say for yourself?

Cham. I can say nothing.—I'm so frightened, and so ashamed—but indeed I am vartuous—I am vartuous, indeed.

Mrs Heid. Well, well——don't tremble so; but, tell us what you know of this horrable plot, here.

Miss Ster. We'll forgive you, if you'll discover all.

Cham. Why, madam—don't let me betray my fellow servants——I shan't sleep in my bed, if I do.

Mrs Heid. Then you shall sleep somewhere else to-morrow night.

Cham. O dear! what shall I do!

Mrs Heid. Tell us this moment, or I'll turn you out of doors directly.

Cham. Why, our butler has been treating us below in his pantry——Mr Brush forced us to make a kind of a holiday night of it.

Miss Ster. Holiday! for what?

Cham. Nay, I only made one.

Miss Ster. Well, well; but upon what account?

Cham. Because, as how, madam, there was a change in the family, they said——that his honour, sir John, was to marry Miss Fanny, instead of your ladyship.

Miss Ster. And so you make a holiday for that?—Very fine!

Cham. I did not make it, madam.

Mrs Heid. But do you know nothing of sir John's being to run away with Miss Fanny to-night?

Cham. No, indeed, madam.

Miss Ster. Nor of his being now locked up in my sister's chamber?

Cham. No, as I hope for marcy, madam.

Mrs Heid. Well, I'll put an end to all this directly——do you run to my brother Sterling——

Cham. Now, madam!—'Tis so very late, madam——

Mrs Heid. I don't care how late it is. Tell him there are thieves in the house——that the house is on fire——tell him to come here immediately——go, I say!

Cham. I will, I will, though I'm frightened out of my wits. [*Exit.*

Mrs Heid. Do you watch here, my dear; and I'll put myself in order, to face them. We'll plot them, and counter-plot them, too.

[*Exit into her chamber.*

Miss Ster. I have as much pleasure in this revenge, as in being made a countess.—Ha! they are unlocking the door.——Now for it!

[*Retires.*

FANNY's *door is unlocked, and* BETTY *comes out with a candle.* MISS STERLING *approaches her.*

Betty. [*Calling within.*] Sir, sir! now's your time—all's clear. [*Seeing* MISS STERLING.]——Stay, stay—not yet—we are watched.

Miss Ster. And so you are, madam Betty.

[MISS STERLING *lays hold of her, while* BETTY *locks the door, and puts the key into her pocket.*]

Bet. [*Turning round.*] What's the matter, madam?

Miss Ster. Nay, that you shall tell my father and aunt, madam.

Bet. I am no tell-tale, madam, and no thief; they'll get nothing from me.

Miss Ster. You have a great deal of courage, Betty; and, considering the secrets you have to keep, you have occasion for it.

Bet. My mistress shall never repent her good opinion of me, ma'am.

Enter MR STERLING.

Ster. What's all this? What's the matter? Why am I disturbed in this manner?

Miss Ster. This creature, and my distresses, sir, will explain the matter.

Re-enter MRS HEIDELBERG, *with another head-dress.*

Mrs Heid. Now I'm prepared for the rancounter. Well, brother, have you heard of this scene of wickedness?

Ster. Not I—but what is it? Speak. I was got into my little closet, all the lawyers were in bed, and I had almost lost my senses in the confusion of lord Ogleby's mortgages, when I was alarmed with a foolish girl, who could hardly speak; and whether it's fire, or thieves, or murder, or a rape, I'm quite in the dark.

Mrs Heid. No, no; there's no rape, brother! all parties are willing, I believe.

Miss Ster. Who's in that chamber?

[*Detaining* BETTY, *who seemed to be stealing away.*]

Bet. My mistress.

Miss Ster. And who's with your mistress?

Bet. Why, who should there be?

Miss Ster. Open the door, then, and let us see.

Bet. The door is open, madam. [MISS STERLING *goes to the door.*] I'll sooner die than peach. [*Exit hastily.*

Miss Ster. The door is locked; and she has got the key in her pocket.

Mrs Heid. There's impudence, brother! piping hot from your daughter Fanny's school!

Ster. But zounds! what is all this about? You tell me of a sum total, and you don't produce the particulars.

Mrs Heid. Sir John Melvil is lock up in your daughter's bed-chamber———There is the particulars.

Ster. The devil he is! That's bad.

Miss Ster. And he has been there some time, too.

Ster. Ditto!

Mrs Heid. Ditto! worse and worse, I say.—I'll raise the house, and expose him to my lord, and the whole fammaly.

Ster. By no means! we shall expose ourselves, sister! the best way is to insure privately—let me alone! I'll make him marry her to-morrow morning.

Miss Ster. Make him marry her! this is beyond all patience! You have thrown away all your affection; and I shall do as much by my obedience; unnatural fathers make unnatural children. My revenge is in my own power, and I'll indulge it. Had they made their escape, I should have been exposed to the derision of the world: but the deriders shall be derided; and so—help! help, there! thieves! thieves!

Mrs Heid. Tit-for-tat, Betsey! you are right, my girl.

Ster. Zounds! you'll spoil all—you'll raise the whole family—the devil's in the girl!

Mrs Heid. No, no; the devil's in you, brother; I am ashamed of your principles. What! would you connive at your daughter's being locked up with her sister's husband? Help! thieves! thieves, I say! [*Cries out.*

Ster. Sister, I beg you! daughter, I command you! If you have no regard for me, consider yourselves! we shall lose this opportunity of ennobling our blood, and getting above twenty *per cent.* for our money.

Miss Ster. What, by my disgrace and my sister's triumph! I have a spirit above such mean considerations; and to shew you, that it is not a low-bred, vulgar 'Change-alley spirit———help! help! thieves! thieves! thieves, I say!

Ster. Ay, ay, you may save your lungs—the house is in an uproar: women, at best, have no discretion; but, in a passion, they'll fire a house, or burn themselves in it, rather than not be revenged.

Enter CANTON, *in a night-gown and slippers.*

Can. Eh, diable! vat is de raison of dis great noise, dis tantamarre?

Ster. Ask those ladies, sir; 'tis of their making.

Lord Ogle. [*Calls within.*] Brush! Brush!—Canton! where are you? What's the matter?—[*Rings a bell.*] Where are you?

Ster. 'Tis my lord calls, Mr Canton.

Can. I com, mi lor!———

[*Exit* CANTON.

[LORD OGLEBY *still rings.*

Serj. Flow. [*Calls within.*] A light! a light, here! where are the servants? Bring a light for me and my brothers.

Ster. Lights here! lights for the gentlemen!

[*Exit* STERLING.

Mrs Heid. My brother feels, I see—your sister's turn will come next.

Miss Ster. Ay, ay, let it go round, madam; it is the only comfort I have left.

Re-enter STERLING, *with lights, before Serjeant* FLOWER, *with one boot and a slipper, and* TRAVERSE.

Ster. This way, sir! this way, gentlemen!

Flow. Well; but Mr Sterling, no danger, I hope. Have they made a burglarious entry?—Are you prepared to repulse them? I am very much alarmed about thieves at circuit-time.—They would be particularly severe with us gentlemen of the bar.

Tra. No danger, Mr Sterling? no trespass, I hope?

Ster. None, gentlemen, but of those ladies making.

Mrs Heid. You'll be ashamed to know, gentlemen, that all your labours and studies about this young lady are thrown away—Sir John Melvil is, at this moment, locked up with this lady's younger sister.

Flow. The thing is a little extraordinary, to be sure; but, why were we to be frightened out of our beds for this? Could not we have tried this cause to-morrow morning?

Miss Ster. But, sir, by to-morrow morning, perhaps, even your assistance would not have been of any service—the birds, now in that cage, would have flown away.

Enter LORD OGLEBY, *in his robe-de-chambre, night-cap, &c. leaning on* CANTON.

Lord Ogle. I had rather lose a limb than my night's rest. What's the matter with you all?

Ster. Ay, ay, 'tis all over! Here's my lord too!

Lord Ogle. What's all this shrieking and screaming? Where's my angelic Fanny? She's safe, I hope?

Mrs Heid. Your angelic Fanny, my lord, is locked up with your angelic nephew in that chamber.

Lord Ogle. My nephew! then will I be excommunicated.

Mrs Heid. Your nephew, my lord, has been plotting to run away with the younger sister; and the younger sister has been plotting to run away with your nephew: and if we had not watched them, and called up the fammaly, they had been upon the scamper to Scotland by this time.

Lord Ogle. Look'e, ladies! I know that sir John has conceived a violent passion for Miss Fanny; and I know, too, that Miss Fanny has conceived a violent passion for another person; and I am so well convinced of the rectitude of her affections, that I will support them with my fortune, my honour, and my life. Eh, shan't I, Mr Sterling? [*Smiling.*] What say you?

Ster. [*Sulkily.*] To be sure, my lord. These bawling women have been the ruin of every thing. [*Aside.*

Lord Ogle. But come, I'll end this business in a trice—if you, ladies, will compose yourselves, and Mr Sterling will insure Miss Fanny from violence, I will engage to draw her from her pillow with a whisper through the key-hole.

Mrs Heid. The horrid creatures! I say, my lord, break the door open.

Lord Ogle. Let me beg of your delicacy not to be too precipitate. Now to our experiment! [*Advancing towards the door.*

Miss Ster. Now, what will they do? my heart will beat through my bosom.

Enter BETTY, *with the key.*

Bet. There's no occasion for breaking open doors, my lord; we have done nothing that we ought to be ashamed of, and my mistress shall face her enemies. [*Going to unlock the door.*

Mrs Heid. There's impudence!

Lord Ogle. The mystery thickens. Lady of the bed-chamber, [*To* BETTY.] open the door, and entreat sir John Melvil (for the ladies will have it that he is there) to appear and answer to high crimes and misdemeanors.—Call sir John Melvil into the court!

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL, *on the other side.*

Sir John. I am here, my lord.

Mrs Heid. Hey-day!

Miss Ster. Astonishment!

Sir John. What's all this alarm and confusion? there is nothing but hurry in the house; what is the reason of it?

Lord Ogle. Because you have been in that chamber; have been! nay, you are there at this moment, as these ladies have protested, so don't deny it———

Tra. This is the clearest alibi I ever knew, Mr Serjeant.

Flow. *Luce clarius.*

Lord Ogle. Upon my word, ladies, if you have often these frolicks, it would be really entertaining to pass a whole summer with you. But come, [*To* BETTY.] open the door, and entreat your amiable mistress to come forth, and dispel all our doubts with her smiles.

Bet. [*Opening the door.*] Madam, you are wanted in this room. [*Pertly.*

Enter FANNY, *in great confusion.*

Miss Ster. You see she's ready dressed—and what confusion she's in!

Mrs Heid. Ready to pack off, bag and baggage! her guilt confounds her!

Flow. Silence in the court, ladies!

Fan. I am confounded, indeed, madam!

Lord Ogle. Don't droop, my beauteous lily! but, with your own peculiar modesty, declare your state of mind.—Pour conviction into their ears, and raptures into mine. [*Smiling.*

Fan. I am, at this moment, the most unhappy—most distressed—the tumult is too much for my heart—and I want the power to reveal a secret, which, to conceal, has been the misfortune and misery of my— [*Faints away.*

Lord Ogle. She faints! help, help! for the fairest and best of women!

Bet. [*Running to her.*] O, my dear mistress—help, help, there!——

Sir John. Ha! let me fly to her assistance.

LOVEWELL *rushes out of the chamber.*

Love. My Fanny in danger! I can contain no longer.—Prudence were now a crime; all other cares were lost in this!—speak, speak, speak to me, my dearest Fanny!—let me but hear thy voice! open your eyes, and bless me with the smallest sign of life!

[*During this speech, they are all in amazement.*]

Miss Ster. Lovewell!——I am easy.

Mrs Heid. I am thunderstruck!

Lord Ogle. I am petrified!

Sir John. And I undone!

Fan. [*Recovering.*] O, Lovewell!—even supported by thee, I dare not look my father, nor his lordship, in the face.

Ster. What now! did not I send you to London, sir?

Lord Ogle. Eh!—What! How's this? by what right and title have you been half the night in that lady's bed-chamber?

Love. By that right, which makes me the happiest of men! and, by a title, which I would not forego, for any the best of kings could give.

Bet. I could cry my eyes out to hear his magnimity.

Lord Ogle. I am annihilated!

Ster. I have been choked with rage and wonder; but now I can speak.—Zounds! what have

you to say to me? Lovewell, you are a villain.—You have broke your word with me.

Fan. Indeed, sir, he has not—you forbade him to think of me, when it was out of his power to obey you; we have been married these four months.

Ster. And he shan't stay in my house four hours. What baseness and treachery! As for you, you shall repent this step as long as you live, madam.

Fan. Indeed, sir, it is impossible to conceive the tortures I have already endured in consequence of my disobedience. My heart has continually upbraided me for it; and, though I was too weak to struggle with affection, I feel that I must be miserable for ever, without your forgiveness.

Ster. Lovewell, you shall leave my house directly; and you shall follow him, madam.

Lord Ogle. And if they do, I will receive them into mine. Look ye, Mr Sterling; there have been some mistakes, which we had all better forget, for our own sakes; and the best way to forget them, is to forgive the cause of them; which I do, from my soul.—Poor girl! I swore to support her affection with my life and fortune;—'tis a debt of honour, and must be paid—you swore as much, too, Mr Sterling; but your laws in the city will excuse you, I suppose; for you never strike a balance without errors excepted.

Ster. I am a father, my lord; but, for the sake of all other fathers, I think I ought not to forgive her, for fear of encouraging other silly girls, like herself, to throw themselves away without the consent of their parents.

Love. I hope there will be no danger of that, sir. Young ladies, with minds like my Fanny's, would startle at the very shadow of vice; and, when they know to what uneasiness only an indiscretion has exposed her, her example, instead of encouraging, will rather serve to deter them.

Mrs Heid. Indiscretion, quotha! a mighty pretty delicate word to express disobedience!

Lord Ogle. For my part, I indulge my own passions too much to tyrannize over those of other people. Poor souls, I pity them! And you must forgive them, too. Come, come, melt a little of your flint, Mr Sterling!

Ster. Why, why, as to that, my lord—to be sure he is a relation of yours, my lord——what say you, sister Heidelberg?

Mrs Heid. The girl's ruined, and I forgive her.

Ster. Well—so do I, then.—Nay, no thanks—[*To* LOVEWELL *and* FANNY, *who seem preparing to speak.*] there's an end of the matter.

Lord Ogle. But, Lovewell, what makes you dumb all this while?

Love. Your kindness, my lord——I can scarce believe my own senses—they are all in a tumult of fear, joy, love, expectation, and gratitude; I ever was, and am now more bound in duty to your lordship. For you, Mr Sterling, if every moment of my life, spent gratefully in your service, will, in some measure, compensate the want of fortune, you, perhaps, will not repent your goodness to me. And you, ladies, I flatter myself, will not, for the future, suspect me of artifice and intrigue—I shall be happy to oblige and serve you.—As for you, sir John——

Sir John. No apologies to me, Lovewell; I do not deserve any. All I have to offer, in excuse for what has happened, is my total ignorance of your situation. Had you dealt a little more openly with me, you would have saved me, and yourself, and that lady (who, I hope, will pardon my behaviour), a great deal of uneasiness. Give me leave, however, to assure you, that, light and capricious as I may have appeared, now my infatuation is over, I have sensibility enough to be ashamed of the part I have acted, and honour enough to rejoice at your happiness.

Love. And now, my dearest Fanny, though we are seemingly the happiest of beings, yet all our joys will be dampt, if his lordship's generosity and Mr Sterling's forgiveness, should not be succeeded by the indulgence, approbation, and consent of these our best benefactors. [*To the audience.*] [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

ENGLISH MERCHANT.

BY

COLMAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

LORD FALBRIDGE, *attached to* AMELIA.
SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS, *an attainted Scottish knight, father to* AMELIA.
FREEPORT, *the English merchant.*
SPATTER, *a meddling author.*
OWEN, *servant to* SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS.
LA FRANCE, *servant to* LORD FALBRIDGE.
Servants, &c.

WOMEN.

LADY ALTON, *attached to* LORD FALBRIDGE.
AMELIA, *daughter to* SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS.
MRS GOODMAN—*lets lodgings.*
MOLLY, *maid to* AMELIA.

Scene— London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A room in* MRS GOODMAN'S *house.*

Enter MOLLY, *struggling with* SPATTER.

Mol. BE quiet, Mr Spatter! let me alone! Pray now, sir! It is a strange thing a body can't go about the house without being pestered with your impertinence—Why sure!—

Spat. Introduce me to your mistress, then—come, there's a good girl!—and I will teaze you no longer.

Mol. Indeed I shan't—Introduce you to my lady! for what, pray?

Spat. Oh! for a thousand things. To laugh, to chat, to take a dish of tea, to—

Mol. You drink tea with my lady! I should not have thought of that—On what acquaintance?

Spat. The most agreeable in the world, child! a new acquaintance.

Mol. Indeed, you mistake yourself mightily—you are not a proper acquaintance for a person of her quality, I assure you, sir!

Spat. Why, what quality is she, then?

Mol. Much too high quality for your acquaintance, I promise you. What! a poet-man! that sits write, write, write, all day long, scribbling a pack of nonsense for the newspapers!—You're fit for nothing above a chambermaid.

Spat. That's as much as to say, that you think me just fit for you. Eh, child?

Mol. No, indeed; not I, sir. Neither my lady nor I will have any thing to say to you.

Spat. Your mistress and you both give yourselves a great many airs, my dear. Your poverty, I think, might pull down your pride.

Mol. What does the fellow mean by poverty?

Spat. I mean, that you are starving.

Mol. Oh the slanderous monster! We! Starving! Who told you so? I'd have you to know, sir, my lady has a very great fortune.

Spat. So 'tis a sign, by her way of life and appearance.

Mol. Well; she lives privately, indeed, because she loves retirement; she goes plain, because she hates dress; she keeps no table, because she is an enemy to luxury—In short, my lady is as rich as a Jew, and you are an impertinent coxcomb!

Spat. Come, come! I know more of your mistress than you imagine.

Mol. And what do you know of her?

Spat. Oh, I know what I know.

Mol. Well! [*Alarmed.*

Spat. I know who she is, and where she came from; I am very well acquainted with her family, and know her whole history.

Mol. How can that be?

Spat. Very easily—I have correspondence everywhere. As private as she may think herself, it is not the first time that I have seen or heard of Amelia.

Mol. Oh gracious! as sure as I am alive this man will discover us! [*Apart.*] Mr Spatter, my dear Mr Spatter! if you know any thing, sure you would not be so cruel as to betray us!

Spat. My dear Mr Spatter! O ho! I have guessed right—there is something then?

Mol. No, sir, there is nothing at all; nothing that signifies to you or any body else.

Spat. Well, well. I'll say nothing; but then, you must—

Mol. What?

Spat. Come; kiss me, hussy!

Mol. I say kiss you, indeed!

Spat. And you'll introduce me to your mistress?

Mol. Not I, I promise you.

Spat. Nay, no mysteries between you and me, child! Come; here's the key to all locks, the clue to every maze, and the discloser of all secrets; money, child! Here, take this purse; you see I know something; tell me the rest, and I have the fellow to it in my pocket.

Mol. Ha, ha, ha! poor Mr Spatter! Where could you get all this money, I wonder! Not by your poetries, I believe. But what signifies telling you any thing, when you are acquainted with our whole history already? You have correspondence everywhere, you know. There, sir! take up your filthy purse again, and remember, that I scorn to be obliged to any body but my mistress.

Spat. There's impudence for you! when, to my certain knowledge, your mistress has not a guinea in the world; you live in continual fear of being discovered; and you will both be utterly undone in a fortnight, unless lord Falbridge should prevent it, by taking Amelia under his protection. You understand me, child?

Mol. You scandalous wretch! Did you ever hear such a monster? I won't stay a moment longer with him—But you are quite mistaken about me and my mistress, I assure you, sir. We are in the best circumstances in the world; we have nothing to fear; and we don't care a farthing for you—So your servant, Mr Poet!

[*Exit.*

Spat. Your servant, Mrs Pert! "We are in the best circumstances in the world." Ay, that is as much as to say, they are in the utmost distress. "We have nothing to fear."—That is, they are frightened out of their wits. "And we don't care a farthing for you."—Meaning, that they will take all the care in their power, that I shall not find them out—But I may be too hard for you yet, young gentlewoman! I have earned but a poor livelihood by mere scandal and abuse; but if I could once arrive at doing a little substantial mischief, I should make my fortune.

Enter MRS GOODMAN.

Oh! your servant, Mrs Goodman! Yours is the most unsociable lodging-house in town. So many ladies, and only one gentleman! and you won't take the least notice of him.

Mrs Good. How so, Mr Spatter?

Spat. Why, did not you promise to introduce me to Amelia?

Mrs Good. To tell you the plain truth, Mr Spatter, she don't like you. And, indeed, I don't know how it is, but you make yourself a great many enemies.

Spat. Yes; I believe I do raise a little envy.

Mrs Good. Indeed you are mistaken, sir. As you are a lodger of mine, it makes me quite uneasy to hear what the world says of you. How do you contrive to make so many enemies, Mr Spatter?

Spat. Because I have merit, Mrs Goodman.

Mrs Good. May be so; but nobody will allow it but yourself. They say that you set up for a wit, indeed; but that you deal in nothing but scandal, and think of nothing but mischief.

Spat. I do speak ill of the men sometimes, to be sure; but then, I have a great regard for women—provided they are handsome: and, that I may give you a proof of it, introduce me to Amelia.

Mrs Good. You must excuse me; she and you would be the worst company in the world; for she never speaks too well of herself, nor the least ill of any body else. And then her virtue—

Spat. Pooh, pooh! she speaks ill of nobody, because she knows nobody; and as for her virtue, ha, ha!

Mrs Good. You don't believe much in that, I suppose?

Spat. I have not overmuch faith, Mrs Goodman. Lord Falbridge, perhaps, may give a better account of it.

Mrs Good. Lord Falbridge can say nothing but what would be extremely to her honour, I assure you, sir. [SPATTER *laughs.*] Well, well, you may laugh, but it is very true.

Spat. Oh, I don't doubt it; but you don't tell the whole truth, Mrs Goodman. When any of your friends or acquaintance sit for their pictures, you draw a very flattering likeness. All characters have their dark side; and if they have but one eye, you give them in profile. Your great friend, Mr Freeport, for instance, whom you are always praising for his benevolent actions——

Mrs Good. He is benevolence itself, sir.

Spat. Yes, and grossness itself, too. I remem-

ber him these many years. He always cancels an obligation by the manner of conferring it; and does you a favour, as if he were going to knock you down.

Mrs Good. A truce with your satire, good Mr Spatter! Mr Freeport is my best friend; I owe him every thing; and I can't endure the slightest reflection on his character. Besides, he can have given no offence to Lady Alton, whatever may be the case with Amelia.

Spat. Lady Alton! she is a particular friend of mine to be sure; but, between you and me, Mrs Goodman, a more ridiculous character than any you have mentioned. A *bel esprit* forsooth! and as vain of her beauty as learning, without any great portion of either. A fourth grace, and a tenth muse! who fancies herself enamoured of Lord Falbridge, because she would be proud of such a conquest; and has lately bestowed some marks of distinction on me, because she thinks it will give her credit among persons of letters.

Mrs Good. Nay, if you can't spare your own friends, I don't wonder at your attacking mine—and so, sir, your humble servant. But stay! here's a post-chaise stopped at our door; and here comes a servant with a portmanteau. 'Tis the gentleman for whom my first floor was taken, I suppose.

Spat. Very likely: well, you will introduce me to him at least, Mrs Goodman.

Enter a Servant with a portmanteau—SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *following.*

Sir Wil. You are Mrs Goodman, I suppose, madam?

Mrs Good. At your service, sir.

Sir Wil. Mr Owen, I believe, has secured apartments here?

Mrs Good. He has, sir.

Sir Wil. They are for me, madam—Have you any other lodgers?

Mrs Good. Only that gentleman, sir; and a young lady——

Spat. Of great beauty and virtue. Eh, Mrs Goodman?

Mrs Good. She has both, sir; but you will see very little of her, for she lives in the most retired manner in the world.

Sir Wil. Her youth and beauty are matter of great indifference to me; for I shall be as much a recluse as herself.—Is there any news at present stirring in London?

Mrs Good. Mr Spatter can inform you, sir, for he deals in news. In the mean while, I'll prepare your apartments.

[*Exit, followed by the servant.*——SIR WILLIAM *walks up and down, without taking notice of* SPATTER.

Spat. [*Aside*] This must be a man of quality, by his ill manners. I'll speak to him.——Will your lordship give me leave——

[*To* SIR WILLIAM.

Sir Wil. Lordship! I am no lord, sir, and must beg not to be honoured with the name.

Spat. It is a kind of mistake, that cannot displease at least.

Sir Wil. I don't know that. None but a fool would be vain of a title, if he had one; and none but an impostor would assume a title, to which he has no right.

Spat. Oh, you're of the house of commons, then, a member of parliament, and are come up to town to attend the sessions, I suppose, sir?

Sir Wil. No matter what I am, sir.

Spat. Nay, no offence, I hope, sir. All I meant was to do you honour. Being concerned in two evening posts, and one morning paper, I was willing to know the proper manner of announcing your arrival.

Sir Wil. You have connexions with the press, then, it seems, sir?

Spat. Yes, sir; I am an humble retainer to the Muses, an author. I compose pamphlets on all subjects, compile magazines, and do newspapers.

Sir Wil. Do newspapers! What do you mean by that, sir?

Spat. That is, sir, I collect the articles of news from the other papers, and make new ones for the postscript; translate the mails, write occasional letters from Cato and Theatricus, and give fictitious answers to supposed correspondents.

Sir Wil. A very ingenious, as well as honourable employment, I must confess, sir.

Spat. Some little genius is requisite, to be sure. Now, sir, if I can be of any use to you—if you have any friend to be praised, or any enemy to be abused; any author to cry up, or minister to run down; my pen and talents are entirely at your service.

Sir Wil. I am much obliged to you, sir; but, at present, I have not the least occasion for either. In return for your genteel offers, give me leave to trouble you with one piece of advice. When you deal in private scandal, have a care of the cudgel; and when you meddle with public matters, beware of the pillory.

Spat. How, sir! are you no friend to literature? Are you an enemy to the liberty of the press?

Sir Wil. I have the greatest respect for both; but railing is the disgrace of letters, and personal abuse the scandal of freedom: foul-mouthed critics are, in general, disappointed authors; and they, who are the loudest against ministers, only mean to be paid for their silence.

Spat. That may be sometimes, sir; but give me leave to ask you——

Sir Wil. Do not ask me at present, sir! I see a particular friend of mine coming this way, and I must beg you to withdraw!

Spat. Withdraw, sir! first of all, allow me to——

Sir Wil. Nay, no reply! we must be in private. [*Thrusting out* SPATTER.

What a wretch! as contemptible as mischievous. Our generous mastiffs fly at men from an instinct of courage; but this fellow's attacks proceed from an instinct of baseness——But here comes the faithful Owen, with as many good qualities as that execrable fellow seems to have bad ones.

Enter OWEN.

Well, Owen; I am safe arrived, you see.

Owen. Ah, sir! would to heaven you were as safe returned again! Have a care of betraying yourself to be sir William Douglas!——During your stay here, your name is Ford, remember.

Sir Wil. I shall take care—But tell me your news—What have you done since your arrival? Have you heard any thing of my daughter? Have you seen Lord Brumpton? Has he any hope of obtaining my pardon?

Owen. He had, sir.

Sir Wil. And what can have destroyed it, then?

Owen. My lord Brumpton is dead, sir.

Sir Wil. Dead!

Owen. I saw him within this week in apparent good health; he promised to exert his whole interest in your favour: by his own appointment I went to wait on him yesterday noon, when I was stunned with the news of his having died suddenly the evening before.

Sir Wil. My lord Brumpton dead! the only friend I had remaining in England; the only person, on whose intercession I relied for my pardon. Cruel fortune! I have now no hope but to find my daughter. Tell me, Owen; have you been able to hear any tidings of her?

Owen. Alas, sir, none that are satisfactory. On the death of Mr Andrews, in whose care you left her, being cruelly abandoned by the relation who succeeded to the estate, she left the country some months ago, and has not since been heard of.

Sir Wil. Unhappy there, too! When will the measure of my misfortunes be full? When will the malice of my fate be satisfied? Proscribed, condemned, attainted, (alas, but too justly!) I have lost my rank, my estate, my wife, my son, and all my family! One only daughter remains! Perhaps a wretched wanderer, like myself, perhaps in the extremest indigence, perhaps dishonoured—Ha! that thought distracts me!

Owen. My dear master, have patience! Do not be ingenious to torment yourself, but consult your safety, and prepare for your departure.

Sir Wil. No, Owen. Hearing, providentially, of the death of my friend Andrews, paternal care and tenderness drew me hither; and I will not quit the kingdom, till I learn something of my child, my dear Amelia, whom I left a tender innocent, in the arms of the best of women, twenty years ago. Her sex demands protection; and she is now of an age, in which she is more exposed to misfortunes, than even in helpless infancy.

Owen. Be advised; depart, and leave that care to me. Consider, your life is now at stake.

Sir Wil. My life has been too miserable to render me very solicitous for its preservation—But the complection of the times is changed; the very name of the party, in which I was unhappily engaged, is extinguished, and the whole nation is unanimously devoted to the throne. Disloyalty and insurrection are now no more, and the sword of justice is suffered to sleep. If I can find my child, and find her worthy of me, I will fly with her to take refuge in some foreign country; if I am discovered in the search, I have still some hopes of mercy.

Owen. Heaven grant your hopes may be well founded!

Sir Wil. Come, Owen! let us behave at least with fortitude in our adversity! Follow me to my apartment, and let us consult what measures we shall take in searching for Amelia. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* AMELIA'S *apartment.*

Enter AMELIA *and* MOLLY.

Ame. Poor Molly! to be teased with that odious fellow, Spatter!

Mol. But, madam, Mr Spatter says he is acquainted with your whole history.

Ame. Mere pretence, in order to render himself formidable. Be on your guard against him, my dear Molly; and remember to conceal my misery from him and all the world. I can bear poverty, but am not proof against insult and contempt.

Mol. Ah, my dear mistress, it is to no purpose to endeavour to hide it from the world. They will see poverty in my looks. As for you, you can live upon the air; the greatness of your soul seems to support you; but, lack-a-day! I shall grow thinner and thinner every day of my life.

Ame. I can support my own distress, but yours touches me to the soul. Poor Molly! the labour of my hands shall feed and clothe you—Here! dispose of this embroidery to the best advantage; what was formerly my amusement, must now become the means of our subsistence. Let us be obliged to nobody, but owe our support to industry and virtue.

Mol. You're an angel! let me kiss those dear hands that have worked this precious embroidery! let me bathe them with my tears! You're an angel upon earth. I had rather starve in your service, than live with a princess. What can I do to comfort you?

Ame. Thou faithful creature—only continue to be secret: you know my real character; you know I am in the utmost distress: I have opened my heart to you, but you will plant a dagger there, if you betray me to the world.

Mol. Ah, my dear mistress, how should I betray you! I go no where, I converse with nobody

but yourself and Mrs Goodman: besides, the world is very indifferent about other people's misfortunes.

Ame. The world is indifferent, it is true; but it is curious, and takes a cruel pleasure in tearing open the wounds of the unfortunate.

Enter MRS GOODMAN.

Mrs Goodman!

Mrs Good. Excuse me, madam: I took the liberty of waiting on you to receive your commands. 'Tis now near three o'clock. You have provided nothing for dinner, and have scarce taken any refreshment these three days.

Ame. I have been indisposed.

Mrs Good. I am afraid you are more than indisposed—You are unhappy—Pardon me! but I cannot help thinking that your fortune is unequal to your appearance.

Ame. Why should you think so? You never heard me complain of my fortune.

Mrs Good. No, but I have too much reason to believe it is inferior to your merit.

Ame. Indeed, you flatter me.

Mrs Good. Come, come; you must not indulge this melancholy. I have a new lodger, an elderly gentleman, just arrived, who does me the honour to partake of my dinner; and I must have your company, too. He seems to be in trouble, as well as you. You must meet; two persons in affliction may perhaps become a consolation to each other. Come, let us take some care of you.

Ame. Be assured, Mrs Goodman, I am much obliged to you for your attention to me; but I want nothing.

Mrs Good. Dear madam! you say you want nothing, and you are in want of every thing.

Enter Servant.

Ser. [*To* MRS GOODMAN.] Lady Alton, madam, sends her compliments, and will wait upon you after dinner.

Mrs Good. Very well; my best respects to her ladyship, and I shall be ready to attend her. [*Exit Servant.*] There, there is one cause of your uneasiness! Lady Alton's visit is on your account. She thinks you have robbed her of lord Falbridge's affections, and that is the occasion of her honouring me with her company.

Ame. Lord Falbridge's affections!

Mrs Good. Ah! my dear Amelia, you don't know your power over his heart. You have reconciled it to virtue—But come! let me prevail on you to come with me to dinner.

Ame. You must excuse me.

Mrs Good. Well, well, then I'll send you something to your own apartment. If you have any other commands, pray honour me with them, for I would fain oblige you, if I knew how it were in my power. [*Exit.*

Ame. What an amiable woman! If it had not been for her apparent benevolence and goodness of heart, I should have left the house on Mr Spatter's coming to lodge in it.

Mol. Lady Alton, it seems, recommended him as a lodger here; so he can be no friend of yours on that account; for to be sure she owes you no good will on account of my lord Falbridge.

Ame. No more of lord Falbridge, I beseech you, Molly. How can you persist in mentioning him, when you know, that, presuming on my situation, he has dared to affront me with dishonourable proposals?

Mol. Ah, madam, but he sorely repents it, I promise you, and would give his whole estate for an opportunity of seeing you once more, and geting into your good graces again.

Ame. No; his ungenerous conduct has thrown him as much below me, as my condition had placed me beneath him. He imagined he had a right to insult my distress; but I will teach him to think it respectable. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An apartment at* MRS GOODMAN'S.

Enter LADY ALTON *and* SPATTER.

Spat. BUT you won't hear me, madam!

Lady Alt. I have heard too much, sir! This wandering *incognita* a woman of virtue! I have no patience.

Spat. Mrs Goodman pretends to be convinced of her being a person of honour.

Lady Alt. A person of honour, and openly receive visits from men! seduce lord Falbridge! No, no! reserve this character for your next novel, Mr Spatter! it is an affront to my understanding. I begin to suspect you have betrayed me; you have gone over to the adverse party, and are in the conspiracy to abuse me.

Spat. I, madam! Neither her beauty, nor her virtue—

Lady Alt. Her beauty! her virtue! Why, thou wretch, thou grub of literature, whom I, as a patroness of learning and encourager of men of letters, willing to blow the dead coal of genius, fondly took under my protection, do you remember what I have done for you?

Spat. With the utmost gratitude, madam.

Lady Alt. Did not I draw you out of the garret, where you daily spun out your flimsy brain

to catch the town flies in your cobweb dissertations? Did not I introduce you to lord Dapperwit, the Apollo of the age? And did not you dedicate your silly volume of poems on several occasions to him? Did not I put you into the list of my visitors, and order my porter to admit you at dinner-time? Did not I write the only scene in your execrable farce, which the audience vouchsafed an hearing? And did not my female friend, Mrs Melpomene, furnish you with Greek and Latin mottoes for your twopenny essays?

Spat. I acknowledge all your ladyship's goodness to me. I have done every thing in my power to shew my gratitude, and fulfil your ladyship's commands.

Lady Alt. Words, words, Mr Spatter! You have been witness of lord Falbridge's inconstancy. A perfidious man! False as Phaon to Sappho, or Jason to Medea! You have seen him desert me for a wretched vagabond; you have seen me abandoned like Calypso, without making a single effort to recall my faithless Ulysses from the Siren that has lured him from me.

Spat. Be calm but one moment, madam, and I'll—

Lady Alt. Bid the sea be calm, when the winds are let loose upon it. I have reason to be enraged. I placed you in genteel apartments in this house, merely to plant you as a spy; and what have you done for me? Have you employed your correspondence to any purpose? or discovered the real character of this infamous woman, this insolent Amelia?

Spat. I have taken every possible method to detect her. I have watched Amelia herself like a bailiff, or a duenna; I have overheard private conversations; have sounded the landlady; tampered with the servants; opened letters; and intercepted messages.

Lady Alt. Good creature! my best Spatter! And what?—what have you discovered?

Spat. That Amelia is a native of Scotland; that her surname, Walton, is probably not real, but assumed; and that she earnestly wishes to conceal both the place of her birth, and her family.

Lady Alt. And is that all?

Spat. All that I have been able to learn as yet, madam.

Lady Alt. Wretch! of what service have you been, then? Are these your boasted talents? When we want to unravel an ambiguous character, you have made out that she wishes to be concealed; and when we wish to know who she is, you have just discovered that she is a native of Scotland!

Spat. And yet, if you will give me leave, madam, I think I could convince you that these discoveries, blind and unsatisfactory as they may appear to you at first, are of no small consequence.

Lady Alt. Of what consequence can they possibly be to me, man?

Spat. I'll tell you, madam. It is a rule in politics, when we discover something, to add something more. Something added to something, makes a good deal; upon this basis I have formed a syllogism.

Lady Alt. What does the pedant mean? A syllogism!

Spat. Yes, a syllogism: as, for example, any person who is a native of Scotland, and wishes to be concealed, must be an enemy to the government. Amelia is a native of Scotland, and wishes to be concealed. Ergo, Amelia is an enemy to the government.

Lady Alt. Excellent! admirable logic! but I wish we could prove it to be truth.

Spat. I would not lay a wager of the truth of it; but I would swear it.

Lady Alt. What, on a proper occasion, and in a proper place, my good Spatter?

Spat. Willingly; we must make use of what we know, and even of what we don't know.—— Truth is of a dry and simple nature, and stands in need of some little ornament. A lie, indeed, is infamous; but fiction, your ladyship, who deals in poetry, knows is beautiful.

Lady Alt. But the substance of your fiction, Spatter?

Spat. I will lodge an information, that the father of Amelia is a disaffected person, and has sent her to London for treasonable purposes: nay, I can, upon occasion, even suppose the father himself to be in London: in consequence of which, you will probably recover lord Falbridge, and Amelia will be committed to prison.

Lady Alt. You have given me new life. I took you for a mere stainer of paper; but I have found you a Machiavel. I hear somebody coming. Mrs Goodman has undertaken to send Amelia hither. Ha! she's here—Away, Spatter, and wait for me at my house: you must dine with me; and, after dinner, like true politicians, we will settle our plan of operations over our coffee. Away, away this instant!

[*Exit* SPATTER.

A convenient engine this Mr Spatter: the most impudent thorough-paced knave in the three kingdoms! with the heart of Zoilus, the pen of Mævius, and the tongue of Thersites. I was sure he would stick at nothing. The writings of authors are public advertisements of their qualifications; and when they profess to live upon scandal, it is as much as to say, that they are ready for every other dirty work, in which we chuse to employ them. But now for Amelia: if she proves tractable, I may forego the use of this villain, who almost makes me hate my triumph, and be ashamed of my revenge.

Enter AMELIA.

Ame. Mrs Goodman has informed me, that your ladyship had desired to see me: I wait your commands, madam.

Lady Alt. Look you, young woman: I am sensible how much it is beneath a person of my rank to parley with one of your condition. once, however, I am content to wave all ceremony; and if you behave as you ought to do, you have nothing to fear, child.

Ame. I hope I have never behaved otherwise than as I ought to do, madam.

Lady Alt. Yes; you have received the visits of lord Falbridge; you have endeavoured to estrange his affections from me: but, if you encourage him in his infidelity to me, tremble for the consequence: be advised, or you are ruined.

Ame. I am conscious of no guilt, and know no fear, madam.

Lady Alt. Come, come, Mrs Amelia; this high strain is out of character with me. Act over your Clelia, and Cleopatra, and Cassandra, at a proper time; and let me talk in the style of nature and common sense to you. You have no lord Falbridge, no weak young nobleman to impose upon at present.

Ame. To impose upon! I scorn the imputation, and am sorry to find that your ladyship came hither, merely to indulge yourself in the cruel pleasure of insulting one of the unhappiest of her sex. [*Weeping.*

Lady Alt. You are mistaken; I came hither to concert measures for your happiness, to assist your poverty, and relieve your distress. Leave this house; leave London; I will provide you a retirement in the country, and supply all your wants. Only renounce all thoughts of lord Falbridge, and never let him know the place of your retreat.

Ame. Lord Falbridge! What is lord Falbridge to me, madam?

Lady Alt. To convince me you have no commerce with him, accept of my proposals.

Ame. No, madam; the favours which you intend me, I could not receive without blushing.—I have no wants but what I can supply myself; no distresses which your ladyship can relieve; and I will seek no refuge but my own virtue.

Lady Alt. Your virtue! Ridiculous! If you are a woman of virtue, what is the meaning of all this mystery? Who are you? What are you? Who will vouch for your character?

Ame. It wants no vouchers; nor will I suffer myself to be arraigned, like a criminal, till I know by what authority you take upon you to act as my judge.

Lady Alt. Matchless confidence! Yes, yes; it is too plain; I see you are the very creature I took you for; a mere adventurer: some strolling princess, that are perhaps more frugal of your favours than the rest of your sisterhood, merely to enhance the price of them.

Ame. Hold, madam! This opprobrious language is more injurious to your own honour than to mine. I see the violence of your temper, and will leave you. But you may one day know that my birth is equal to your own; my heart is, perhaps, more generous; and whatever may be my situation, I scorn to be dependant on any body, much less on one, who has so mean an opinion of me, and who considers me as her rival.

[*Exit* AMELIA.

Lady Alt. Her rival! Unparalleled insolence! An open avowal of her competition with me!—Yes; I see Spatter must be employed. Her rival! I shall burst with indignation.

Enter MRS GOODMAN.

Lady Alt. Mrs Goodman! where is Mr Spatter?

Mrs Good. He went out the moment he left your ladyship.——But you seem disordered; shall I get you some hartshorn, madam?

Lady Alt. Some poison. Rival! I shall choak with rage. You shall hear from me. You, and your Amelia. You have abused me; you have conspired against my peace; and, be assured, you shall suffer for it. [*Exit.*

Mrs Good. What a violent woman! her passion makes her forget what is due to her sex and quality. Ha! Mr Freeport!

Enter FREEPORT.

My best friend! Welcome to London! When did you arrive from Lisbon?

Free. But last night.

Mrs Good. I hope you have had a pleasant voyage?

Free. A good trading voyage—I have got money, but I have got the spleen, too. Have you any news in town?

Mrs Good. None at all, sir.

Free. So much the better. The less news, the less nonsense. But what strange lady have you had here? I met her as I was coming up: she rushed by like a fury, and almost swept me down stairs again with the wind of her hoop-petticoat.

Mrs Good. Ah! jealousy! jealousy is a terrible passion, especially in a woman's breast, Mr Freeport.

Free. Jealousy! Why, she is not jealous of you, Mrs Goodman?

Mrs Good. No; but of a lodger of mine.

Free. Have you any new lodgers since I left you?

Mrs Good. Two or three, sir; the last arrived but to-day; an elderly gentleman, who will see no company.

Free. He's in the right. Three parts in four

of mankind are knaves or fools; and the fourth part live by themselves. But who are your other lodgers?

Mrs Good. An author, and a lady.

Free. I hate authors. Who is the lady?

Mrs Good. She calls herself Amelia Walton; but I believe that name is not her real one.

Free. Not her real one! Why, sure she is a woman of character?

Mrs Good. A woman of character! She is an angel. She is most miserably poor; and yet haughty to an excess.

Free. Pride and poverty! A sad composition, Mrs Goodman!

Mrs Good. No, sir; her pride is one of her greatest virtues: it consists in depriving herself of almost all necessaries, and concealing it from the world. Though every action speaks her to be a woman of birth and education, she lives upon the work of her own hands, without murmur or complaint. I make use of a thousand stratagems to assist her against her will; I prevail on her to keep the money due for rent for her support, and furnish her with every thing she wants at half its prime cost; but if she perceives or suspects these little artifices, she takes it almost as ill as if I had attempted to defraud her. In short, sir, her unshaken virtue and greatness of soul under misfortunes, makes me consider her as a prodigy, and often draws tears of pity and admiration from me.

Free. Ah! women's tears lie very near their eyes! I never cried in my life; and yet I can feel, too; I can admire, I can esteem, but what signifies whimpering? Hark ye, Mrs Goodman! This is a very extraordinary account you give of this young woman; you have raised my curiosity, and I'll go see this lodger of yours; I am rather out of spirits, and it will serve to amuse me.

Mrs Good. Oh, sir, you can't see her; she neither pays visits, nor receives them, but lives in the most retired manner in the world.

Free. So much the better. I love retirement as well as she. Where are her apartments?

Mrs Good. On this very floor, on the other side of the staircase.

Free. I'll go and see her immediately.

Mrs Good. Indeed you can't, sir. It is impossible.

Free. Impossible! where is the impossibility of going into a room? Come along!

Mrs Good. For Heaven's sake, Mr Freeport!

Free. Pshaw! I have no time to lose; I have business half an hour hence.

Mrs Good. But won't it be rather indelicate, sir? Let me prepare her first.

Free. Prepare her—With all my heart—But remember that I am a man of business, Mrs Goodman, and have no time to waste in ceremony and compliment.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—AMELIA'S *Apartment.*

AMELIA *at work, and* MOLLY.

Ame. No, Polly! if lord Falbridge comes again, I am resolved not to see him.

Mol. Indeed, madam, he loves you above all the world; I am sure of it; and I verily believe he will run mad, if you don't hear what he has to say for himself.

Ame. Speak no more of him.

Enter MRS GOODMAN.

Mrs Goodman!

Mrs Good. Pardon me, madam! Here is a gentleman of my acquaintance begs you would give him leave to speak with you.

Ame. A gentleman! who is he?

Mrs Good. His name is Freeport, madam. He has a few particularities; but he is the best-hearted man in the world. Pray, let him come in, madam!

Ame. By no means; you know I receive visits from nobody.

Enter FREEPORT.

Bless me! he's here! This is very extraordinary indeed. Mrs Goodman.

Free. Don't disturb yourself, young woman! don't disturb yourself!

Mol. Mighty free and easy, methinks!

Ame. Excuse me, sir; I am not used to receive visits from persons entirely unknown.

Free. Unknown! There is not a man in all London better known than I am. I am a merchant; my name is Freeport; Freeport of Crutched-Friars; inquire upon 'Change!

Ame. Mrs Goodman! I never saw the gentleman before. I am surprised at his coming here.

Free. Pooh! Prithee! Mrs Goodman knows me well enough. [MRS GOODMAN *talks apart with* AMELIA.] Ay! that's right, Mrs Goodman. Let her know who I am, and tell her to make herself easy.

Mrs Good. But the lady does not chuse we should trouble her, sir.

Free. Trouble her! I'll give her no trouble; I came to drink a dish of tea with you; let your maid get it ready, and we will have it here instead of your parlour—In the mean time, I will talk with this lady; I have something to say to her.

Ame. If you had any business, sir—

Free. Business! I tell you I have very particular business; so sit down, and let's have the tea.

Mrs Good. You should not have followed me so soon, sir.

Free. Pooh, prithee! [*Exit* MRS GOODMAN.

Mol. This is the oddest man I ever saw in my life!

Ame. Well, sir, as I see you are a particular acquaintance of Mrs Goodman—But, pray, what are your commands for me, sir! [*They sit.*

Free. I tell you what, young woman; I am a plain man, and will tell you my mind in an instant. I am told that you are one of the best women in the world: very virtuous, and very poor. I like you for that: but they say you are excessively proud too; now, I don't like you for that, madam.

Mol. Free and easy still, I see.

Ame. And pray, sir, who told you so?

Free. Mrs Goodman.

Ame. She has deceived you, sir; not in regard to my pride, perhaps, for there is a certain right pride which every body, especially women, ought to possess; and as to virtue, it is no more than my duty; but as to poverty, I disclaim it; they who want nothing, cannot be said to be poor.

Free. It is no such thing: you don't speak the truth; and that is worse than being proud. I know very well that you are as poor as Job, that you are in want of common necessaries, and don't make a good meal above once a fortnight.

Mol. My mistress fasts for her health, sir.

Free. Hold your tongue, hussy! what, are you proud too?

Mol. Lord, what a strange man!

Free. But however, madam, proud or not proud does not signify twopence—Hark ye, young woman! it is a rule with me (as it ought to be with every good Christian) to give a tenth part of my fortune in charity. In the account of my profits, there stands, at present, the sum of two thousand pounds on the credit side of my books; so that I am two hundred pounds in arrear. This I look upon as a debt due from my fortune to your poverty—Yes, your poverty I say; so, never deny it. There's a bank note for two hundred pounds; and now I am out of your debt—Where the deuce is this tea, I wonder?

Mol. I never saw such a man in my life!

Ame. I don't know that I ever was so thoroughly confounded! [*Apart.*]—Sir!

[*To* FREEPORT.

Free. Well?

Ame. This noble action has surprised me still more than your conversation; but you must excuse my refusal of your kindness; for, I must confess, that if I were to accept what you offer, I don't know when I should be able to restore it.

Free. Restore it! why who wants you to restore it? I never dreamt of restitution.

Ame. I feel, I feel your goodness to the bottom of my soul; but you must excuse me. I have no occasion for your bounty; take your note, sir, and bestow it where it is wanted.

Mol. Lord, madam! you are ten times stranger than the gentleman—I tell you what, sir; [*To* FREEPORT.] it does not signify talking; we are in the greatest distress in the world, and if it had not been for the kindness and good nature of Mrs Goodman, we might have died by this time. My lady has concealed her distress from every body that was willing and able to relieve her; you have come to the knowledge of it in spite of her teeth; and I hope that you will oblige her, in spite of her teeth, to accept of your generous offer.

Ame. No more, my dear Polly; if you would not have me die with shame, say no more! Return the gentleman his note, with my best thanks for his kindness; tell him, I durst not accept of it; for when a woman receives presents from a man, the world will always suspect that she pays for them at the expence of her virtue.

Free. What's that! what does she say, child?

Mol. Lord, sir, I hardly know what she says. She says, that when a gentleman makes a young lady presents, he is always supposed to have a design upon her virtue.

Free. Nonsense! why should she suspect me of an ungenerous design, because I do a generous action?

Mol. Do you hear, madam?

Ame. Yes, I hear; I admire; but I must persist in my refusal: if that scandalous fellow Spatter were to hear of this, he would stick at saying nothing.

Free. Eh! what's that?

Mol. She is afraid you should be taken for her lover, sir.

Free. I for your lover! not I. I never saw you before. I don't love you; so, make no scruples upon that account. I like you well enough, but I don't love you at all: not at all, I tell you—If you have a mind never to see my face any more, good by t'ye!—You shall never see me any more. If you like I should come back again, I'll come back again; but I lose time; I have business; your servant! [*Going.*

Ame. Stay, sir! do not leave me without receiving the sincerest acknowledgments of my gratitude and esteem; but, above all, receive your note again, and do not put me any longer to the blush!

Free. The woman is a fool!

Enter MRS GOODMAN.

Ame. Come hither, I beseech you, Mrs Goodman.

Mrs Good. Your pleasure, madam?

Ame. Here! take this note which that gentleman has given me by mistake; return it to him, I charge you; assure him of my esteem and admiration; but let him know I need no assistance, and cannot accept it. [*Exit* AME.

Mrs Good. Ah, Mr Freeport! you have been at your old trade. You are always endeavouring to do good actions in secret; but the world always finds you out, you see.

Mol. Well; I don't believe there are two stranger people in England, than my mistress and that gentleman—one so ready to part with mo-

ney, and the other so unwilling to receive it—don't believe her, sir; for, between friends, she is in very great need of assistance, I assure you.

Mrs Good. Indeed, I believe so.

Free. Oh, I have no doubt on't; so I'll tell you what, Mrs Goodman, keep the note, and supply her wants out of it without her knowledge—and now I think of it, that way is better than t'other.

Mol. I never saw such a strange man in my life! [*Exit* MOL.

Mrs Good. I shall obey your kind commands, sir—Poor soul! my heart bleeds for her; her virtue and misfortunes touch me to the soul!

Free. I have some little feeling for her, too; but she is too proud. A fine face; fine figure; well-behaved; well-bred; and, I dare say, an excellent heart!—But she is too proud; tell her so, d'ye hear? tell her she is too proud. I shall be too late for my business—I'll see her again soon—It is a pity she is so proud. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A hall.*

SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *alone.*

Sir Wil. A YOUNG woman! a native of Scotland! her name Amelia! supposed to be in the greatest distress, and living in total retirement! If fortune should, for once, smile upon me, and have thrown me into the very same house! I don't know what to think of it; and yet, so many uncommon circumstances together, recall the memory of my misfortunes, and awaken all the father in my bosom.—I must be satisfied.

Enter MOLLY *crossing the stage.*

Sir Wil. Madam! will you permit me to speak one word to you?

Mol. [*coming forward.*] If you please; what is your pleasure, sir?

Sir Wil. I presume, madam, you are the charming young woman I heard of?

Mol. I have a few charms in the eyes of some folks, to be sure, sir.

Sir Wil. And you are a native of Scotland, they tell me?

Mol. I am; at your service, sir.

Sir Wil. Will you give me leave to ask the name of your family? Who is your father?

Mol. I really don't remember my father.

Sir Wil. Ha! not remember him, do you say? [*Earnestly.*

Mol. No, sir; but I have been told that he was—

Sir Wil. Who, madam?

Mol. One of the most eminent bakers in Aberdeen, sir.

Sir Wil. Oh, I conceive! You live, I suppose, with the young lady I meant to speak to. I mistook you for the lady herself.

Mol. You did me a great deal of honour, I assure you, sir.

Sir Wil. But you are acquainted with your mistress's family?

Mol. Family, sir!

Sir Wil. Ay; who are her parents?

Mol. She comes of very creditable parents, I promise you, sir.

Sir Wil. I don't doubt it; but who are they? I have particular reasons for inquiring.

Mol. Very likely so; but I must beg to be excused, sir.

Sir Wil. Of what age is your mistress? you will tell me that, at least.

Mol. Oh, as to her age, she don't care who knows that; she is too young to deny her age yet a-while. She is about one-and-twenty, sir.

Sir Wil. Precisely the age of my Amelia. [*Aside.*] One-and-twenty, you say? [*To* MOL.

Mol. Yes, sir; and I am about two-and twenty; there is no great difference between us.

Sir Wil. [*Apart.*] It must be so; her age, her country, her manner of living, all concur to prove her mine; my dear child, whom I left to taste of misfortune from her cradle!

Mol. [*Apart.*] What is he muttering, I wonder? I wish this one-and-twenty has not turned the old gentleman's head.

Sir Wil. Let me beg the favour of you to conduct me to your mistress: I want to speak with her.

Mol. She will see no company, sir; she is indisposed; she is in great affliction; and receives no visits at all.

Sir Wil. Mine is not a visit of form or ceremony, or even impertinent curiosity; but on the most urgent business. Tell her, I am her fellow-countryman.

Mol. What! are you of Scotland, too, sir?

Sir Wil. I am. Tell her I take part in her afflictions, and may, perhaps, bring her some consolation.

Mol. There is something mighty particular about this old gentleman! He has not brought another two hundred pounds, sure! [*Apart.*] Well, sir; since you are so very pressing, since you say you are our fellow-countryman, if you will walk this way, I'll speak to my mistress, and see what I can do for you.

Sir Wil. I am obliged to you. [*Exit* MOLLY. And now, if I may trust the forebodings of an old fond heart, I am going to throw my arms about my daughter. [*Exit.*

As SIR WILLIAM *follows* MOLLY *out on one side,* SPATTER *appears on the other.*

Spat. There they go! what the deuce can that old fellow and Amelia's maid do together? The slut is certainly conducting him to her mistress! In less than half an hour I expect that Amelia will be apprehended. In the mean time, I must be upon the watch; for, since I have laid the information, it is high time that I should collect some materials to support it.—Who comes here? Lord Falbridge's valet de chambre: his errand is to Amelia, without doubt; something may be learnt there, perhaps.

Enter LA FRANCE.

Ha! Monsieur La France! your servant.

La France. Serviteur! ver glad to see you, Monsieur Spatter.

Spat. Well; what brings you here? eh, Monsieur La France?

La France. Von lettre, Monsieur.

Spat. A letter to whom?

La France. From my lor to Mademoiselle Amelie.

Spat. Oh! you're mistaken, Monsieur; that letter is for lady Alton.

La France. Lady Alton! no, ma foi! it be for Mademoiselle. I am no mistake. Je ne me trompe pas la dessus.

Spat. Why, have not you carried several letters from lord Falbridge to lady Alton?

La France. Oh, que oui! but dis be for de young laty dat lif here; for Mademoiselle: mi lor love her! ma foi; he lov her à la folie.

Spat. And he loved lady Alton à la folie, did not he?

La France. Oh, que non! he lov her so gentely! si tranquilement; ma foi, he lov her à la Françoise.—But now he lov Mademoiselle; he no eat, no sleep, no speak, but Mademoiselle; no tink, but of Mademoiselle; quite an oder ting, Monsieur Spatter, quite an oder ting!

Spat. Well, well; no matter for that; the letter is for lady Alton, I promise you.

La France. Ah! pardonnez moi!

Spat. It is, I assure you; and to convince you of it, see here, Monsieur! lady Alton has sent you five guineas to pay the postage.

La France. Five guineas! ma foi, I believe I was mistake, indeed.

Spat. Ay, ay; I told you you were mistaken: and after all, if it should not be for her ladyship, she will inclose it in another case, and send it to Amelia, and nobody will be the wiser.

La France. Fort bien; ver well; la voila. [*Gives the letter.*] I have got five guinees; I don't care.

Spat. Why should you? Where's the harm, if one woman should receive a letter written to another? There will be nothing lost by it; for, if Amelia don't receive this, she will receive others; and letters of this sort are all alike, you know.

La France. Begar dat is ver true. Adieu, sir.—I have execute my commission: adieu. Oh! je fais bien mes commissions, moi!

[*Exit* LA FRANCE.

Spat. See the effects of secret service-money! Intelligence must be paid for; and the bribing couriers is a fair stratagem, by all the laws of war. Shall I break open this letter, or carry it to lady Alton as it is? No; I'll read it myself, that I may have the credit of communicating the contents. Let me see! [*Opens the letter, and reads.*] 'Thou dearest, most respectable, and 'most virtuous of women!' So! this is à la folie, indeed, as Monsieur La France calls it.—'If any 'consideration could add to my remorse, for the 'injury I have offered you, it would be the dis-'covery of your real character.' Ah, ah! 'I 'know who you are. I know you are the daugh-'ter of the unhappy sir William Douglas.'—So, so!—'Judge, then, of the tumult of my soul; 'which is only preserved from the horrors of des-'pair, by the hopes of rendering some service to 'the father, which may, perhaps, in some mea-'sure, atone for my behaviour to his too justly of-'fended daughter. Give me leave, this evening, 'to sue for my pardon at your feet, and to in-'form you of the measures I have taken. In the 'mean time, believe me unalterably yours.

'FALBRIDGE.'

This is a precious packet, indeed!—Now, if I could discover the father, too!—His lordship's visit will be too late in the evening, I fancy; the lady will not be at home; but, before she goes, once more to my old trade of eaves-dropping about her apartments! The old gentleman and she are certainly together, and their conversation, perhaps, may be curious. At all events, lady Alton must be gratified. Men of letters never get any thing of their patrons, but by sacrificing to their foibles. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—AMELIA's *apartment.*

SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *and* AMELIA *discovered sitting.*

Sir Wil. Every word you utter, touches me to the soul. Nothing but such noble sentiments could have supported your spirit under so many misfortunes.

Ame. Perhaps it is to my misfortunes that I owe those sentiments. Had I been brought up in ease and luxury, my mind, which has learnt fortitude from distress, might have been enfeebled by prosperity.

Sir Wil. Thou most amiable of thy sex, I conjure thee to hide nothing from me. You say you were born at Aberdeen; you confess that you are derived from one of those unhappy families, who suffered themselves to be so fatally deluded, and drawn from their allegiance to the best of kings.

Why, why then, will you not tell me all? Why do you endeavour to conceal your name and family?

Ame. My duty to my family obliges me to silence. My father's life is forfeited by the sentence of the law; and he owes his existence, at this hour, to flight or secrecy. He may be in England; he may, for aught I know, be in London; and the divulging my name and family might create a fresh search after him, and expose him to new perils. Your conversation, it is true, has inspired me with respect and tenderness; but yet, you are a stranger to me: I have reason to fear every thing, and one word may undo me.

Sir Wil. Alas! one word may make us both happy. Tell me; of what age were you when your cruel fortune separated you from your father?

Ame. An infant; so young, that I have not the least traces of him in my memory.

Sir Wil. And your mother; what became of her?

Ame. She, as I have often heard, was carried off by a fever, while she was preparing to embark with me, to follow the fortunes of my father. He, driven almost to despair by this last stroke of ill fortune, continually shifted his place of residence abroad; but, for some years past, whether by his death, the miscarriage of letters, the infidelity of friends, or other accidents, I have not received the least intelligence of him; and now, I almost begin to despair of hearing of him again, though I still persist in my inquiries.

Sir Wil. [*Rising.*] It must be so; it is as I imagined. All these touching circumstances are melancholy witnesses of the truth of it. Yes, my child! I am that unhappy father whom you lost so early; I am that unfortunate husband, whom death, and my unhappy fate, almost at the very same period, divorced from the best of wives; I am—I am sir William Douglas.

Ame. Sir William Douglas! have I lived to see my father! then Heaven has heard my prayers; this is the first happy moment of my unfortunate life.—[*Embracing.*]—And yet, your presence here fills me with apprehensions; I tremble for your safety, for your life; how durst you venture your person in this kingdom? how can you expose yourself to the danger of discovery in this town? My whole soul is in a tumult of fear and joy.

Sir Wil. Do not be alarmed, my Amelia; fear nothing; Heaven begins to smile upon my fortune. To find thee so unexpectedly, to find thee with a mind so superior to distress, softens the anguish of my past life, and gives me happy omens of the future.

Ame. Oh, sir! by the joy I receive from the embraces of a father, let me conjure you to provide for your safety! do not expose me to the horror of losing you again; of losing you for ever! Quit this town immediately; every moment that you remain in it, is at the hazard of your life; I am ready to accompany you to any part of the world.

Sir Wil. My dear child! how I grieve that your youth and virtue should be involved in my misfortunes! Yes, we will quit this kingdom; prepare for your departure, and we may leave London this evening.

Enter OWEN, *hastily.*

Ha! Owen! thou art come at a happy moment. I have found my daughter. This is your young mistress, the paragon of her sex, my dear, my amiable Amelia.

Owen. Oh, sir, this is no time for congratulation. You are in the most imminent danger.

Sir Wil. What is the matter?

Owen. The officers of government are, at this instant, in the house. I saw them enter; I heard them say they had authority to apprehend some suspected person, and I ran immediately to inform you of your danger.

Ame. Oh, Heaven! My father, what will you do?

Owen. Do not be alarmed, sir; we are two; we are armed; and we may, perhaps, be able to make our way through them; I will stand by you to the last drop of my blood.

Sir Wil. Thou faithful creature! Stay, Owen; our fears may betray us: till we are sure we are attacked, let us shew no signs of opposition.

Enter MOLLY, *hastily.*

Mol. My dear mistress! we are ruined; we are undone for ever.

Ame. There are officers of justice in the house; I have heard it; tell me, tell me this instant, whom do they seek for?

Mol. For you, madam, for you; they have a warrant to apprehend you, they say.

Ame. But they have no warrant to apprehend any body else?

Mol. No, madam; nobody else; but I will follow you to the end of the world.

Ame. My dear Polly, I did not mean you. Retire, sir! [*To* SIR WILLIAM.] For Heaven's sake, leave me to their mercy! they can have no facts against me; my life has been as innocent as unfortunate, and I must soon be released.

Sir Wil. No, my child; I will not leave thee.

Mol. My child? This is sir William Douglas, then, as sure as I am alive!

Sir Wil. Besides, returning at such a time might create suspicion, and incur the danger we would wish to avoid.

Mol. They will be in the room in a moment; I think I hear them upon the stairs; they would have been here before me, if Mr Freeport had not come in and stopt them.

Sir Wil. Courage, my dear Amelia!

Ame. Alas, sir! I have no terrors but for you.

Owen. They are here, sir!

Mol. Oh, lord! here they are, indeed! I am frighted out of my wits!

Enter MRS GOODMAN, FREEPORT, *and Officer.*

Free. A warrant to seize her? a harmless young woman? it is impossible!

Offi. Pardon me, sir; if the young lady goes by the name of Amelia Walton, I have a warrant to apprehend her.

Free. On what account?

Offi. As a dangerous person.

Free. Dangerous!

Offi. Yes, sir; suspected of disaffection and treasonable practices.

Ame. I am the unhappy object of your search, sir; give me leave to know the substance of the accusation.

Offi. I cannot tell you particulars, madam; but information upon oath has been made against you, and I am ordered to apprehend you.

Mrs Good. But you will accept of bail, sir? I will be bound for all I am worth in the world.

Offi. In these cases, madam, bail is not usual; and, if ever accepted at all, it is excessively high; and given by persons of very large property, and known character.

Free. Well; my property is large enough, and my character very well known. My name is Freeport.

Offi. I know you very well, sir.

Free. I'll answer for her appearance; I'll be bound in a penalty of five hundred pounds, a thousand, two thousand, or what sum you please.

Offi. And will you enter into the recognisance immediately?

Free. With all my heart; come along! [*Going.*

Offi. And are you in earnest, sir?

Free. Ay, to be sure. Why not?

Offi. Because, sir, I'll venture to say, there are but few people that place their money on such securities.

Free. So much the worse; he, who can employ it in doing good, places it on the best security, and puts it out at the highest interest in the world. [*Exit* FREEMAN, *with the Officer.*

Sir Wil. I can hardly trust my eyes and ears! who is this benevolent gentleman?

Mrs Good. I don't wonder you are surprised at Mr Freeport's manner of proceeding, sir; but it is his way. He is not a man of compliment; but he does the most essential service in less time, than others take in making protestations.

Mol. Here he is again! Heaven reward him!

Re-enter FREEPORT.

Free. So! that matter is dispatched; now to our other affairs! this is a busy day with me.—Look'ye, sir William; we must be brief; there is no time to be lost.

Sir Wil. How! am I betrayed then!

Free. Betrayed! no; but you are discovered.

Owen. What! my master discovered! [*Offers to draw.*

Free. [*To* OWEN.] Nay, never clap thy hand to thy sword, old Trusty! your master is in danger, it is true; but not from me, I promise you. Go, and get him a post-chaise, and let him pack off this instant; that is the best way of shewing your attachment to him at present.——Twenty years, sir William, have not made so great an alteration in you, but I knew you the moment I saw you.

Mrs Good. Harbour no distrust of Mr Freeport, sir; he is one of the worthiest men living.

Ame. I know his worthiness. His behaviour to the officer but this moment, uncommonly generous as it appeared, is not the first testimony he has given me to day, of his noble disposition.

Free. Noble! p'shaw! nonsense!

Sir Wil. [*To* FREEPORT.] Sir; the kind manner in which you have been pleased to interest yourself in my affairs, has almost as much overpowered me, as if you had surprised me with hostile proceedings. Which way shall I thank you for your goodness to me and my Amelia?

Free. Don't thank me at all; when you are out of danger, perhaps I may make a proposal to you, that will not be disagreeable. At present, think of nothing but your escape; for I should not be surprised, if they were very shortly to make you the same compliment they have paid to Amelia: and, in your case, which is really a serious one, they might not be in the humour to accept of my recognisance.

Mrs Good. Mr Freeport is in the right, sir; every moment of delay is hazardous; let us prevail upon you to depart immediately! Amelia, being wholly innocent, cannot be long detained in custody, and as soon as she is released, I will bring her to you, wherever you shall appoint.

Free. Ay, ay; you must be gone directly, sir! and as you may want ready money upon the road, take my purse! [*Offering his purse.*

Sir Wil. No, thou truest friend, I have no need of it. With what wonderful goodness have you acted towards me and my unhappy family!

Free. Wonderful! why wonderful? Would not you have done the same, if you had been in my place?

Sir Wil. I hope I should.

Free. Well, then, where is the wonder of it? Come, come, let us see you make ready for your departure!

Sir Wil. Thou best of men!

Free. Best of men? Heaven forbid! I have done no more than my duty by you. I am a man myself: and am bound to be a friend to all mankind, you know. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—SPATTER'S *apartment.*

LADY ALTON *with a letter in her hand, and* SPATTER.

Lady Alt. THANKS, my good Spatter! many thanks for this precious epistle! more precious at present than one of Ovid, Pliny, or Cicero. It is at once a billet-doux and a state paper; and serves at the same time to convict her of conspiring against me, and the public.

Spat. It is a valuable manuscript, to be sure, madam; and yet that is but the least half of my discoveries, since I left your ladyship.

Lady Alt. But is not this half, according to the Grecian axiom, more than the whole, Mr Spatter?

Spat. When you know the whole, I believe you will think not, madam.

Lady Alt. Out with it then! I am impatient to be mistress of it.

Spat. By intercepting this letter of lord Falbridge's, your ladyship sees that we have discovered Amelia to be the daughter of sir William Douglas.

Lady Alt. True.

Spat. But what would you say, madam, if I had found out the father himself, too?

Lady Alt. Sir William Douglas!

Spat. Is now in this house, madam.

Lady Alt. Impossible!

Spat. Nothing more certain. He arrived this morning under a feigned name. I saw him conducted to Amelia's apartment. This raised my suspicion, and I planted myself at her door, with all the circumspection of a spy, and address of a chambermaid. There I overheard their mutual acknowledgments of each other; and a curious interview it was. First they wept for grief; and then they wept for joy; and then they wept for grief again. Their tears, however, were soon interrupted by the arrival of the officer, whose purpose was partly defeated, as you have already heard, by the intervention of Freeport.

Lady Alt. Yes, the brute! But that delay was not half so unfortunate, as your discoveries have been happy, Spatter; for my revenge shall now return on them with redoubled fury.—Issue out upon them once more; see what they are about; and be sure to give me immediate notice, if lord Falbridge should come. [*Going.*

Spat. Stay, madam. After intercepting the letter, I sent for your ladyship, that, at so critical a juncture, you might be present on the spot. And if you go home again, we shall lose time, which perhaps may be precious, in running to and fro. Suppose you step into the study, till I return. You will find my own answer to my last pamphlet, and the two first sheets of the next month's Magazine to amuse you.

Lady Alt. Planned like a wise general! Do you then go, and reconnoitre the enemy, while I lie here in ambush to reinforce you as soon as there shall be occasion. Do but give the word, we'll make a vigorous sally, put their whole body to rout, and take Amelia and her father prisoners. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*A hall.*

Enter FREEPORT.

Free. I don't know how it is; but this Amelia, here, runs in my head strangely. Ever since I saw her, I think of nothing else. I am not in love with her? In love with her! that's nonsense. But I feel a kind of uneasiness, a sort of pain that—I don't know what to make of it—— I'll speak to her father about her.

Enter OWEN.

Well, old true-penny! Have you prepared every thing for sir William's departure?

Owen. We had need be going, indeed, sir; we are in continual danger while we stay here; who d'ye think lodged the information against Madam Amelia?

Free. Who?

Owen. A person who lodges in this very house, it seems: one Mr Spatter, sir.

Free. Spatter! how d'ye know?

Owen. I had it from one of the officers, who came to apprehend her.

Free. A dog! I could find in my heart to cut off his ears with my own hands, and save him the disgrace of the pillory.

Owen. My poor master is always unfortunate. If lord Brumpton had lived a week longer, sir William might perhaps have been out of the reach of their malice.

Free. Lord Brumpton?

Owen. Yes, sir. He was soliciting my master's pardon; but died before he had accomplished his benevolent intentions.

Free. Ha! A thought strikes me! [*Apart.*]—Hark ye, friend, [*To* OWEN] does sir William know the present lord Brumpton?

Owen. No, sir. The late lord had no children, or near relations, living; and, indeed, he was the only surviving friend of my poor master in the kingdom.

Free. Is the chaise at the door?

Owen. Not yet, sir; but I expect it every moment.

Free. Run to your master, and desire him not to go till I see him. Tell him I am going out upon his business, and will be back within this hour.

Owen. I will let him know immediately. Ah, you're a true friend, indeed, sir.

[*Shaking him earnestly by the hand.*

Free. Pooh! prithee!

Owen. Ah! Heaven preserve you!

[*Exit* OWEN.

Free. Fare thee well, old honesty! By the death of lord Brumpton, without children or near relations living, as Owen says, the title and estate come to my old friend Jack Brumpton, of Liverpool, who is of a distant branch, a fourth cousin, for aught I know, who has past his whole life in a compting-house; and who, a few years ago, no more dreamt of being a lord, than grand signior, or great mogul. He has so good a heart, that I believe it is impossible even for a title to corrupt it. I know he is in town; so I'll go to him immediately, acquaint him with the obligation entailed on him, to be of service to sir William, and make him heir to the benevolence of his predecessor, as well as his wealth and dignity. [*Going, stops.*] Who's here? Mrs Goodman and Spatter, as I live! Oh the dog! my blood rises at the villain. If I don't take care, I shall incur an action of battery for caneing the rascal.

Enter MRS GOODMAN *and* SPATTER.

Mrs Good. In short, Mr Spatter, I must beg leave to give you warning, and desire that you would provide yourself with another lodging as soon as possible.

Spat. What now? What the deuce is the matter with you, Mrs Goodman?

Mrs Good. I see now the meaning of lady Alton's recommendation of such a lodger to my house, as well as of her visits to Amelia, and her frequent conferences with you, sir.

Spat. The woman is certainly out of her senses.

Free. What has been laid to your charge is no joke, sir.

Spat. What! are you there to keep up her backhand, Mr Freeport! What is all this?

Free. You are found out to be a spy, sir.

Mrs Good. A person who pries into the secrets of families, merely to betray them.

Free. An informer!

Mrs Good. An eaves-dropper!

Free. A liar!

Spat. Right-hand and left! this is too much: what the plague is the matter with you both?

Mrs Good. Did not you go and tell that Amelia was a native of Scotland?

Spat. Well; and where's the harm of being born in Scotland?

Free. None; except by your malicious interpretation, rascal; by means of which, you made it the ground of an information against her, and were the cause of her being apprehended.

Spat. And you were the cause of her being released; every man in his way, Mr Freeport!

Free. Look you, sirrah! you are one of those wretches, who miscall themselves authors; a fellow, whose heart, and tongue, and pen, are equally scandalous; who try to insinuate yourself every where, to make mischief, if there is none, and to increase it, if you find any. But if you fetch and carry like a spaniel, you must be treated like one. I have observed that you are always loitering in the passages; but if I catch you within the wind of a door again, I'll beat you till you are as black as your own ink, sirrah.—Now, you know my mind. [*Exit.*

Spat. Very civil, and very polite, indeed, Mr Freeport. Ha! here comes my friend, lord Falbridge.

Mrs Good. Lord Falbridge your friend? For shame, Mr Spatter!

Enter LORD FALBRIDGE, *hastily.*

Lord Fal. Mrs Goodman, I rejoice to see you. Tell me, how does my Amelia? I have heard of her distress, and flew to her relief.—Was she alarmed? Was she terrified?

Mrs Good. Not much, my lord: she sustained the shock with the same constancy that she endures every affliction.

Lord Fal. I know her merit; I am too well acquainted with her greatness of soul; and hope it is not yet too late for me to do justice to her virtue. Go to her, my dear Mrs Goodman, and tell her, I beg to see her: I have something that concerns her very nearly, to impart to her.

Mrs Good. I will, my lord. [*Exit.*

Lord Fal. Oh, Mr Spatter! I did not see you. What have you got there, sir?

[*Seeing a paper in his hand.*

Spat. Proposals for a new work, my lord!—May I beg the honour of your lordship's name among my list of subscribers?

Lord Fal. With all my heart, sir. I am already in your debt on another account.

[*Pulling out his purse.*

Spat. To me, my lord? You do me a great deal of honour; I should be very proud to be of the least service to your lordship.

Lord Fal. You have been of great service to me already, sir. It was you, I find, lodged the information against this young lady.

Spat. I did no more than my duty, my lord.

Lord Fal. Yes; you did me a favour, sir.—I consider only the deed, and put the intention quite out of the question. You meant to do Amelia a prejudice, and you have done me a service: for, by endeavouring to bring her into distress, you gave me an opportunity of shewing my eagerness to relieve her. There, sir! there is for the good you have done, while you meant to make mischief. [*Giving him a few guineas.*] But take this along with it; if you ever presume to mention the name of Amelia any more, or give yourself the least concern about her, or her affairs, I'll——

Spat. I am obliged to your lordship.

[*Bowing.*

Lord Fal. Be gone, sir; leave me.

Spat. Your most humble servant, my lord!—So! I am abused by every body; and yet I get money by every body: egad, I believe I am a much cleverer fellow than I thought I was!

[*Exit.*

Lord Fal. Alas! I am afraid that Amelia will not see me. What would I not suffer to repair the affront that I have offered her?

Enter MOLLY.

Ha! Polly! how much am I obliged to you for sending me notice of Amelia's distress?

Mol. Hush, my lord! Speak lower, for Heaven's sake! My mistress has so often forbade me to tell any thing about her, that I tremble still at the thoughts of the confidence I have put in you. I was bewitched, I think, to let you know who she was.

Lord Fal. You were inspired, Polly! Heaven inspired you to acquaint me with all her distresses, that I might recommend myself to her favour again, by my zeal to serve her, though against her will.

Mol. That was the reason I told you; for else, I am sure, I should die with grief to give her the least uneasiness.

Lord Fal. But may I hope to see Amelia? Will she let me speak with her?

Mol. No, indeed, my lord; she is so offended at your late behaviour, that she will not even suffer us to mention your name to her.

Lord Fal. Death and confusion! What a wretch have I made myself! Go, Polly; go and let her know, that I must speak with her; inform her, that I have been active for her welfare; and have authority to release her from the information lodged against her.

Mol. I will let her know your anxiety, my lord; but, indeed, I am afraid she will not see you.

Lord Fal. She must, Polly; she must. The agonies of my mind are intolerable. Tell her, she must come, if it be but for a moment; or else, in the bitterness of despair, I fear I shall break into her apartment, and throw myself at her feet.

Mol. Lud! you frighten me out of my wits. Have a little patience, and I'll tell my mistress what a taking you are in.

Lord Fal. Fly, then! I can taste no comfort, till I hear her resolution. [*Exit* MOLLY.

How culpably have I acted towards the most amiable of her sex! But I will make her every reparation in my power. The warmth and sincerity of my repentance shall extort forgiveness from her. By Heaven, she comes!—Death! how servilely does an ungenerous action abase us! I am conscious of the superiority of her virtue, and almost dread the encounter.

Enter AMELIA.

Ame. I understand, my lord, that, by your application, I am held free of the charge laid against me; and that I am once more entirely at liberty. I am truly sensible of your good offices, and thank you for the trouble you have taken.

[*Going.*

Lord Fal. Stay, madam! do not leave me in still greater distraction than you found me. If my zeal to serve you has had any weight with you, it must have inspired you with more favourable dispositions towards me.

Ame. You must pardon me, my lord, if I cannot so soon forget a very late transaction. After that, all your proceedings alarm me: nay, even your present zeal to serve me, creates new suspicions, while I cannot but be doubtful of the motives from which it proceeds.

Lord Fal. Cruel Amelia! for, guilty as I am, I must complain, since it was your own diffidence that was in part the occasion of my crime. Why did you conceal your rank and condition from me? Why did not you tell me, that you were the daughter of the unhappy sir William Douglas?

Ame. Who told you that I was so, my lord?

Lord Fal. Nay, do not deny it now: it is in vain to attempt to conceal it any longer; it was the main purport of my letter to apprize you of my knowledge of it.

Ame. Your letter, my lord!

Lord Fal. Yes; wild as it was, it was the offspring of compunction and remorse; and if it conveyed the dictates of my soul, it spoke me the truest of penitents. You did not disdain to read it, sure!

Ame. Indeed, my lord, I never received any letter from you.

Lord Fal. Not received any! I sent it this very morning. My own servant was the messenger. What can this mean? Has he betrayed me? At present, suffer me to compensate, as far as possible, for the wrongs I have done you: receive my hand and heart, and let an honourable marriage obliterate the very idea of my past conduct.

Ame. No, my lord; you have discovered me, it is true: I am the daughter of sir William Douglas. Judge for yourself, then; and think how I ought to look upon a man, who has insulted my distress, and endeavoured to tempt me to dishonour my family.

Lord Fal. Your justice must acquit me of the intention of that offence, since, at that time, I was ignorant of your illustrious extraction.

Ame. It may be so; yet your excuse is but an aggravation of the crime. You imagined me, perhaps, to be of as low and mean an origin, as you thought me poor and unhappy. You supposed that I had no title to my chastity but my honour, no protection but my virtue; and yet, you attempted to rob me of that treasure, which

was the only jewel that could raise the meanness of my birth, or support me under my misfortunes; which, instead of relieving, you chose to make the pandar to your vile inclinations.

Lord Fal. Thou most amiable of thy sex, how I adore thee! Even thy resentment renders thee more lovely in my eyes, and makes thee, if possible, dearer to me than ever. Nothing but our union can ever make me happy.

Ame. Such an union must not, cannot be.

Lord Fal. Why? What should forbid it?

Ame. My father.

Lord Fal. Your father! where is he? In whatever part of the world he now resides, I will convey you to him, and he shall ratify our happiness.

Enter MOLLY, *hastily.*

Mol. Oh Lord, madam! here's the angry lady coming again; she that made such a racket this morning.

Ame. Lady Alton?

Mol. Yes, madam.

Lord Fal. Lady Alton! Confusion! Stay, madam! [*To* AMELIA, *who is going.*

Ame. No, my lord; I have endured one affront from her already to-day; why should I expose myself to a second? Her ladyship, you know, has a prior claim to your attention. [*Exit.*

Lord Fal. Distraction! I had a thousand things to say to her.—Go, my dear Polly, follow my Amelia! Plead earnestly in my behalf; urge all the tenderest things that fancy can suggest, and return to me as soon as lady Alton is departed.

Mol. I will, my lord. Oh lud! here she is, as I am alive! [*Exit.*

Lady Fal. Abandoned by Amelia! and hunted by this fury! I shall run wild!

Enter LADY ALTON.

Lady Alt. You may well turn away from me; at length I have full conviction of your baseness. I am now assured of my own shame, and your falsehood. Perfidious monster!

Lord Fal. It is unjust to tax me with perfidy, madam. I have rather acted with too much sincerity. I long ago frankly declared to you the utter impossibility of our reconciliation.

Lady Alt. What! after having made your addresses to me? After having sworn the most inviolable affection for me? Oh, thou arch-deceiver!

Lord Fal. I never deceived you: when I professed a passion, I really entertained one: when I made my addresses to you, I wished to call you my wife.

Lady Alt. And what can you allege in excuse of your falsehood? Have you not been guilty of the blackest perjury?

Lord Fal. The change of my sentiments needs no excuse from me, madam; you were yourself the occasion of it. In spite of the torrent of fashion, and the practice of too many others of my rank in life, I have a relish for domestic happiness; and have always wished for a wife, who might render my home a delightful refuge from the cares and bustle of the world abroad. These were my views with you; but, thank Heaven, your outrageous temper happily betrayed itself in good time, and convinced me, that my sole aim in marriage would be frustrated: for I could neither have been happy myself, nor have made you so.

Lady Alt. Paltry evasion! You have abandoned me for your Amelia; you have meanly quitted a person of letters, a woman of rank and condition, for an illiterate vagabond, a needy adventurer.

Lord Fal. The person you mention, madam, is, indeed, the opposite of yourself; she is all meekness, grace, and virtue.

Lady Alt. Provoking traitor! You urge me past all sufferance. I meant to expostulate, but you oblige me to invective.—But, have a care! You are not so secure as you suppose yourself; and I may revenge myself sooner than you imagine.

Lord Fal. I am aware of your vindictive disposition, madam; for I know, that you are more envious than jealous, and rather violent than tender; but the present object of my affections shall be placed above your resentment, and challenge your respect.

Lady Alt. Away, fond man! I know that object of your affections better than yourself; I know who she is; I know who the stranger is that arrived for her this morning; I know all: men more powerful than yourself shall be apprised of the whole immediately; and within these two hours, nay, within this hour, you shall see the unworthy object, for which you have slighted me, with all that is dear to her and you, torn away from you perforce. [*Going.*

Lord Fal. Ha! how's this? Stay, madam! Explain yourself! But one word; do but hear me.

Lady Alt. No; I disdain to hear you: I scorn all explanation. I have discovered the contemptible cause of your inconstancy, and know you to be mean, base, false, treacherous, and perfidious. You have forfeited my tenderness; and, be assured, you shall feel the effects of my revenge. [*Exit.*

Lord Fal. What does she mean! The stranger that arrived to-day!—That arrived for my Amelia! Sure it cannot be. [*Pausing.*] Is it possible that———

Re-enter MOLLY.

Ha, Polly! explain these riddles to me. Lady Alton threatens me; she threatens my Amelia: does she know any thing? Her fury will trans-

port her to every extravagance: how dreadful is jealousy in a woman!

Mol. Ay, it is a dreadful thing, indeed, my lord. Well! Heaven send me always to be in love, and never to be jealous!

Lord Fal. But she talked of tearing Amelia from me perforce——And then some stranger—She threatens him, too: what is it she means?

Mol. What! a gentleman that came to madam Amelia? [*Alarmed.*

Lord Fal. Yes, to Amelia; and arrived this very day, she says.

Mol. We are ruined for ever! she means sir William Douglas!

Lord Fal. The father of my Amelia! Is he here?

Mol. Yes, my lord; I was bound to secrecy; but I can't help telling you the whole truth, because I am sure you will do all in your power to be of service to us.

Lord Fal. You know my whole soul, Polly: this outrageous woman's malice shall be defeated.

Mol. Heaven send it may!

Lord Fal. Be assured it shall: do not alarm your mistress; I fly to serve her, and will return as soon as possible.

Mol. I shall be miserable till we see you again, my lord. [*Exit.*

Lord Fal. And now, good Heaven! that art the protection of innocence, second my endeavours! enable me to repair the affront I have offered to injured virtue, and let me relieve the unhappy from their distresses. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter LORD FALBRIDGE *and* MOLLY, *meeting.*

Mol. Oh, my lord! I am glad to see you returned.

Lord Fal. Where is your mistress? [*Eagerly.*

Mol. In her own chamber.

Lord Fal. And where is sir William Douglas?

Mol. With my mistress.

Lord Fal. And have there been no officers here to apprehend them?

Mol. Officers! No, my lord. Officers! you frighten me! I was in hopes, by seeing your lordship so soon again, that there were some good news for us.

Lord Fal. Never was any thing so unfortunate. The noble persons, to whom I meant to make application, were out of town; nor could by any means be seen or spoken with, till tomorrow morning: and, to add to my distraction, I learnt that a new information had been made, and a new warrant issued to apprehend sir William Douglas and Amelia.

Mol. Oh dear! What can we do then?

Lord Fal. Do! I shall run mad. Go, my dear Polly, go to your mistress, and sir William, and inform them of their danger. Every moment is precious, but perhaps they may yet have time to escape.

Mol. I will, my lord!

[*Going.*

Lord Fal. Stay! [MOLLY *returns.*] My chariot is at the door; tell them not to wait for any other carriage, but to get into that, and drive away immediately.

Mol. I will, my lord. Oh dear! I never was so terrified in all my life!

[*Exit* MOLLY.

Lord Fal. If I can but save them now, we may gain time for mediation. Ha! what noise? Are the officers coming? Who's here?

Enter LA FRANCE.

La France. Milor, mons. le duc de——

Lord Fal. Sirrah! villain! You have been the occasion of all this mischief. By your carelessness, or treachery, lady Alton has intercepted my letter to Amelia.

La France. Ladi Alton?

Lord Fal. Yes, dog; did not I send you here this morning with a letter?

La France. Oui, milor.

Lord Fal. And did you bring it here, rascal?

La France. Oui, milor.

Lord Fal. No, sirrah. You did not bring it; the lady never received any letter from me; she told me so herself: whom did you give it to? [LA FRANCE *hesitates.*] Speak, sirrah! or I'll shake your soul out of your body. [*Shaking him.*

La France. I giv it to——

Lord Fal. Who, rascal?

La France. Monsieur Spatter.

Lord Fal. Mr Spatter?

La France. Oui, milor; he promis to giv it to Mademoiselle Amelie, vid his own hand.

Lord Fal. I shall soon know the truth of that, sir, for yonder is Mr Spatter himself: run, and tell him I desire to speak with him!

La France. Oui, milor; ma foi, I vas very near kesh; I never was in more vilain embarras in all my life. [*Exit* LA FRANCE.

Lord Fal. My letter's falling into the hands of that fellow, accounts for every thing. The contents instructed him concerning Amelia. What a wretch I am! Destined every way to be of prejudice to that virtue, which I am bound to adore.

Re-enter LA FRANCE *with* SPATTER.

Spat. Monsieur la France tells me, that your lordship desires to speak with me—what are your commands, my lord? [*Pertly*

Lord Fal. The easy impudence of the rascal puts me out of all patience! [*Aside.*

Spat. My lord!

Lord Fal. The last time I saw you, sir, you were rewarded for the good you had done; you must expect now to be chastised for your mischief.

Spat. Mischief, my lord?

Lord Fal. Yes, sir—where is that letter of mine, which La France tells me he gave you to deliver to a young lady of this house?

Spat. Oh the devil! [*Apart.*] Letter, my lord? [*Hesitates.*

Lord Fal. Yes, letter, sir; did not you give it him, La France?

La France. Oui, milor!

Spat. Y—e—e—s, yes, my lord; I had the letter of Monsieur La France, to be sure, my lord; but——but——

Lord Fal. But what, sirrah? give me the letter immediately; and if I find that the seal has been broken, I will break every bone in your skin.

Spat. For Heaven's sake, my lord! [*Feeling in his pockets.*] I—I—I have not got the letter about me at present, my lord; but if you will give me leave to step to my apartment, I'll bring it you immediately.

[*Offering to go.*

Lord Fal. [*Stopping him.*] No, no; that will not do, sir; you shall not stir, I promise you—Look ye, rascal! tell me, what is become of my letter, or I will be the death of you this instant.

[*Drawing.*

Spat. [*Kneeling.*] Put up your sword, my lord; put up your sword; and I will tell you every thing in the world. Indeed, I will.

Lord Fal. Well, sir; be quick then!

[*Putting up his sword.*

Spat. Lady Alton——

Lord Fal. Lady Alton! I thought so; go on, sir.

Spat. Lady Alton, my lord, desired me to procure her all the intelligence in my power, concerning every thing that past between your lordship and Amelia.

Lord Fal. Well, sir; what then?

Spat. A little patience, I entreat your lordship. Accordingly, to oblige her ladyship——one must oblige the ladies, you know, my lord—I did keep a pretty sharp look out, I must confess: and this morning, meeting Monsieur La France, with a letter from your lordship in his charge, I very readily gave him five guineas of her ladyship's bounty-money, to put it into my hands.

La France. Oh diable! me voila perdu!

[*Aside.*

Lord Fal. How! A bribe, rascal?

[*To* LA FRANCE.

La France. Ah, milor! [*On his knees.*

Spat. At the same price for every letter, he would have sold a whole mail, my lord.

La France. Ayez pitiè de moi!

[*Holding up his hands.*

Lord Fal. Betray the confidence I reposed in you?

Spat. He offered me the letter of his own accord, my lord.

La France. No such ting, en veritè, milor!

Spat. Very true, I can assure your lordship.

Lord Fal. Well, well; I shall chastise him at my leisure. At present, sir, do you return me my letter.

Spat. I—I have it not about me, my lord.

Lord Fal. Where is it, rascal? tell me this instant, or——

La France. Lèdy Altón—

Lord Fal. [*To* SPATTER.] What! has she got it? speak, sirrah!

Spat. She has, indeed, my lord.

Lord Fal. Are not you a couple of villains?

La France. Oui, milor. } *both speak at once.*

Spat. Yes, my lord! }

Lord Fal. [*To* SPAT.] But hold, sir! a word more with you! As you seem to be lady Alton's chief agent, I must desire some further information from you.

Spat. Any thing in my power, my lord.

Lord Fal. I can account for her knowledge of Amelia, by means of my letter; but how did she discover sir William Douglas?

Spat. I told her, my lord.

Lord Fal. But how did you discover him yourself?

Spat. By listening, my lord.

Lord Fal. By listening?

Spat. Yes, by listening, my lord! let me but once be about a house, and I'll engage to clear it, like a ventilator, my lord. There is not a door to a single apartment in this house, but I have planted my ear at the key-hole.

Lord Fal. And were these the means by which you procured your intelligence?

Spat. Yes, my lord.

Lord Fal. Impossible!

Spat. Oh dear! nothing so easy; this is nothing at all, my lord! I have given an account of the plays in our journal, for three months together, without being nearer the stage than the pit-passage; and I have collected the debates of a whole session, for the magazine, only by attending in the lobby.

Lord Fal. Precious rascal!—Ha! who comes here? Lady Alton herself again, as I live!

Spat. [*Apart.*] The devil she is! I wish I was out of the house.

Enter LADY ALTON.

Lady Alt. What! still here, my lord? still witnessing to your own shame, and the justice of my resentment!

Lord Fal. Yes, I am still here, madam; and sorry to be made a witness of your cruelty and meanness: of your descending to arts, so unlike

beneath your rank; and practices, so unworthy of your sex.

Lady Alt. You talk in riddles, my lord!

Lord Fal. This gentleman shall explain them. Here, madam! here is the engine of your malice, the instrument of your vengeance, your prime minister, Mr Spatter.

Lady Alt. What have I to do with Mr Spatter?

Lord Fal. To do mischief—to intercept letters, and break them open; to overhear private conversations, and betray them; to——

Lady Alt. Have you laid any thing of this kind to my charge, sir?

[*To* SPATTER.

Spat. I have been obliged to speak the truth, though much against my will, indeed, madam.

Lady Alt. The truth! thou father of lies, did ever any truth proceed from thee? What! is his lordship your new patron! A fit Mæcenas for thee, thou scandal to the belles lettres!

Lord Fal. Your rage at this detection is but a fresh conviction of your guilt.

Lady Alt. Do not triumph, monster! you shall still feel the superiority I have over you. The object of your wishes is no longer under your protection; the officers of the government entered the house at the same time with myself, with a warrant to seize both Amelia and her father.

Lord Fal. Confusion! Are not they gone then? La France! villain! run, and bring me word!

La France. I go, milor! [*Exit.*

Lady Alt. Do not flatter yourself with any hopes; they have not escaped; here they are, secured in proper hands.

Lord Fal. Death and distraction! now I am completely miserable.

Enter SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS, AMELIA, OWEN, *and Officers.*

Lady Alt. Yes, your misery is complete indeed; and so shall be my revenge. Oh! your servant, madam! [*Turning to* AMELIA] You now see to what a condition your pride and obstinacy have reduced you. Did not I bid you tremble at the consequences?

Ame. It was here alone that I was vulnerable. [*Holding her father's hand.*] Oh, madam! [*Turning to* LADY ALTON.] by the virtues that should adorn your rank, by the tenderness of your sex, I conjure you, pity my distress! do but release my father, and there are no concessions, however humiliating, which you may not exact from me.

Lady Alt. Those concessions now come too late, madam. If I were even inclined to relieve you, at present it is not in my power. [*Haughtily.*] Lord Falbridge perhaps may have more interest. [*With a sneer.*

Lord Fal. Cruel, insulting woman! [*To* LADY ALTON.] Do not alarm yourself, my Amelia!—Do not be concerned, sir! [*To* SIR WILLIAM.] Your enemies shall still be disappointed. Although ignorant of your arrival, I have, for some time past, exerted all my interest in your favour, and, by the mediation of those still more powerful, I do not despair of success. Your case is truly a compassionate one; and in that breast, from which alone mercy can proceed, thank Heaven, there is the greatest reason to expect it.

Sir Wil. I am obliged to you for your concern, sir.

Lord Fal. Oh, I owe you all this, and much more—But this is no time to speak of my offences, or repentance.

Lady Alt. This is mere trifling. I thought you knew on what occasion you came hither, sir.

[*To the Officer.*

Offi. Your reproof is too just, madam. I attend you, sir. [*To* SIR WILLIAM.

Lord Fal. Hold! Let me prevail on you, sir, [*To the Officer.*] to suffer them to remain here till to-morrow morning. I will answer for the consequences.

Offi. Pardon me, my lord! we should be happy to oblige you; but we must discharge the duty of our office.

Lady Fal. Distraction!

Sir Wil. Come, then! we follow you, sir! Be comforted, my Amelia! for my sake, be comforted! Wretched as I am, your anxiety shocks me more than my own misfortunes.

As they are going out, Enter FREEPORT.

Free. Heyday! what now! the officers here again! I thought we had satisfied you this morning. What is the meaning of all this?

Offi. This will inform you, sir.

[*Giving the warrant.*

Free. How's this? Let me see! [*Reading.*] 'This is to require you'—um um—'the bodies 'of William Ford and Amelia Walton'—um um—'suspected persons'—um—um—Well, well! I see what this is: but you will accept of bail, sir?

Offi. No, sir; this case is not bailable, and we have already been reprimanded for taking your recognizance this morning.

Sir Wil. Thou good man! I shall ever retain the most lively sense of your behaviour: but your kind endeavours to preserve the poor remainder of my proscribed life are in vain. We must submit to our destiny. [*All going.*

Free. Hold, hold! one word, I beseech you, sir? [*To the Officer.*] a minute or two will make no difference—Bail then, it seems, will not do, sir?

Officer. No, sir.

Free. Well, well; then I have something here that will perhaps. [*Feeling in his pocket.*

Lord Fal. How!

Lady Alt. What does he mean?

Free. No, it is not there.——It is in t'other pocket, I believe. Here, sir William! [*Producing a parchment.*] Ask the gentleman, if that will not do.——But, first of all, read it yourself, and let us hear how you like the contents.

Sir Wil. What do I see! [*Opening and perusing it.*] My pardon! the full and free pardon of my offences! Oh heaven! and is it to you then, to you, sir, that I owe all this?---Thus, thus let me shew my gratitude to my benefactor!

[*Falling at his feet.*

Free. Get up, get up, sir William! Thank Heaven, and the most gracious of monarchs. You have very little obligation to me, I promise you.

Ame. My father restored! Then I am the happiest of women!

Lord Fal. A pardon! I am transported.

Lady Alt. How's this? a pardon!

Free. Under the great seal, madam.

Lady Alt. Confusion! what! am I baffled at last then? Am I disappointed even of my revenge?—Thou officious fool! [*To* FREEPORT.] May these wretches prove as great a torment to you, as they have been to me! As for thee, [*To* LORD FALBRIDGE.] thou perfidious monster, may thy guilt prove thy punishment! May you obtain the unworthy union you desire! May your wife prove as false to you, as you have been to me! May you be followed, like Orestes, with the furies of a guilty conscience; find your error when it is too late; and die in all the horrors of despair! [*Exit.*

Free. There goes a woman of quality for you! what little actions! and what a great soul!—— Ha! Master Spatter! where are you going?

[*To* SPATTER, *who is sneaking off.*

Spat. Following the Muse, sir! [*Pointing after* LADY ALTON.] But if you have any further commands, or his lordship should have occasion for me to write his epithalamium—

Lord Fal. Peace, wretch! sleep in a whole skin, and be thankful! I would solicit mercy myself, and have not leisure to punish you. Be gone, sir!

Spat. I am obliged to your lordship—This affair will make a good article for the Evening-Post to-night, however. [*Aside, and Exit.*

Sir Wil. How happy has this reverse of fortune made me!—But my surprise is almost equal to my joy. May we beg you, sir, [*To* FREEPORT.] to inform us how your benevolence has effected what seems almost a miracle, in my favour?

Free. In two words then, sir William, this happy event is chiefly owing to your old friend, the late lord Brumpton.

Sir Wil. Lord Brumpton!

Free. Yes; honest Owen there told me, that his lordship had been employed in soliciting your pardon. Did not you, Owen?

Owen. I did, sir.

Free. Upon hearing that, and perceiving the danger you were in, I went immediately to the present lord Brumpton; who is a very honest fellow, and one of the oldest acquaintance I have in the world. He, at my instance, immediately made the necessary application; and guess how agreeably we were surprised to hear that the late lord had already been successful, and that the pardon had been made out, on the very morning of the day his lordship died. Away went I, as fast as a pair of horses could carry me, to fetch it; and should certainly have prevented this last arrest, if the warrant to apprehend you, as dangerous persons, had not issued under your assumed names of William Ford and Amelia Walton, against whom the information had been laid. But, however, it has only served to prevent your running away, when the danger was over; for at present, sir William, thank Heaven and his majesty, you are a whole man again; and you have nothing to do but to make a legal appearance, and to plead the pardon I have brought you, to absolve you from all informations.

Lord Fal. Thou honest, excellent man! How happily have you supplied, what I failed to accomplish!

Free. Ay, I heard that your lordship had been busy.—You had more friends at court than one, sir William, I promise you.

Sir Wil. I am overwhelmed with my sudden good fortune, and am poor even in thanks. Teach me, Mr Freeport, teach me how to make some acknowledgement for your extraordinary generosity!

Free. I'll tell you what, sir William. Notwithstanding your daughter's pride, I took a liking to her, the moment I saw her.

Lord Fal. Ha! What's this!

Free. What's the matter, my lord?

Lord Fal. Nothing. Go on, sir!

Free. Why, then, to confess the truth, I am afraid that my benevolence, which you have all been pleased to praise so highly, had some little leaven of self-interest in it; and I was desirous to promote Amelia's happiness more ways than one.

Lord Fal. Then I am the veriest wretch that ever existed.—But take her, sir! for I must confess that you have deserved her by your proceedings; and that I, fool and villain that I was, have forfeited her by mine. [*Going.*

Free. Hold, hold! one word before you go, if you please, my lord! You may kill yourself for aught I know, but you shan't lay your death at my door, I promise you. I had a kindness for Amelia, I must confess; but, in the course of my late negotiation for sir William, hearing of your lordship's pretensions, I dropt all thoughts of her. It is a maxim with me, to do good wherever I can, but always to abstain from doing mischief.—Now, as I can't make the lady

happy myself, I would fain put her into the hands of those that can.—So, if you would oblige me, sir William, let me join these two young folks together, [*Joining their hands.*] and do you say Amen to it.

Sir Wil. With all my heart!—You can have no objection, Amelia? [AMELIA *bursts into tears.*

Lord Fal. How bitterly do those tears reproach me! It shall be the whole business of my future life to atone for them.

Ame. Your actions this day, and your solicitude for my father, have redeemed you in my good opinion; and the consent of sir William, seconded by so powerful an advocate as Mr Freeport, cannot be contended with. Take my hand, my lord! a virtuous passion may inhabit the purest breast; and I am not ashamed to confess, that I had conceived a partiality for you, till your own conduct turned my heart against you; and if my resentment has given you any pain, when I consider the occasion, I must own that I cannot repent it.

Lord Fal. Mention it no more, my love, I beseech you! You may justly blame your lover, I confess; but I will never give you cause to complain of your husband.

Free. I don't believe you will. I give you joy, my lord! I give you all joy! As for you, madam, [*To* AMELIA.] do but shew the world that you can bear prosperity, as well as you have sustained the shocks of adversity, and there are few women, who may not wish to be an Amelia.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

BROTHERS.

BY

CUMBERLAND.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR BENJAMIN DOVE, *henpecked by his wife.*
BELFIELD *sen.* } *the Brothers.*
BELFIELD *jun.* }
CAPTAIN IRONSIDES, *uncle to* BELFIELD *sen. and jun.*
SKIFF, *master of the privateer.*
PATERSON, *servant to* SIR BENJAMIN.
OLD GOODWIN, *a fisherman.*
PHILIP, *his son.*
FRANCIS, *servant to* BELFIELD *jun.*
JONATHAN, *servant to* SIR BENJAMIN.

WOMEN.

LADY DOVE.
SOPHIA, SIR BENJAMIN'S *daughter.*
VIOLETTA, *wife to* BELFIELD *sen.*
FANNY GOODWIN.
LUCY WATERS.
KITTY, LADY DOVE'S *maid.*

Scene—The sea coast of Cornwall.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A rocky shore, with a fisherman's cabin in the cliff: a violent tempest, with thunder and lightning: a ship discovered stranded on the coast. The characters enter, after having looked out of their cabin, as if waiting for the abatement of the storm.*

GOODWIN, PHILIP, *and* FANNY.

Phi. IT blows a rank storm; 'tis well, father, we hauled the boat ashore before the weather came on; she's safe bestowed, however, let what will happen.

Good. Ay, Philip, we had need be provident: except that poor skiff, my child, what have we left in this world that we can call our own?

Phi. To my thoughts, now, we live as happily in this poor hut, as we did yonder in the great house, when you was 'squire Belfield's principal tenant, and as topping a farmer as any in the whole county of Cornwall.

Good. Ah, child!

Phi. Nay, never droop; to be sure, father, the 'squire has dealt hardly with you, and a mighty point, truly, he has gained! the ruin of an honest man. If those are to be the uses of a great estate, Heaven continue me what I am!

Fan. Ay, ay, brother, a good conscience in a coarse drugget, is better than an aching heart in a silken gown.

Good. Well, children, well, if you can bear

misfortunes patiently, 'twere an ill office for me to repine; we have long tilled the earth for a subsistence; now, Philip, we must plough the ocean; in those waves lies our harvest; there, my brave lad, we have an equal inheritance with the best.

Phi. True, father; the sea, that feeds us, provides us an habitation here in the hollow of the cliff. I trust, the 'squire will exact no rent for this dwelling——Alas! that ever two brothers should have been so opposite as our merciless landlord, and the poor young gentleman, they say, is now dead.

Good. Sirrah, I charge you, name not that unhappy youth to me any more; I was endeavouring to forget him and his misfortunes, when the sight of that vessel in distress brought him afresh to my remembrance; for, it seems, he perished by sea: the more shame upon him, whose cruelty and injustice drove him thither. But come, the wind lulls apace; let us launch the boat, and make a trip to yonder vessel: if we can assist in lightening her, perhaps she may ride it out.

Phi. 'Tis to no purpose; the crew are coming ashore in their boat; I saw them enter the creek.

Good. Did you so? Then, do you and your sister step into the cabin; make a good fire, and provide such fish and other stores as you have within: I will go down, and meet them: whoever they may be, that have suffered this misfortune on our coasts, let us remember, children, never to regard any man as an enemy, who stands in need of our protection. [*Exit* GOOD.

Phi. I am strongly tempted to go down to the creek, too; if father should light on any mischief ——well, for once in my life, I'll disobey him; sister, you can look to matters within doors; I'll go round by the point, and be there as soon as he.

Fan. Do so, Philip; 'twill be best.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*Continues.*

GOODWIN *re-enters, followed by* FRANCIS, *and several sailors carrying goods and chests from the wreck.*

Good. This way, my friends, this way! there's stowage enough within for all your goods.

Fran. Come, bear a hand, my brave lads, there's no time to lose; follow that honest man, and set down your chests where he directs you.

Sai. Troth, I care not how soon I'm quit of mine; 'tis plaguy heavy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Continues.*

Enter other Sailors.

1*st Sai.* Here's a pretty spot of work! plague on't, what a night has this been! I thought this damned lee-shore would catch us at last.

2*d Sai.* Why, 'twas impossible to claw her off; well, there's an end of her—The Charming Sally privateer!—Poor soul; a better sea boat never swam upon the salt sea.

3*d Sai.* I knew we should have no luck after we took up that woman there from the packet that sunk along side us.

1*st Sai.* What, madam Violetta, as they call her? Why, 'tis like enough—But hush, here comes our captain's nephew; he's a brave lad, and a seaman's friend, and, between you and me [*Boatswain's whistle.*]—But hark, we are called —Come along! [*Exeunt Sailors.*

SCENE IV.

BELFIELD *jun. and* FRANCIS.

Bel. jun. That ever fortune should cast us upon this coast!—Francis!

Fran. Sir!

Bel. jun. Have the people landed those chests we brought off with us in the boat?

Fran. They have, sir; an old fisherman, whom we met, has shewn us here to a cavern in the cliff, where we have stowed them all in safety.

Bel. jun. That's well. Where's my uncle?

Fran. On board; no persuasions can prevail on him to quit the ship, which, he swears, will lift with the tide; his old crony, the master, is with him, and they ply the casks so briskly, that it seems a moot point, which fills the fastest, they, or the wreck.

Bel. jun. Strange insensibility! but you must bring him off by force, then, if there is no other way of saving him. I think, on my conscience, he is as indifferent to danger as the plank he treads on. We are now thrown upon my unnatural brother's estate; that house, Francis, which you see to the left, is his; and what may be the consequence if he and my uncle should meet, I know not; for such has been captain Ironsides' resentment on my account, that he has declared war against the very name of Belfield; and, in one of his whimsical passions, you know, insisted on my laying it aside for ever; so that hitherto I have been known on board by no other name than that of Lewson.

Fran. 'Tis true, sir; and, I think, 'twill be adviseable to continue the disguise as long as you can. As for the old captain, from the life he always leads on shore, and his impatience to get on board again, I think, 'tis very possible an interview between him and your brother may be prevented.

Bel. jun. I think so, too. Go then, Francis, and conduct the old gentleman hither; I see Violetta coming. [*Exit* FRAN. Sure there is something in that woman's story uncommonly mysterious—Of English parents—born in Lisbon—her family and fortune buried in the earthquake—so much she freely tells; but more, I am convinced, remains untold, and of a melancholy sort: she has once or twice, as I

thought, seemed disposed to unbosom herself to me; but it is so painful to be told of sorrows one has not power to relieve, that I have hitherto avoided the discourse.

Enter VIOLETTA:

Bel. jun. Well, madam, melancholy still? still that face of sorrow and despair? twice shipwrecked, and twice rescued from the jaws of death, do you regret your preservation? and have I incurred your displeasure, by prolonging your existence?

Vio. Not so, Mr Lewson; such ingratitude be far from me. Can I forget, when the vessel, in which I had sailed from Portugal, foundered by your side, with what noble, what benevolent ardour, you flew to my assistance? Regardful only of my safety, your own seemed no part of your care.

Bel. jun. Oh! no more of this; the preservation of a fellow-creature is as natural as self-defence. You now, for the first time in your life, breathe the air of England—a rough reception it has given you; but be not, therefore, discouraged; our hearts, Violetta, are more accessible than our shores; nor can you find inhospitality in Britain, save in our climate only.

Vio. These characteristics of the English may be just. I take my estimate from a less favourable example.

Bel. jun. Villainy, madam, is the growth of every soul; nor can I, while yonder habitation is in my view, forget, that England has given birth to monsters that disgrace humanity; but this I will say for my countrymen, that, where you can point out one rascal with a heart to wrong you, I will produce fifty honest fellows ready and resolute to redress you.

Vio. Ah!—But on what part of the English coast is it that we are landed?

Bel. jun. On the coast of Cornwall.

Vio. Of Cornwall is it? You seem to know the owner of that house: are you well acquainted with the country hereabouts?

Bel. jun. Intimately; it has been the cradle of my infancy, and, with little interruption, my residence ever since.

Vio. You are amongst your friends, then, no doubt; how fortunate is it, that you will have their consolation and assistance in your distress.

Bel. jun. Madam———

Vio. Every moment will bring them down to the very shores; this brave, humane, this hospitable people, will flock, in crowds, to your relief; your friends, Mr Lewson—

Bel. jun. My friends, Violetta! must I confess it to you, I have no friends——those rocks, that have thus scattered my treasures, those waves, that have devoured them, to me are not so fatal, as hath been that man, whom Nature meant to be my nearest friend.

Vio. What, and are you a fellow-sufferer, then? Is this the way you reconcile me to your nation? Are these the friends of human kind? Why don't we fly from this ungenerous, this ungrateful country?

Bel. jun. Hold, madam! one villain, however base, can no more involve a whole nation in his crimes, than one example, however dignified, can inspire it with his virtues: thank Heaven, the worthless owner of that mansion is yet without a rival.

Vio. You have twice directed my attention to that house; 'tis a lovely spot; what pity that so delicious a retirement should be made the residence of so undeserving a being!

Bel. jun. It is, indeed, a charming place, and was once the seat of hospitality and honour; but, its present possessor, Andrew Belfield——Madam, for Heaven's sake, what ails you? you seem suddenly disordered——Have I said——

Vio. No, 'tis nothing; don't regard me, Mr Lewson. I am weak, and subject to these surprizes; I shall be glad, however, to retire.

Bel. jun. A little repose, I hope, will relieve you; within this hut, some accommodation may be found: lean on my arm.

[*Leads her to the door of the cabin.*

Enter GOODWIN.

Good. Heaven defend me! do my eyes deceive me? 'tis wondrous like his shape, his air, his look——

Bel. jun. What is your astonishment, friend? Do you know me? If it was not for that habit, I should say your name is Goodwin.

Good. 'Tis he! he is alive! my dear young master, Mr Belfield! Yes, sir, my name is Goodwin: however changed my appearance, my heart is still the same, and overflows with joy at this unexpected meeting.

Bel. jun. Give me thy hand, my old, my honest friend; and is this sorry hole thy habitation?

Good. It is.

Bel. jun. The world, I see, has frowned on thee since we parted.

Good. Yes, sir: but what are my misfortunes? you must have undergone innumerable hardships; and now, at last, shipwrecked on your own coast! Well, but your vessel is not totally lost, and we will work night and day in saving your effects.

Bel. jun. Oh, as for that, the sea gave all, let it take back a part; I have enough on shore not to envy my brother his fortune. But there is one blessing, master Goodwin, I own I should grudge him the possession of—There was a young lady———

Good. What, sir, have not you forgot Miss Sophia?

Bel. jun. Forgot her! my heart trembles while I ask you, if she is indeed, as you call her, Miss Sophia.

Good. She is yet unmarried, though every day we expect——

Bel. jun. 'Tis enough; Fortune, I acquit thee! Happy be the winds that threw me on this coast, and blest the rocks that received me! Let my vessel go to pieces; she has done her part in bearing me hither, while I can cast myself at the feet of my Sophia, recount to her my unabating passion, and have one fair struggle for her heart.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Enter VIOLETTA.

Vio. Once more I am alone. How my heart sunk, when Lewson pronounced the name of Belfield! it must be he, it must be my false, cruel, yet (spite of all my wrongs) beloved husband: yes, there he lives, each circumstance confirms it; Cornwall, the county; here the sea-coast, and these white craggy cliffs; there the disposition of his seat; the grove, lake, lawn; every feature of the landscape tallies with the descriptions he has given me of it. What shall I do, and to whom shall I complain? when Lewson spoke of him, it was with a bitterness that shocked me; I will not disclose myself to him; by what fell from him, I suspect he is related to Mr Belfield—But, hush! I talk to these rocks, and forget that they have ears.

Enter FANNY.

Fan. Are you better, madam? Is the air of any service to you?

Vio. I am much relieved by it: the beauty of that place attracted my attention, and, if you please, we will walk further up the hill to take a nearer view of it.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Part of the crew enter, with IRONSIDES *and* SKIFF *in the midst of them.*

Omnes. Huzza! huzza! huzza!

1st Sai. Long life to your honour! welcome ashore, noble captain!

2d Sai. Avast there, Jack; stand clear, and let his old honour pass. Bless his heart, he looks cheerly howsomever; let the world wag as it will, he'll never flinch.

3d Sai. Not he! he's true English oak to the heart of him; and a fine old seaman-like figure he is.

Iron. Ah, messmates, we are all aground; I have been taking a parting cup with the Charming Sally——she's gone; but the stoutest bark must have an end; master, here, and I, did all we could to lighten her; we took leave of her in an officer-like manner.

1st Sai. Hang sorrow! we know the worst on't; 'tis only taking a fresh cruize; and for my part, I'll sail with captain Ironsides as far as there's water to carry me.

Omnes. So we will all.

Iron. Say ye so, my hearts? if the wind sits that way, hoist sail, say I; old George will make one amongst you, if that be all; I hate an idle life——So, so; away to your work; to-morrow we'll make a day on't.

[*Exeunt Sailors.*

Iron. Skiff!

Skiff. Here, your honour!

Iron. I told you, Skiff, how 'twould be; if you had luffed up in time, as I would have had you, and not made so free with the land, this mishap had never come to pass.

Skiff. Lord love you, captain Ironsides! 'twas a barrel of beef to a biscuit, the wind had not shifted so direct contrary as it did; who could have thought it?

Iron. Why, I could have thought it; every body could have thought it: do you consider whereabouts you are, mun? Upon the coast of England, as I take it. Every thing here goes contrary both by sea and land——Every thing whips, and chops, and changes about, like mad, in this country; and the people, I think, are as full of vagaries as the climate.

Skiff. Well, I could have swore———

Iron. Ay, so you could, Skiff; and so you did, pretty roundly, too; but for the good you did by it, you might as well have puffed a whiff of tobacco in the wind's face.

Skiff. Well, captain; though we have lost our ship, we haven't lost our all: thank the fates, we've saved treasure enough to make all our fortunes notwithstanding.

Iron. Fortunes, quotha? What have two such old weather-beaten fellows, as thee and I are, to do with fortune; or, indeed, what has fortune to do with us? Flip and tobacco is the only luxury we have any relish for: had we fine houses, could we live in them? a greasy hammock has been our birth for these fifty years; fine horses, could we ride them? and, as for the fair sex, there, that my nephew makes such a pother about, I don't know what thou may'st think of the matter, Skiff; but, for my own part, I should not care if there were no such animals in the creation.

Enter BELFIELD, *jun.*

Bel. jun. Uncle, what chear, man?

Iron. Oh, Bob! is it thee? whither bound now, my dear boy?

Bel. jun. Why, how can you ask such a question? We have landed our treasure; saved all our friends, and set foot upon English ground, and what business, think you, can a young fellow, like me, have, but one?

Iron. Pshaw, you are a fool, Bob; these wenches will be the undoing of you—a plague of them altogether say I: what are they good for, but to spoil company, and keep brave fellows

from their duty? O' my conscience, they do more mischief to the king's navy in one twelvemonth, than the French have done in ten; a pack of—but I ha' done with them; thank the stars I ha' fairly washed my hands of 'em! I ha' nothing to say to none of 'em.

Skiff. Mercy be good unto us! that my wife could but hear your worship talk.

Bel. jun. Oh, my dear uncle!———

Iron. But I'll veer away no more good advice after you; so even drive as you will under your petticoat-sails; black, brown, fair, or tawny, 'tis all fish that comes in your net: Why, where's your reason, Bob, all this here while? Where's your religion, and be damned to you?

Bel. jun. Come, come, my dear uncle, a truce to your philosophy. Go, throw your dollars into yonder ocean, and bribe the tempest to be still; you shall as soon reverse the operations of nature, as wean my heart from my Sophia.

Iron. Hold, hold! take me right; if, by Sophia, you mean the daughter of sir Benjamin Dove, I don't care if I make one with you;—what say'st thou, boy? shall it be so?

Bel. jun. So, then, you think there may be one good woman, however?

Iron. Just as I think there may be one honest Dutchman, one sober German, or one righteous methodist. Look'e, Bob, so I do but keep single, I have no objection to other people's marrying; but, on these occasions, I would manage myself as I would my ship; not by running her into every odd creek and cranny, in the smuggling fashion, as if I had no good credentials to produce; but, play fairly, and in sight, d'ye see; and whenever a safe harbour opens, stand boldly in, boy, and lay her up snug, in a good birth, once for all.

Bel. jun. Come, then, uncle, let us about it; and you may greatly favour my enterprize, since you can keep the father and mother in play, while I———

Iron. Avast, young man! avast! the father, if you please, without the mother; sir Benjamin's a passable good companion, for a landman; but for my lady———I'll have nothing to say to my lady; she's his wife, thank the stars, and not mine.

Bel. jun. Be it as you will; I shall be glad of your company on any terms.

Iron. Say no more, then. About ship; if you are bound for that port, I'm your mate:—master, look to the wreck; I'm for a fresh cruize.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.——*The outside of* SIR BENJAMIN DOVE'S *house.*

Enter BELFIELD, *sen. and* LUCY WATERS.

Lucy. WHAT, don't I know you? haven't you been to me of all mankind the basest?

Bel. sen. Not yet, Lucy.

Lucy. Sure, Mr Belfield, you won't pretend to deny it to my face.

Bel. sen. To thy face, child, I will not pretend that I can deny any thing; you are much too handsome to be contradicted.

Lucy. Pish!

Bel. sen. So! so!

Lucy. Haven't you, faithless as you are, promised me marriage over and over again?

Bel. sen. Repeatedly.

Lucy. And you have now engaged yourself to the daughter of sir Benjamin Dove, have you not?

Bel. sen. Assuredly.

Lucy. Let me demand of you, then, Mr Belfield, since you had no honourable designs towards me yourself, why you prevented those of an humbler lover, young Philip, the son of your late tenant, poor Goodwin?

Bel. sen. For the very reason you state in your question; because I had no honourable designs, and he had: you disappointed my hopes, and I was resolved to defeat his.

Lucy. And this you thought reason sufficient to expel his father from your farm; to persecute him and his innocent family, till you had accomplished their ruin, and driven them to the very brink of the ocean for their habitation and subsistence?

Bel. sen. Your questions, Miss Lucy, begin to be impertinent.

Lucy. Oh, do they touch you, sir? but I'll waste no more time with you; my business is with your Sophia. Here, in the very spot which you hope to make the scene of your guilty triumphs, will I expose you to her; set forth your inhuman conduct to your unhappy brother; and detect the mean artifices you have been driven to, in order to displace him in her affections.

Bel. sen. You will?

Lucy. I will, be assured; so let them pass.

Bel. sen. Stay, Lucy; understand yourself a little better. Didn't you pretend to Sophia, that my brother paid his addresses to you; that he had pledged himself to marry you; nay, that he had———

Lucy. Hold, Mr Belfield, nor further explain a transaction, which, though it reflects shame enough upon me, that was your instrument, ought to cover you, who was principal in the crime, with treble confusion and remorse.

Bel. sen. True, child; it was rather a disreputable transaction; and 'tis, therefore, fit no part of it should rest with me: I shall disavow it altogether.

Lucy. Incredible confidence!

Bel. sen. We shall see who will meet most belief in the world; you or I. Choose, therefore, your part: if you betray it, you have me for an enemy; and a fatal one you shall find me.—Now, enter, if you think fit; there lies your way to Sophia. [*She goes into the house.*] So! how am I to parry this blow? what plea shall I use with Sophia? 'twas the ardour of my love—any thing will find pardon with a woman, that conveys flattery to her charms. After all, if the worst should happen, and I be defeated in this match, so shall I be saved from doing that, which, when done, 'tis probable I may repent of; and I have some intimation from within, which tells me that it will be so: I perceive that, in this life, he, who is checked by the rubs of compunction, can never arrive at the summit of prosperity.

Enter PATERSON.

Pat. What, melancholy, Mr Belfield! So near your happiness, and so full of thought?

Bel. sen. Happiness! what's that?

Pat I'll tell you, sir; the possession of a lovely girl, with fifty thousand pounds in her lap, and twice fifty thousand virtues in her mind; this I call happiness, as much as mortal man can merit: and this, as I take it, you are destined to enjoy.

Bel. sen. That is not so certain, Mr Paterson. Would you believe it, that perverse hussy, Lucy Waters, who left me but this minute, threatens to transverse all my hopes, and is gone this instant to Sophia with that resolution?

Pat. Impossible! how is Miss Waters provided or provoked to do this!

Bel. sen. Why, 'tis a foolish story, and scarce worth relating to you; but you know, when your letters called me home from Portugal, I found my younger brother in close attendance on Miss Dove; and, indeed, such good use had the fellow made of his time in my absence, that I found it impossible to counterwork his operations by fair and open approaches; so, to make short of the story, I took this girl, Lucy Waters, into partnership; and, by a happy device, ruined him with Sophia.

Pat. This, Mr Belfield, I neither know, nor wish to know.

Bel. sen. Let it pass, then. Defeated in these views, my brother, as you know, betook himself to the desperate course of privateering, with that old tar-barrel, my uncle: what may have been his fate, I know not, but I have found it convenient to propagate a report of his death.

Pat. I am sorry for it, Mr Belford: I wish nothing was convenient, that can be thought dishonourable.

Bel. sen. Nature, Mr Paterson, never put into a human composition more candour and credulity than she did into mine; but acquaintance with life has shewn me how impracticable these principles are. To live with mankind, we must live like mankind: was it a world of honesty, I should blush to be a man of art.

Pat. And do you dream of ever reaching your journey's end by such crooked paths as these are?

Bel. sen. And yet, my most sage moralist, wonderful as it may seem to thee, true it is, notwithstanding, that, after having threaded all these by-ways and crooked allies, which thy right-lined apprehension knows nothing of; after having driven my rival from the field, and being almost in possession of the spoil, still I feel a repugnance in me that almost tempts me to renounce my good fortune, and abandon a victory I have struggled so hard to obtain.

Pat. I guessed as much; 'tis your Violetta; 'tis your fair Portuguese, that counterworks your good fortune; and I must own to you, it was principally to save you from that improvident attachment, that I wrote so pressingly for your return; but though I have got your body in safe holding, your heart is still at Lisbon; and if you marry Miss Dove, 'tis because Violetta's fortune was demolished by the earthquake; and sir Benjamin's stands safe upon terra firma.

Bel. sen. Prithee, Paterson, don't be too hard upon me: sure you don't suspect that I am married to Violetta?

Pat. Married to Violetta! Now you grow much too serious, and 'tis time to put an end to the discourse. [*Exit.*

Bel. sen. And you grow much too quick-sighted, Mr Paterson, for my acquaintance. I think he does not quite suspect me of double dealing in this business; and yet I have my doubts; his reply to my question was equivocal, and his departure abrupt—I know not what to think—This I know, that Love is a deity, and Avarice a devil; that Violetta is my lawful wife; and that Andrew Belfield is a villain. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

PATERSON *passes over the stage.*

Pat. All abroad this fine day—not a creature within doors.

Enter KITTY.

Kitty. Mr Paterson! hist, Mr Paterson! a word in your ear, sweet sir.

Pat. Curse on't, she has caught me—Well, Mrs Kitty?

Kitty. Why, I have been hunting you all the house over; my lady's impatient to see you.

Pat. Oh, I'm my lady Dove's most obedient servant—And what are her ladyship's commands, pray?

Kitty. Fy, Mr Paterson! how should I know what her ladyship wants with you? but a secret it is, no doubt, for she desires you to come to her

immediately in the garden, at the bottom of the yew-tree walk, next the warren.

Pat. The devil she does!——What a pity it is, Mrs Kitty, we can't cure your lady of this turn for solitude. I wish you would go with me; your company, probably, will divert her from her contemplations: besides, I shall certainly mistake the place.

Kitty. I go with you, Mr Paterson! a fine thing truly: I'd have you to know, that my character is not to be trusted with young fellows in yew-tree walks, whatever my lady may think of the matter—Besides, I've an assignation in another place. [*Exit.*

Pat. What a devilish dilemma am I in! Why this is a peremptory assignation—Certain it is, there are some ladies that no wise man should be commonly civil to——Here have I been flattering myself that I was stroaking a termagant into humour, and all the while have been betraying a tender victim into love. Love, love, did I say? her ladyship's passion is a disgrace to the name—But what shall I do?—'tis a pitiful thing to run away from a victory; but 'tis frequently the case in precipitate successes; we conquer more than we have wit to keep, or ability to enjoy. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the yew-tree walk.*

Enter BELFIELD *junior.*

Bel. jun. Now, could I but meet my Sophia!—Where can she have hid herself?—Hush; lady Dove, as I live!

Enter LADY DOVE.

Lady Dove. So, Mr Paterson, you're a pretty gentleman, to keep a lady waiting here! Why, how you stand?—Come, come, I shall expect a very handsome atonement for this indecorum—Why, what, let me look——Ah! who have we here?

Bel. jun. A man, madam; and though not your man, yet one as honest, and as secret: come, come, my lady, I'm no tell-tale; be you but grateful, this goes no further.

Lady Dove. Lost and undone! young Belfield!

Bel. jun. The same; but be not alarmed; we both have our secrets; I am, like you, a votary to love: favour but my virtuous passion for Miss Dove, and take you your Paterson; I shall be silent as the grave.

Lady Dove. Humph!

Bel. jun. Nay, never hesitate; my brother, I know, had your wishes: but wherein has nature favoured him more than me? And, since fortune has now made my scale as heavy as his, why should you partially direct the beam?

Lady Dove. Well, if it is so, and that you promise not to betray me——But this accident has so discomposed me (plague on't, say I), don't press me any further, at present; I must leave you; remember the condition of our agreement, and expect my friendship——Oh, I could tear your eyes out! [*Exit.*

Bel. jun. Well, sir Benjamin, keep your own counsel, if you are wise; I'll do as I would be done by. Had I such a wife as lady Dove, I should be very happy to have such a friend as Mr Paterson. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Enter SOPHIA DOVE, *and* LUCY WATERS.

Lucy. If there is faith in woman, I have seen young Belfield; I have beheld his apparition; for what else could it be?

Sophia. How? when? where? I shall faint with surprise.

Lucy. As I crossed the yew-tree walk, I saw him pass by the head of the canal, towards the house. Alas! poor youth, the injuries I have done him have called him from his grave.

Sophia. Injuries, Miss Waters! what injuries have you done him? Tell me; for therein, perhaps, I may be concerned.

Lucy. Deeply concerned you are; with the most penitent remorse I confess it to you, that his affections to you were pure, honest, and sincere. Yes, amiable Sophia, you was unrivalled in his esteem; and I, who persuaded you to the contrary, am the basest, the falsest of womankind; every syllable I told you of his engagements to me, was a malicious invention: how could you be so blind to your own superiority, to give credit to the imposition, and suffer him to depart without an explanation? Oh, that villain, that villain, his brother, has undone us all!

Sophia. Villain, do you call him? Whither would you transport my imagination? You hurry me with such rapidity from one surprise to another, that I know not where to fix, how to act, or what to believe.

Lucy. Oh, madam! he is a villain, a most accomplished one; and, if I can but snatch you from the snare he has spread for you, I hope it will, in some measure, atone for the injuries I have done to you, and to that unhappy youth, who now——O Heavens! I see him again! he comes this way! I cannot endure his sight! alive or dead, I must avoid him. [*Runs out.*

Enter BELFIELD *junior.*

Bel. jun. Adorable Sophia! this transport overpays my labours.

Sophia. Sir! Mr Belfield, is it you? Oh, support me!———

Bel. jun. With my life, thou loveliest of women! Behold your poor adventurer is returned; happy past compute, if his fate is not indifferent to you; rich beyond measure, if his safety is worthy your concern.

Sophia. Release me, I beseech you: what have

I done! Sure you are too generous to take any advantage of my confusion.

Bel. jun. Pardon me, my Sophia! the advantages I take from your confusion are not to be purchased by the riches of the east: I would not forego the transport of holding you one minute in my arms, for all that wealth and greatness have to give.

LADY DOVE *enters, while* BELFIELD *junior is kneeling, and embracing* SOPHIA.

Lady Dove. Hey-day! what's here to do with you both?

Sophia. Ah!——— [*Shrieks.*

Bel. jun. Confusion! Lady Dove here?

Lady Dove. Yes, sir; lady Dove is here; and will take care you shall have no more garden-dialogues. On your knees, too!——The fellow was not half so civil to me. [*Aside.*]——Ridiculous! a poor beggarly swabber truly!——As for you, Mrs———

Bel. jun. Hold, madam! as much of your fury and foul language as you please upon me; but not one hard word against that lady, or by Heavens!———

Lady Dove. Come, sir, none of your reprobate swearing; none of your sea-noises here. I would my first husband was alive! I would he was, for your sake! I am surprised, Miss Dove, you have no more regard for your reputation; a delicate swain truly you have chosen; just thrown ashore from the pitchy bowels of a shipwrecked privateer! Go, go; get you in; for shame! your father shall know of these goings on, depend on't:—— as for you, sir—— [*Exit* SOPHIA.

Bel. jun. [*Stopping* LADY DOVE.] A word with you, madam! Is this fair dealing? What would you have said, if I had broke in thus upon you and Mr Paterson?

Lady Dove. Mr Paterson! why, you rave; what is it you mean?

Bel. jun. Come, come, this is too ridiculous; you know your reputation is in my keeping; call to mind what passed between us a while ago, and the engagement you are under on that account.

Lady Dove. Ha, ha, ha!

Bel. jun. Very well, truly; and you think to brave this matter out, do you?

Lady Dove. Most assuredly; and shall make sir Benjamin call you to account, if you dare to breathe a word against my reputation: incorrigible coxcomb! to think I would keep any terms with you after such an event. Take my word for it, Belfield, you are come home no wiser than you went out; you missed the only advantage you might have taken of that rencounter, and now I set you at defiance: take heed to what you say, or look to hear from sir Benjamin.

Bel. jun. Oh, no doubt on't: how can sir Benjamin avoid fighting for your sake, when your ladyship has so liberally equipped him with weapons? [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE V.—*A hall.*

Enter JONATHAN *and* FRANCIS.

Jon. And so, sir, 'tis just as I tell you; every thing in this family goes according to the will of the lady: for my own part, I am one of those that bate trouble; I swim with the stream, and make my place as easy as I can.

Fran. Your looks, Mr Jonathan, convince me that you live at your ease.

Jon. I do so; and therefore, (in spite of the old proverb, "Like master, like man,") you never saw two people more different than I and sir Benjamin Dove. He, Lord help him! is a little peaking, puling thing! I am a jolly, portable man, as you see. It so happened, that we both became widowers at the same time; I knew when I was well, and have continued single ever since. He fell into the clutches of—Hark, sure I hear my lady——

Fran. No, it was nothing. When did the poor gentleman light upon this termagant?

Jon. Lackaday! 'twas here at the borough of Knavestown, when master had the great contest with 'squire Belfield, about three years ago: her first husband, Mr Searcher, was a king's messenger, as they call it, and came down express from a great man about court during the poll; he caught a surfeit, as ill luck would have it, at the election-dinner; and, before he died, his wife, that's now my lady, came down to see him; then it was master fell in love with her: egad, 'twas the unluckiest job of all his life.

Sir Ben. [*Calls without.*] Jonathan! why, Jonathan!

Fran. Hark, you are called.

Jon. Ay, ay; 'tis only my master; my lady tells the servants not to mind what sir Benjamin says, and I love to do as I am bid.

Fran. Well, honest Jonathan, if you won't move, I must; by this time I hope my young master is happy with your young mistress.

[*Exit* FRANCIS.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN DOVE.

Sir Ben. Why, Jonathan, I say? Oh, are you here? Why cou'dn't you come when I called you?

Jon. Lackaday, sir! you don't consider how much easier it is for you to call, than for me to come.

Sir Ben. I think, honest Jonathan, when I first knew you, you was a parish orphan; I 'prenticed you out; you run away from your master; I took you into my family; you married; I set you up in a farm of my own; stocked it; you paid me no rent; I received you again into my service, or rather, I should say, my lady's—— Are these things so, or does my memory fail me, Jonathan?

Jon. Why, to be sure, I partly remember somewhat of what your worship mentions.

Sir Ben. If you partly remember all this, Jonathan, don't entirely forget to come when I call.

Iron. [*Without.*] Hoy there! within! what! nobody stirring? all hands asleep? all under the hatches?

Sir Ben. Hey-day, who the dickens have we got here? Old captain Ironsides, as I am a sinner! who could have thought of this? Run to the door, good Jonathan—nay, hold; there's no escaping now:—what will become of me!—he'll ruin every thing; and throw the whole house into confusion.

Iron. [*Entering.*] What, sir Ben! my little knight of Malta! give me a buss, my boy. Hold, hold! sure I'm out of my reckoning: let me look a little nearer; why, what mishap has befallen you, that you heave out these signals of distress?

Sir Ben. I'm heartily glad to see thee, my old friend; but a truce to your sea-phrases, for I don't understand them: what signals of distress have I about me?

Iron. Why that white flag there at your main top-mast head: in plain English, what dost do with that clout about thy pate?

Sir Ben. Clout, do you call it? 'Tis a little *en dishabille*, indeed; but there's nothing extraordinary, I take it, in a man's wearing his gown and cap in a morning; 'tis the dress I usually chuse to study in.

Iron. And this hall is your library, is it? Ah! my old friend, my old friend! But, come, I want to have a little chat with you, and thought to have dropt in at pudding-time, as they say; for though it may be morning with thee, sir Ben, 'tis mid-day with the rest of the world.

Sir Ben. Indeed! is it so late?—But I was fallen upon an agreeable *tête à tête* with lady Dove, and hardly knew how the time passed.

Iron. Come, come; 'tis very clear how your time has passed—but what occasion is there for this fellow's being privy to our conversation?—Why don't the lubber stir? What does the fat, lazy oaf stand staring at?

Sir Ben. What shall I say now? Was ever any thing so distressing!——Why that's Jonathan, captain; don't you remember your old friend, Jonathan?

Jon. I hope your honour's in good health; I'm glad to see your honour come home again.

Iron. Honest Jonathan, I came to visit your master, and not you; if you'll go and hasten dinner, and bring sir Benjamin his periwig and clothes, you'll do me a very acceptable piece of service; for, to tell you the truth, my friend, I haven't had a comfortable meal of fresh provision this many a day.

[*Exit* JONATHAN.

Sir Ben. 'Foregad, you're come to the wrong house to find one. [*Aside.*

Iron. And so, sir knight, knowing I was welcome, and having met with a mishap here, upon your coast, I am come to taste your good cheer, and pass an evening with you over a tiff of punch.

Sir Ben. The devil you are! [*Aside.*]——This is very kind of you: there is no man in England, captain Ironsides, better pleased to see his friends about him than I am.

Iron. Ay, ay; if I did'nt think I was welcome, I shou'dn't ha' come.

Sir Ben. You may be assured you are welcome.

Iron. I am assured.

Sir Ben. You are, by my soul! take my word for it, you are.

Iron. Well, well; what need of all this ceremony about a meal's meat? who doubts you?

Sir Ben. You need not doubt me, believe it—I'll only step out, and ask my lady what time she ordered dinner; or whether she has made any engagement I'm not apprized of.

Iron. No, no; engagement! how can that be, and you in this pickle? Come, come, sit down; dinner won't come the quicker for your inquiry: and now tell me, how does my god-daughter Sophia?

Sir Ben. Thank you heartily, captain, my daughter's well in health.

Iron. That's well; and how fares your fine new wife? How goes on matrimony? Fond as ever, my little amorous Dove? always billing, always cooing?

Sir Ben. No, captain, no; we are totally altered in that respect; we shew no fondness now before company; my lady is so delicate in that particular, that from the little notice she takes of me in public, you would scarce believe we were man and wife.

Iron. Ha, ha, ha! why 'tis the very circumstance that would confirm it; but I'm glad to hear it: for, of all things under the sun, I most nauseate your nuptial familiarities; and, though you remember I was fool enough to dissuade you from this match, I am rejoiced to hear you manage so well and so wisely.

Sir Ben. No man happier in this life, captain! no man happier! one thing only is wanting; had the kind stars but crowned our endearments———

Iron. What, my lady don't breed, then?

Sir Ben. Hush, hush! for Heaven's sake don't speak so loud! should my lady overhear you, it might put strange things into her head; oh! she is a lady of delicate spirits, tender nerves—quite weak and tender nerves—a small matter throws her down—gentle as a lamb—starts at a straw—speak loud, and it destroys her: Oh! my friend, you are not used to deal with women's constitutions—these hypochondriac cases require a deal of management—'tis but charity to humour them; and you cannot think what pains it requires to keep them always quiet and in temper!

Iron. Ay, like enough—but here comes my lady, and in excellent temper, if her looks don't belie her.

Enter LADY DOVE.

Lady Dove. What's to do now, sir Benjamin? What's the matter that you send for your clothes? Can't you be contented to remain as you are? Your present dress is well enough to stay at home in, and I don't know that you have any call out of doors.

Iron. Gentle as a lamb, sir Benjamin!

Sir Ben. This attention of yours, my dear, is beyond measure flattering! I am infinitely beholden to you; but you are so taken up with your concern on my account, that you overlook our old friend and neighbour, captain Ironsides.

Lady Dove. Sir Benjamin, you make yourself quite ridiculous: this folly is not to be endured; you are enough to tire the patience of any woman living.

Sir Ben. She's quite discomposed; all in a flutter for fear I should take cold by changing my dress.

Iron. Yes, I perceive she has exceeding weak nerves. You are much in the right to humour her.

Lady Dove. Sir Benjamin Dove, if you mean that I should stay a minute longer in this house, I insist upon your turning that old porpoise out of it: is it not enough to bring your nauseous sea companions within these doors, but must I be compelled to entertain them? Foh! I shan't get the scent of his tar-jacket out of my nostrils this fortnight.

Sir Ben. Hush, my dear lady Dove! for Heaven's sake, don't shame and expose me in this manner! how can I possibly turn an honest gentleman out of my doors, who has given me no offence in life?

Lady Dove. Marry, but he has though, and great offence, too. I tell you, sir Benjamin, you are made a fool of.

Sir Ben. Nay, now, my dear sweet love! be composed.

Lady Dove. Yes, forsooth, and let a young, rambling, raking prodigal, run away with your daughter!

Sir Ben. How, what!

Lady Dove. A fine thing, truly, to be composed——

Iron. Who is it your ladyship suspects of such a design?

Lady Dove. Who, sir? why, who but your nephew Robert? You flattered us with a false hope he was dead; but, to our sorrow, we find him alive, and returned; and now you are cajoling this poor, simple, unthinking man, while your wild Indian, your savage there, is making off with his daughter.

Sir Ben. Mercy on us! what am I to think of all this?

Iron. What are you to think! Why, that it is a lie—that you are an ass—and that your wife is a termagant. My nephew is a lad of honour, and scorns to run away with any man's daughter, or wife either, though, I think, there's little danger of that here—As for me, sooner than mess with such a vixen, I'd starve: and so, sir Benjamin, I wish you a good stomach to your dinner.

[*Exit* IRONSIDES.

Lady Dove. Insolent, unmannerly brute! was ever the like heard? And you to stand tamely by! I declare I've a great mind to raise the servants upon him, since I have no other defenders. Thus am I for ever treated by your scurvy companions!

Sir Ben. Be pacified, my dear! am I in fault? But for Heaven's sake, what is become of my daughter?

Lady Dove. Yes, you can think of your daughter; but she is safe enough for this turn; I have taken care of her for one while, and thus I am rewarded for it. Am I a vixen? am I a termagant? Oh, had my first husband, had my poor, dear, dead Mr Searcher heard such a word, he would have rattled him—But he—What do I talk of? he was a man! yes, yes, he was, indeed, a man—As for you———

Sir Ben. Strain the comparison no farther, lady Dove; there are particulars, I dare say, in which I fall short of Mr Searcher.

Lady Dove. Short of him! I tell you what, sir Benjamin; I valued more the dear grey-hound that hung at his button-hole, more than I do all the foolish trinkets your vanity has lavished on me.

Sir Ben. Your ladyship, doubtless, was the paragon of wives: I well remember, when the poor man laid ill at my borough of Knavestown, how you came flying on the wings of love, by the Exeter waggon, to visit him before he died.

Lady Dove. I understand your sneer, sir, and despise it: there is one condition only, upon which you may regain my forfeited opinion.—Young Belfield, who, with this old fellow, has designs in hand of a dangerous nature, has treated me with an indignity still greater than what you have now been a witness to. Shew yourself a man upon this occasion, sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. Any thing, dearest, for peace sake.

Lady Dove. Peace sake! It is war, and not peace, which I require—But come, if you will walk this way, I'll lay the matter open to you.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The sea-shore before* GOODWIN'S *cabin.*

Enter VIOLETTA *and* FANNY.

Vio. AND when is this great match of Mr Belfield's to be?

Fanny. Alas, madam! we look to hear of it every day.

Vio. You seem to consider this event, child, as a misfortune to yourself: however others may be affected by Mr Belfield's marrying Miss Dove, to you I conceive it must be matter of indifference.

Fanny. I have been taught, madam, to consider no event as matter of indifference to me, by which good people are made unhappy.——— Miss Sophy is the best young lady living; Mr Belfield is———

Vio. Hold, Fanny! do step into the house; in my writing-box you will find a letter sealed, but without a direction; bring it to me. [*Exit* FANNY.] I have been writing to this base man, for I want fortitude to support an interview. What if I unbosomed myself to this girl, and entrusted the letter to her conveyance? She seems exceedingly honest, and, for one of so mean a condition, uncommonly sensible; I think I may safely confide in her. Well, Fanny!

Enter FANNY.

Fanny. Here is your letter, madam.

Vio. I thank you; I trouble you too much; but thou art a good-natured girl, and your attention to me shall not go unrewarded.

Fanny. I am happy to wait on you; I wish I could do or say any thing to divert you; but my discourse can't be very amusing to a lady of your sort; and talking of this wedding seems to have made you more melancholy than you was before.

Vio. Come hither, child; you have remarked my disquietude; I will now disclose to you the occasion of it: you seem interested for Miss Dove; I am touched with her situation: you tell me, she is the best young lady living.

Fanny. Oh, madam! if it were possible for an angel to take a human shape, she must be one.

Vio. 'Tis very well; I commend your zeal; you are speaking now of the qualities of her mind.

Fanny. Not of them alone; she has not only the virtues, but the beauties of an angel.

Vio. Indeed! Pray, tell me, is she so very handsome?

Fanny. As fine a person as you could wish to see.

Vio. Tall?

Fanny. About your size, or rather taller.

Vio. Fair, or dark complexioned?

Fanny. Of a most lovely complexion; 'tis her greatest beauty, and all pure nature, I'll be answerable; then, her eyes are so soft, and so smiling; and as for her hair——

Vio. Hey-day! why, where are you rambling, child? I am satisfied; I make no doubt she is a consummate beauty, and that Mr Belfield loves her to distraction. [*Aside.*] I don't like this girl so well as I did; she is a great talker; I am glad I did not disclose my mind to her; I'll go in, and determine on some expedient. [*Exit.*

Fanny. Alas, poor lady! as sure as can be, she has been crossed in love; nothing in this world besides could make her so miserable. But sure I see Mr Francis; if falling in love leads to such misfortunes, 'tis fit I should get out of his way. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Enter FRANCIS *and* PHILIP.

Fran. Wasn't that your sister, Philip, that ran into the cabin?

Phi. I think it was.

Fran. You've made a good day's work on't: the weather coming about so fair, I think we've scarce lost any thing of value, but the ship;—didn't you meet the old captain as you came down to the creek?

Phi. I did; he has been at sir Benjamin Dove's, here, at Cropley-castle, and is come back in a curious humour.

Fran. So! so! I attended my young master thither at the same time; how came they not to return together?

Phi. That I can't tell. Come, let's go in, and refresh ourselves. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter SOPHIA DOVE, *and* LUCY WATERS.

Sophia. Indeed, and indeed, Miss Lucy Waters, these are strong facts which you tell me; and, I do believe, no prudent woman would engage with a man of Mr Andrew Belfield's disposition: but what course am I to follow? and how am I to extricate myself from the embarrassments of my situation?

Lucy. Truly, madam, you have but one refuge that I know of.

Sophia. And that lies in the arms of a young adventurer. O, Lucy, Lucy! this is a flattering prescription; calculated rather to humour the patient, than to remove the disease.

Lucy. Nay, but if there is a necessity for your taking this step———

Sophia. Ay, necessity is grown strangely com-

modious of late, and always compels us to do the very thing we have most a mind to.

Lucy. Well, madam, but common humanity to young Mr Belfield——You must allow he has been hardly treated.

Sophia. By me, Lucy?

Lucy. Madam! No, madam, not by you; but 'tis charity to heal the wounded, though you have not been a party in the fray.

Sophia. I grant you. You are a true female philosopher; you would let charity recommend you a husband, and a husband recommend you to charity—But I won't reason upon the matter; at least, not in the humour I am now; not at this particular time: no, Lucy, nor in this particular spot; for here it was, at this very hour, yesterday evening, young Belfield surprised me.

Lucy. And see, madam, punctual to the same lucky moment, he comes again! let him plead his own cause; you need fear no interruption; my lady has too agreeable an engagement of her own, to endeavour at disturbing those of other people. [*Exit.*

Enter BELFIELD, *jun.*

Bel. jun. Have I, then, found thee, loveliest of women? O! Sophia, report has struck me to the heart; if, as I am told, to-morrow gives you to my brother, this is the last time I am ever to behold you.

Sophia. Why so, Mr Belfield? Why should our separation be a necessary consequence of our alliance?

Bel. jun. Because I have been ambitious, and cannot survive the pangs of disappointment.

Sophia. Alas, poor man! but you know where to bury your disappointments; the sea is still open to you; and, take my word for it, Mr Belfield, the man who can live three years, ay, or three months, in separation from the woman of his heart, need be under no apprehension for his life, let what will befall her.

Bel. jun. Cruel, insulting Sophia! when I last parted from you, I flattered myself I had left some impression on your heart—But in every event of my life, I meet a base, injurious brother; the everlasting bar to my happiness——I can support it no longer; and Mr Belfield, madam, never can, never shall be yours.

Sophia. How, Sir! never shall be mine?——What do you tell me? There is but that man on earth with whom I can be happy; and if my fate is such, that he is never to be mine, the world, and all that it contains, will for ever after be indifferent to me.

Bel. jun. I have heard enough; farewell!

Sophia. Farewell, sagacious Mr Belfield! the next fond female, who thus openly declares herself to you, will, I hope, meet with a more gallant reception than I have done.

Bel. jun. How! what! is't possible? O, Heavens!

Sophia. What, you've discovered it at last? Oh, fie upon you!

Bel. jun. Thus, thus, let me embrace my unexpected blessing: come to my heart, my fond, overflowing heart, and tell me once again that my Sophia will be only mine!

Sophia. O, man, man! all despondency one moment, all rapture the next. No question now but you conceive every difficulty surmounted, and that we have nothing to do but to run into each other's arms, make a fashionable elopement, and be happy for life? and I must own to you, Belfield, was there no other condition of our union, even this project should not deter me; but I have better hopes, provided you will be piloted by me; for, believe me, my good friend, I am better acquainted with this coast than you are.

Bel. jun. I doubt not your discretion, and shall implicitly surrender myself to your guidance.

Sophia. Give me a proof of it, then, by retreating from this place immediately; 'tis my father's hour for walking, and I would not have you meet; besides, your brother is expected.

Bel. jun. Ay, that brother, my Sophia, that brother, brings vexation and regret whenever he is named! but I hope, I need not dread a second injury in your esteem; and yet I know not how it is, but if I was addicted to superstition——

Sophia. And if I was addicted to anger, I should quarrel with you for not obeying my injunctions with more readiness.

Bel. jun. I will obey thee, and yet 'tis difficult. Those lips, which thus have blest me, cannot dismiss me without——

Sophia. Nay, Mr Belfield, don't you——well, then—mercy upon us! who's coming here?

Bel. jun. How! oh, yes! never fear; 'tis a friend; 'tis Violetta; 'tis a lady that I——

Sophia. That you what, Mr Belfield? What lady is it! I never saw her in my life before.

Bel. jun. No, she is a foreigner, born in Portugal, though of an English family: the packet, in which she was coming to England, foundered along-side of our ship, and I was the instrument of saving her life: I interest myself much in her happiness, and I beseech you, for my sake, to be kind to her. [*Exit.*

Sophia. He interests himself much in her happiness; he beseeches me, for his sake, to be kind to her—What am I to judge of all this?

Enter VIOLETTA.

Vio. Madam, I ask pardon for this intrusion; but I have business with you of a nature that—I presume I'm not mistaken; you are the young lady I have been directed to, the daughter of sir Benjamin Dove?

Sophia. I am, madam; but wont you please to repose yourself in the house? I understand you are a stranger in this country. May I beg to

know what commands you have for me? Mr Belfield has made me acquainted with some circumstances relative to your story: and, for his sake, madam, I shall be proud to render you any service in my power.

Vio. For Mr Belfield's sake, did you say, madam? Has Mr Belfield named me to you, madam?

Sophia. Is there any wonder in that, pray?

Vio. No; none at all. If any man else, such confidence would surprise me; but, in Mr Belfield, 'tis natural; there is no wondering at what he does.

Sophia. You must pardon me: I find we think differently of Mr Belfield. He left me but this minute, and, in the kindest terms, recommended you to my friendship.

Vio. 'Twas he, then, that parted from you as I came up? I thought so; but I was too much agitated to observe him—and I am confident he is too guilty to dare to look upon me.

Sophia. Why so, madam? For Heaven's sake, inform me what injuries you have received from Mr Belfield; I must own to you, I am much interested in finding him to be a man of honour.

Vio. I know your situation, madam, and I pity it. Providence has sent me here, in time to save you, and to tell you———

Sophia. What? To tell me what? Oh! speak, or I shall sink with apprehension!

Vio. To tell you, that he is——my husband!

Sophia. Husband! your husband? what do I hear! ungenerous, base, deceitful Belfield! I thought he seemed confounded at your appearance; every thing confirms his treachery; and I cannot doubt the truth of what you tell me.

Vio. A truth it is, madam, that I must ever reflect on with the most sorrowful regret.

Sophia. Come, let me beg you to walk towards the house. I ask no account of this transaction of Mr Belfield's. I would fain banish his name from my memory for ever; and you shall this instant be a witness of his peremptory dismission. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Enter BELFIELD *jun. and* PATERSON.

Bel. jun. And so, sir, these are her ladyship's commands, are they?

Pat. This is what I am commissioned by lady Dove to tell you: what report shall I make to her?

Bel. jun. Even what you please, Mr Paterson; mould it and model it to your liking; put as many palliatives, as you think proper, to sweeten it to her ladyship's taste; so you do but give her to understand, that I neither can, nor will abandon my Sophia. Cease to think of her, indeed! What earthly power can exclude her idea from my thoughts? I am surprized lady Dove should think of sending me such a message; and I wonder, sir, that you should consent to bring it.

Pat. Sir!———

Bel. jun. Nay, Mr Paterson, don't assume such a menacing air; nor practise on my temper too far in this business. I know both your situation and my own. Consider, sir, mine is a cause that would animate the most dastardly spirit; your's is enough to damp the most courageous.

[*Exit* BEL. *jun.*

Pat. A very short and sententious gentleman: but there is truth in his remark. Mine is but a sorry commission, after all. The man is in the right to fight for his mistress; she's worth the venture; and, if there was no way else to be quit of mine, I should be in the right to fight, too: egad, I don't see why aversion should not make me as desperate as love makes him. Hell and fury! here comes my Venus!

Enter LADY DOVE.

Lady Dove. Well, Paterson, what says the fellow to my message?

Pat. Says, madam! I'm ashamed to tell you what he says: he's the arrantest boatswain that ever I conversed with.

Lady Dove. But tell me what he says.

Pat. Every thing that scandal and scurrility can utter against you.

Lady Dove. Against me! What could he say against me?

Pat. Modesty forbids me to tell you.

Lady Dove. Oh! the vile reprobate! I, that have been so guarded in my conduct, so discreet in my partialities, as to keep them secret, even from my own husband; but, I hope, he did not venture to abuse my person?

Pat. No, madam, no; had he proceeded to such lengths, I could not in honour have put up with it; I hope I have more spirit than to suffer any reflections upon your ladyship's personal accomplishments.

Lady Dove. Well; but did you say nothing in defence of my reputation?

Pat. Nothing.

Lady Dove. No?

Pat. Not a syllable! Trust me for that; 'tis the wisest way, upon all tender topics, to be silent; for he, who takes upon him to defend a lady's reputation, only publishes her favours to the world; and, therefore, I would always leave that office to a husband.

Lady Dove. 'Tis true; and, if sir Benjamin had any heart——

Pat. Come, come, my dear lady, don't be too severe upon sir Benjamin: many men, of no better appearance than sir Benjamin, have shown themselves perfect heroes: I know a whole family, that, with the limbs of ladies, have the hearts of lions. Who can tell but your husband may be one of this sort?

Lady Dove. Ah!

Pat. Well, but try him; tell him how you have been used, and see what his spirit will prompt

him to do. A-propos! here the gentleman comes: if he won't fight, 'tis but what you expect; if he will, who can tell where a lucky arrow may hit? [*Exit* PAT.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN DOVE.

Lady Dove. Sir Benjamin, I want to have a little discourse in private with you.

Sir Ben. With me, my lady?

Lady Dove. With you, sir Benjamin; 'tis upon a matter of a very serious nature; pray, sit down by me. I don't know how it is, my dear, but I have observed, of late, with much concern, a great abatement in your regard for me.

Sir Ben. Oh! fie, my lady, why do you think so? What reason have you for so unkind a suspicion?

Lady Dove. 'Tis in vain for you to deny it; I am convinced you have done loving me.

Sir Ben. Well now, I vow, my dear, as I am a sinner, you do me wrong.

Lady Dove. Look'e, sir Benjamin, love, like mine, is apt to be quick-sighted; and, I am persuaded, I am not deceived in my observation.

Sir Ben. Indeed, and indeed, my lady Dove, you accuse me wrongfully.

Lady Dove. Mistake me not, my dear, I do not accuse you; I accuse myself; I am sensible there are faults and imperfections in my temper.

Sir Ben. Oh! trifles, my dear, mere trifles.

Lady Dove. Come, come, I know you have led but an uncomfortable life of late, and, I am afraid, I've been innocently, in some degree, the cause of it.

Sir Ben. Far be it from me to contradict your ladyship, if you are pleased to say so.

Lady Dove. I am sure it has been as I say: my over-fondness for you has been troublesome and vexatious; you hate confinement, I know you do; you are a man of spirit, and formed to figure in the world.

Sir Ben. Oh, you flatter me!

Lady Dove. Nay, nay, there's no disguising it: you sigh for action; your looks declare it: this alteration in your habit and appearance, puts it out of doubt: there is a certain quickness in your eye; 'twas the first symptom that attracted my regards; and, I am mistaken, sir Benjamin, if you don't possess as much courage as any man.

Sir Ben. Your ladyship does me honour.

Lady Dove. I do you justice, sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. Why, I believe, for the matter of courage, I have as much as my neighbours; but 'tis of a strange perverse quality; for, as some spirits rise with the difficulties they are to encounter, my courage, on the contrary, is always greatest when there is least call for it.

Lady Dove. Oh! you shall never make me believe this, sir Benjamin; you could not bear to see me ill used; I'm positive you could not.

Sir Ben. 'Tis as well, however, not to be too sure of that. [*Aside.*

Lady Dove. You could not be so mean-spirited, as to stand by and hear your poor dear wife abused and insulted, and——

Sir Ben. Oh! no, by no means; 'twould break my heart; but, who has abused you and insulted you, and——

Lady Dove. Who? Why, this young Belfield, that I told you of.

Sir Ben. Oh! never listen to him! A woman of your years should have more sense than to mind what such idle young fleerers can say of you.

Lady Dove. [*Rising.*] My years, sir Benjamin! Why, you are more intolerable than he is! but let him take his course; let him run away with your daughter; it shall be no further concern of mine to prevent him.

Sir Ben. No, my dear, I've done that effectually.

Lady Dove. How so, pray?

Sir Ben. By taking care he shan't run away with my estate at the same time. Some people lock their daughters up to prevent their eloping. I've gone a wiser way to work with mine; let her go loose, and locked up her fortune.

Lady Dove. And, on my conscience, I believe you mean to do the same by your wife; turn her loose upon the world, as you do your daughter; leave her to the mercy of every free-booter; let her be vilified and abused; her honour, her reputation, mangled and torn by every paltry privateering fellow that fortune casts upon your coasts.

Sir Ben. Hold, my lady, hold! young Belfield did not glance at your reputation, I hope! did he?

Lady Dove. Indeed, but he did though; and therein, I think, every wife has a title to her husband's protection.

Sir Ben. True, my dear; 'tis our duty to plead, but your's to provide us with the brief.

Lady Dove. There are some insults, sir Benjamin, that no man of spirit ought to put up with; and the imputation of being made a wittol of, is the most unpardonable of any.

Sir Ben. Right, my dear; even truth, you know, is not to be spoke at all times.

Lady Dove. How, sir! would you insinuate any thing to the disparagement of my fidelity? but choose your side; quarrel you must, either with him, or with me.

Sir Ben. Oh! if that's the alternative, what a deal of time have we wasted! Step with me into my library, and I'll pen him a challenge immediately. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The cabin, with a view of the sea, as before.*

PHILIP, LUCY WATERS.

Phi. How I have loved you, Lucy, and what I have suffered on your account, you know well enough; and you should not now, when I am struggling to forget you, come to put me in mind of past afflictions: go, go; leave me: I pray you, leave me.

Lucy. Nay, Philip, but hear me!

Phi. Hear you, ungrateful girl! you know it has been all my delight to hear you, to see you, and to sit by your side; for hours have I done it; for whole days together: but those days are past; I must labour now for my livelihood; and, if you rob me of my time, you wrong me of my subsistence.

Lucy. O! Philip, I am undone, if you don't protect me!

Phi. Ah! Lucy, that, I fear, is past prevention!

Lucy. No, Philip, no; I am innocent! and, therefore, persecuted by the most criminal of men. I have disclosed all Mr Belfield's artifices to Miss Sophia, and now am terrified to death; I saw him follow me out of the Park, as I was coming hither, and I dare not return home alone; indeed, Philip, I dare not.

Phi. Well, Lucy, step in with me, and fear nothing; I see the 'squire is coming,——He, who can refuse his protection to a woman, may he never taste the blessings a woman can bestow!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter BELFIELD *sen.*

Bel. sen. Ay, 'tis she! Confusion follow her!—How perversely has she traversed my projects with Sophia!—By all that's resolute, I'll be revenged.—My brother, too, returned. Vexatious circumstance! there am I foiled again—Since first I stepped out of the path of honour, what have I obtained?——O treachery! treachery! if thou canst not in this world make us happy, better have remained that dull formal thing, an honest man, and trusted to what the future might produce.

Enter PHILIP.

So, fellow, who are you?

Phi. A man, sir; an honest man!

Bel. sen. A saucy one, methinks.

Phi. The injurious are apt to think so; however, I ask pardon: as your riches make you too proud, my honesty, perhaps, makes me too bold.

Bel. sen. O! I know you now; you are son to that old fellow I thought proper to discharge from my farm; please to betake yourself from the door of your cabin; there's a young woman within I must have a word with.

Phi. If 'tis Lucy Waters you would speak with——

Bel. sen. If, rascal! It is Lucy Waters that I would speak with; that I will speak with; and, spite of your insolence, compel to answer whatever I please to ask, and go with me wherever I please to carry her.

Phi. Then, sir, I must tell you, poor as I am, she is under my protection: you see, sir, I am armed; you have no right to force an entrance here; and, while I have life, you never shall.

Bel. sen. Then, be it at your peril, villain, if you oppose me, [*They fight.*

Enter PATERSON, *who beats down their swords.*

Pat. For shame, Mr Belfield! what are you about? Tilting with this peasant!

Bel. sen. Paterson, stand off!

Pat. Come, come; put up your sword.

Bel. sen. Damnation, sir! what do you mean? Do you turn against me? Give way, or, by my soul, I'll run you through!

Enter CAPTAIN IRONSIDES *and* SKIFF.

Iron. Hey-day, what the devil ails you all? I thought the whole ship's company had sprung a mutiny. Master and I were taking a nap together for good fellowship; and you make such a damned clattering and clashing, there's no sleeping in peace for you.

Bel. sen. Come, Mr Paterson, will you please to bear me company, or stay with your new acquaintance?

Iron. Oh ho! my righteous nephew, is it you that are kicking up this riot? Why, you ungracious profligate, would you murder an honest lad in the door of his own house?—his castle—his castellum——Are these your fresh-water tricks?

Bel. sen. Your language, Captain Ironsides, savours strongly of your profession; and I hold both you, your occupation, and opinion, equally vulgar and contemptible.

Pat. Come, Mr Belfield, come: for Heaven's sake let us go home.

Iron. My profession! Why, what have you to say to my profession, you unsanctified whelp you? I hope 'tis an honest vocation to fight the enemies of one's country. You, it seems, are for murdering its friends. I trust, it is not for such a skipjack as thee art, to fleer at my profession. Master, did'st ever hear the like?

Skiff. Never, Captain, never. For my own part, I am one of few words; but, for my own part, I always thought, that to be a brave seaman, like your honour, was the greatest title an Englishman can wear.

Iron. Why, so it is, Skiff: ahem!

Bel. sen. Well, sir, I leave you to the enjoy

ment of your honours; so your servant. Sirrah, I shall find a time for you.

[BELFIELD *is going out.*

Iron. Hark'e, sir, come back; one more word with you.

Bel. sen. Well, sir——

Iron. Your father was an honest gentleman: your mother, though I say it, that should not say it, was an angel; my eyes ache when I speak of her: ar'n't you ashamed, sirrah, to disgrace such parents? My nephew Bob, your brother, is as honest a lad, and as brave, as ever stept between stem and stern; a' has a few faults indeed, as who is free? But you, Andrew, you are as false as a quick-sand, and as full of mischief as a fire-ship.

Bel. sen. Captain Ironsides, I have but little time to bestow on you; if you have nothing else to entertain me with, the sooner we part the better.

Iron. No, sir, one thing more, and I have done with you. They tell me you're parliament-man here for the borough of Knavestown: the Lord have mercy upon the nation, when such fellows as thou art are to be our law-makers—For my own part, I can shift; I'll take shipping, and live in Lapland, and be dry nurse to a bear, rather than dwell in a country where I am to be governed by such a thing as thou art.

Bel. sen. By your manners, I should guess you had executed that office already: however, lose no time, fit out a new Charming Sally, and set sail for Lapland; 'tis the properest place for you to live in, and a bear the fittest companion for you to keep.

[*Exeunt* BELFIELD *and* PATERSON.

Iron. Hark'e, Philip? I forgot to ask what all this stir was about.

Phi. Sir, if you please to walk in, I will inform you.

Iron. With all my heart. A pragmatical, impertinent coxcomb! Come, master, we'll fill a pipe, and hear the lad's story within doors. I never yet was ashamed of my profession, and I'll take care my profession shall have no reason to be ashamed of me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter BELFIELD *jun. and* SOPHIA.

Bel. jun. Madam, madam, will you not vouchsafe to give me a hearing?

Sophia. I guess you could recal an act, no earthly power can cancel, all attempt at explanation is vain.

Bel. jun. Yet, before we part for ever, obstinate, inexorable Sophia! tell me what is my offence?

Sophia. Answer yourself that question, Mr Belfield; consult your own heart; consult your Violetta.

Bel. jun. Now, on my life, she's meanly jealous of Violetta! that grateful woman has been warm in her commendations of me, and her distempered fancy turns that candour into criminality.

Sophia. Ha! he seems confounded! guilty beyond all doubt.

Bel. jun. By Heaven I'll no longer be the dupe to these bad humours! Lucy Waters, Violetta, every woman she sees or hears, alarms her jealousy, overthrows my hopes, and rouses every passion into fury. Well, madam, at length I see what you allude to; I shall follow your advice, and consult my Violetta; nay, more, consult my happiness; for with her, at least, I shall find repose; with you, I plainly see, there can be none.

Sophia. 'Tis very well, sir; the only favour you can now grant me, is never to let me see you again; for, after what has passed between us, every time you intrude into my company, you will commit an insult upon good breeding and humanity.

Bel. jun. Madam, I'll take care to give you no further offence. [*Exit.*

Sophia. Oh! my poor heart will break!

Enter SIR BENJAMIN DOVE.

Sir Ben. Hey-day, Sophia, what's the matter? What ails my child? Who has offended you? Did not I see the younger Belfield part from you just now?

Sophia. O, sir! if you have any love for me, don't name that base, treacherous wretch, to me any more. [*Exit.*

Sir Ben. Upon my word, I am young Mr Belfield's most obsequious servant! a very notable confusion truly has he been pleased to make in my family! Lady Dove raves, Sophia cries; my wife calls him a saucy, impudent fellow; my daughter says he's a base, treacherous wretch; from all which I am to conclude, that he has spoke too plain truths to the one, and told too many lies to the other. One lady is irritated because he has refused favours; the other, perhaps, is afflicted because he has obtained them. Lady Dove has peremptorily insisted upon my giving him a challenge; but, to say the truth, I had no great stomach to the business, till this fresh provocation. I perceive now, I am growing into a most unaccountable rage; 'tis something so different from what I ever felt before, that, for what I know, it may be courage, and I mistake it for anger. I never did quarrel with any man, and, hitherto, no man ever quarrelled with me. Egad, if once I break the ice, it shan't stop here: if young Belfield doesn't prove me a coward, lady Dove shall see that I am a man of spirit.—Sure I see my gentleman coming hither again. [*Steps aside.*

Enter BELFIELD *jun.*

Bel. jun. What meanness, what infatuation possesses me, that I should resolve to throw my-

self once more in her way! but she's gone, and yet I may escape with credit.

Sir Ben. Ay, there he is, sure enough: by the mass, I don't like him: I'll listen awhile, and discover what sort of a humour he is in.

Bel. jun. I am ashamed of this weakness: I am determined to assume a proper spirit, and act as becomes a man upon this occasion.

Sir Ben. Upon my soul I'm very sorry for it!

Bel. jun. Now am I so distracted between love, rage, and disappointment, that I could find in my heart to sacrifice her, myself, and all mankind.

Sir Ben. Lord have mercy upon us! I'd better steal off, and leave him to himself.

Bel. jun. And yet, perhaps, all this may proceed from an excess of fondness in my Sophia.

Sir Ben. Upon my word you are blest with a most happy assurance.

Bel. jun. Something may have dropped from Violetta to alarm her jealousy; and, working upon the exquisite sensibility of her innocent mind, may have brought my sincerity into question.

Sir Ben. I don't understand a word of all this.

Bel. jun. Now could I fall at her feet for pardon, though I know not in what I have offended; I have not the heart to move. Fy upon it! What an arrant coward has love made me!

Sir Ben. A coward does he say? I am heartily rejoiced to hear it: if I must needs come to action, pray Heaven it be with a coward! I'll even take him while he is in the humour, for fear he should recover his courage, and I lose mine. [*Aside.*]——So, sir, your humble servant, Mr Belfield! I'm glad I have found you, sir.

Bel. jun. Sir Benjamin, your most obedient. Pray, what are your commands, now you have found me?

Sir Ben. Hold! hold! don't come any nearer: don't you see I am in a most prodigious passion? Fire and fury! what's the reason you have made all this disorder in my house? my daughter in tears; my wife in fits; every thing in an uproar; and all your doing! Do you think I'll put up with this treatment? If you suppose you have a coward to deal with, you'll find yourself mistaken; greatly mistaken, let me tell you, sir! Mercy upon me, what a passion I am in! In short, Mr Belfield, the honour of my house is concerned, and I must, and will have satisfaction. I think this is pretty well to set out with. I'm horribly out of breath. I sweat at every pore. What great fatigues do men of courage undergo!

Bel. jun. Look'e, sir Benjamin, I don't rightly comprehend what you would be at; but, if you think I have injured you, few words are best; disputes between men of honour are soon adjusted; I'm at your service, in any way you think fit.

Sir Ben. How you fly out now! Is that giving me the satisfaction I require? I am the person injured in this matter, and, as such, have a right to be in a passion; but I see neither right nor reason why you, who have done the wrong, should be as angry as I, who have received it.

Bel. jun. I suspect I have totally mistaken this honest gentleman; he only wants to build some reputation with his wife upon this rencounter, and 'twould be inhuman not to gratify him. [*Aside.*

Sir Ben. What shall I do now? Egad I seem to have posed him: this plaguy sword sticks so hard in the scabbard—Well, come forth, rapier; 'tis but one thrust; and what should a man fear, that has lady Dove for his wife?

Bel. jun. Hey-day! Is the man mad? Put up your sword, sir Benjamin; put it up, and don't expose yourself in this manner.

Sir Ben. You shall excuse me, sir; I have had some difficulty in drawing it, and am determined now to try what metal it's made of. So come on, sir.

Bel. jun. Really this is too ridiculous; I tell you, sir Benjamin, I am in no humour for these follies. I've done no wrong to you or yours: on the contrary, great wrong has been done to me; but I have no quarrel with you; so, pray, put up your sword.

Sir Ben. And I tell you, Mr Belfield, 'tis in vain to excuse yourself.—The less readiness he shews, so much the more resolution I feel. [*Aside.*

Bel. jun. Well, sir knight, if such is your humour, I won't spoil your longing. So have at you!

Enter LADY DOVE.

Lady Dove. Ah! [*Shrieks.*

Bel. jun. Hold, hold, sir Benjamin! I never fight in ladies' company. Why, I protest you are a perfect Amadis de Gaul; a Don Quixotte in heroism; and the presence of this your dulcinea renders you invincible.

Sir Ben. Oh! my lady, is it you? don't be alarmed, my dear; 'tis all over: a small fracas between this gentleman and myself; that's all; don't be under any surprize; I believe the gentleman has had enough; I believe he is perfectly satisfied with my behaviour, and I persuade myself you will have no cause for the future to complain of his. Mr Belfield, this is lady Dove.

Bel. jun. Madam, to a generous enemy, 'tis mean to deny justice, or with-hold applause. You are happy in the most valiant of defenders. Gentle as you may find him in the tender passions, to a man, madam, he acquits himself like a man. Sir Benjamin Dove, in justice to your merit, I am ready to make any submission to this lady you shall please to impose. If you suffer her to bully you after this, you deserve to be henpecked all the days of your life. [*Aside.*

Sir Ben. Say no more, my dear Bob; I shall love you for this the longest hour I have to live.

Bel. jun. If I have done you any service, promise me only one hour's conversation with your lovely daughter, and make what use of me you please.

Sir Ben. Here's my hand, you shall have it; leave us. [*Exit* BEL. *jun.*

Lady Dove. What am I to think of all this? It can't well be a contrivance; and yet 'tis strange, that you little animal should have the assurance to face a man, and be so bashful at a rencounter with a woman.

Sir Ben. Well, lady Dove, what are you musing upon? you see you are obeyed; the honour of your family is vindicated. Slow to enter into these affairs; being once engaged, I pertinaciously conduct them to an issue.

Lady Dove. Sir Benjamin——I——I——

Sir Ben. Here, Jonathan! do you hear? set my things ready in the library; make haste.

Lady Dove. I say, sir Benjamin, I think——

Sir Ben. Well, let's hear what it is you think.

Lady Dove. Bless us all, why you snap one up so—I say, I think, my dear, you have acquitted yourself tolerably well, and I am perfectly satisfied.

Sir Ben. Humph! you think I have done tolerably well? I think so too; do you apprehend me? Tolerably! for this business that you think tolerably well done, is but half concluded, let me tell you: nay, what some would call the toughest part of the undertaking remains unfinished; but, I dare say, with your concurrence, I shall find it easy enough.

Lady Dove. What is it you mean to do with my concurrence; what mighty project does your wise brain teem with?

Sir Ben. Nay, now I reflect on't again, I don't think there will be any need of your concurrence; for, nolens or volens, I'm determined it shall be done. In short, this it is; I am unalterably resolved, from this time forward, lady Dove, to be sole and absolute in this house, master of my own servants, father to my own child, and sovereign lord and governor, madam, over my own wife.

Lady Dove. You are?

Sir Ben. I am. Gods! gods! what a pitiful contemptible figure does a man make under petticoat government! Perish he that's mean enough to stoop to such indignities! I am determined to be free——

PATTESON *enters, and whispers* LADY DOVE.

Ha! how's this, Mr Paterson? What liberties are these you take with my wife, and before my face? no more of these freedoms, I beseech you, sir, as you expect to answer it to a husband, who will have no secrets whispered to his wife, to which he is not privy; nor any appointments made, in which he is not a party.

Pat. Hey-day! what a change of government is here! Egad, I'm very glad on't—I've no notion of a female administration. [*Exit.*

Lady Dove. What insolence is this, sir Benjamin? what ribaldry do you shock my ears with? Let me pass, sir; I'll stay no longer in the same room with you.

Sir Ben. Not in the same room, nor under the same roof, shall you long abide, unless you reform your manners. However, for the present, you must be content to stay where you are.

Lady Dove. What, sir! will you imprison me in my own house? I'm sick; I'm ill; I'm suffocated; I want air; I must and will walk into the garden.

Sir Ben. Then, madam, you must find some better weapon than your fan to parry my sword with: this pass I defend: what! do'st think, after having encountered a man, I shall turn my back upon a woman? No, madam; I have ventured my life to defend your honour; 'twould be hard if I wanted spirit to protect my own.

Lady Dove. You monster! would you draw your sword upon a woman?

Sir Ben. Unless it has been your pleasure to make me a monster, madam, I am none.

Lady Dove. Would you murder me, you inhuman brute? Would you murder your poor, fond, defenceless wife?

Sir Ben. Nor tears, nor threats, neither scolding, nor soothing, shall shake me from my purpose: your yoke, lady Dove, has laid too heavy upon my shoulders; I can support it no longer: to-morrow, madam, you leave this house.

Lady Dove. Will you break my heart, you tyrant? Will you turn me out of doors to starve, you barbarous man?

Sir Ben. Oh! never fear; you will fare to the full as well as you did in your first husband's time; in your poor, dear, dead, Mr Searcher's time. You told me once you prized the paltry grey-hound that hung at his button-hole, more than all the jewels my folly had lavished upon you. I take you at your word. You shall have your bawble, and I will take back all mine; they'll be of no use to you hereafter.

Lady Dove. O! sir Benjamin, sir Benjamin! for mercy's sake, turn me not out of your doors! I will be obedient, gentle, and complying, for the future; don't shame me; on my knees, I beseech you don't.

Enter BELFIELD *senior.*

Sir Ben. Mr Belfield, I am heartily glad to see you; don't go back, sir; you catch us indeed a little unawares; but these situations are not uncommon in well-ordered families. Rewards and punishments are the life of government; and the authority of a husband must be upheld.

Bel. sen. I confess, sir Benjamin, I was greatly surprised at finding lady Dove in that attitude: but I never pry into family secrets; I had much rather suppose your lady was on her knees to in-

tercede with you on my behalf, than be told she was reduced to that humble posture for any reason that affects herself.

Sir Ben. Sir, you are free to suppose what you please for lady Dove; I'm willing to spare you that trouble on my account; and therefore, I tell you plainly, if you will sign and seal your articles this night, to-morrow morning Sophia shall be yours: I'm resolved, that the self-same day which consecrates the redemption of my liberty, shall confirm the surrender of yours.

Lady Dove. O! Mr Belfield, I beseech you, intercede with this dear, cruel man, in my behalf! would you believe, that he harbours a design of expelling me his house, on the very day, too, when he purposes celebrating the nuptials of his daughter?

Bel. sen. Come, sir Benjamin, I must speak to you now as a friend in the nearest connexion. I beg you will not damp our happiness with so melancholy an event: I will venture to pledge myself for her ladyship.

Sir Ben. Well, for your sake, perhaps I may prolong her departure for one day; but I'm determined, if she does stay to-morrow, she shall set the first dish upon the table; if 'tis only to shew the company what a refractory wife, in the hands of a man of spirit, may be brought to submit to. Our wives, Mr Belfield, may teaze us, and vex us, and still escape with impunity; but if once they thoroughly provoke us, the charm breaks, and they are lost for ever.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The sea-coast, as before.*

Enter GOODWIN *and* FANNY.

Good. WHAT you tell me, Fanny, gives me great concern; that Mr Francis should think to seduce the innocence of my child for a paltry bribe! what can have passed to encourage him to put such an affront upon you?

Fan. Till this proposal, which I tell you of, I always took Mr Francis for one of the best behaved, modestest young men, I had ever met with.

Good. To say the truth, Fanny, so did I; but the world is full of hypocrisy, and our acquaintance with him has been very short——

Enter FRANCIS.

Hark'e, young man, a word with you! What is it I or my children have done to offend you?

Fran. Offend me! what is it you mean?

Good. When your vessel was stranded upon our coast, did we take advantage of your distress? On the contrary, was'nt this poor hut thrown open to your use, as a receptacle for your treasures, and a repose for your fatigues? Have either those treasures, or that repose, been invaded? Whom amongst you have we robbed or defrauded?

Fran. None, none—your honesty has been as conspicuous as your hospitality.

Good. Why, then, having received no injury, do you seek to do one? an injury of the basest nature—You see, there, a poor girl, whose only portion in this world is her innocence, and of that you have sought to——

Fran. Hold—nor impute designs to me which I abhor. You say your daughter has no portion but her innocence—assured of that, I ask none else; and, if she can forgive the stratagem I have made use of, I am ready to atone for it by a life devoted to her service.

Good. Well, sir, I am happy to find you are the man I took you for, and cannot discommend your caution; so that, if you like my daughter, and Fanny is consenting—But, soft! who have we got here?

Fran. I wish Mr Paterson was further for interrupting us just now.

Enter PATERSON.

Pat. Pray, good people, isn't there a lady with you of the name of Violetta?

Good. There is.

Pat. Can you direct me to her? I have business with her of the utmost consequence.

Good. Fanny, you and Mr Francis step in and let the lady know.

[*Exeunt* FANNY *and* FRANCIS.

If its no offence, Mr Paterson, allow me to ask you, whether there is any hope of our young gentleman here, who is just returned, succeeding in his addresses to Miss Dove?

Pat. Certainly none, Mr Goodwin.

Good. I'm heartily sorry for it.

Pat. I find you are a stranger to the reasons which make against it: but how are you interested in his success?

Good. I am a witness of his virtues, and consequently not indifferent to his success.

[*Exit* GOODWIN.

Enter VIOLETTA.

Pat. Madam, I presume your name is Violetta?

Vio. It is, sir.

Pat. I wait upon you, madam, at Miss Dove's desire, and as a particular friend of Mr Andrew Belfield's.

Vio. Sir!——

Pat. Madam!——

Vio. Pray, proceed.

Pat. To intreat the favour of your company at Cropley-castle upon business, wherein that

lady and gentlemen are intimately concerned: I presume, madam, you guess what I mean?

Vio. Indeed, sir, I cannot easily guess how I can possibly be a party in any business between Miss Dove and Mr Belfield. I thought all intercourse between those persons was now entirely at an end.

Pat. Oh! no, madam; by no means; the affair is far from being at an end.

Vio. How, sir, not at an end?

Pat. No, madam—on the contrary, from sir Benjamin's great anxiety for the match, and, above all, from the very seasonable intelligence you was so good to communicate to Miss Sophia, I am not without hopes that Mr Andrew Belfield will be happy enough to conquer all her scruples, and engage her to consent to marry him.

Vio. Indeed! but pray, sir, those scruples of Miss Dove's, which you flatter yourself Mr Belfield will so happily conquer, how is it that ladies in this country reconcile themselves to such matters? I should have thought such an obstacle utterly insurmountable.

Pat. Why, to be sure, madam, Miss Dove has had some doubts and difficulties to contend with: but duty, you know——and, as I said before, you, madam, you have been a great friend to Mr Belfield—you have forwarded matters surprisingly.

Vio. It is very surprising, truly, if I have.

Pat. You seem greatly staggered at what I tell you: I see you are a stranger to the principles upon which young ladies frequently act in this country. I believe, madam, in England, as many, or more, matches are made from pique, than for love; and, to say the truth, I take this of Miss Dove's to be one of that sort. There is a certain person, you know, who will feel upon this occasion.

Vio. Yes; I well know there is a certain person, who will feel upon this occasion; but, are the sufferings of that unhappy one to be converted into raillery and amusement?

Pat. Oh! Madam! the ladies will tell you, that therein consists the very luxury of revenge ——But, I beseech you, have the goodness to make haste: my friend Mr Belfield may stand in need of your support.

Vio. Thus insulted, I can contain myself no longer. Upon what infernal shore am I cast! into what society of demons am I fallen! that a woman, whom, by an act of honour, I would have redeemed from misery and ruin, should have the insolence, the inhumanity, to invite me to be a spectatress of her marriage with my own husband!

Pat. With your husband! What do I hear? Is Mr Andrew Belfield your husband?

Vio. Ay—do you doubt it? Would I could say he was not!

Pat. Just Heaven! you then are the Violetta —you are the Portuguese lady I have heard so much of, and married to Mr Belfield! base and perfidious!—Why, madam, both Miss Dove and myself conceived that 'twas the young adventurer, with whom you suffered shipwreck, that—

Vio. What! Lewson, the brave, generous, honourable Lewson?

Pat. Lewson! Lewson! as sure as can be, you mean young Belfield; for now, the recollection strikes me, that I've heard he took that name before he quitted England. That Lewson, madam, whom we believed you married to, is Robert Belfield, and younger brother to your husband.

Vio. Mercy defend me! into what distress had this mutual mistake nearly involved us!

Pat. Come, then, madam, let us lose no time, but fly with all dispatch to Cropley-castle. I have a post-chaise waiting, which will convey us thither in a few minutes: but, before we go, I'll step in and direct these good people to find young Belfield, and send him after us—Old Ironsides and all must be there.

[*Exit* PATERSON.

Vio. Let me reflect upon my fate—— Wedded, betrayed, abandoned! at once a widow and a wife—all that my soul held dear, in the same hour obtained and lost! O false, false Belfield! Strong, indeed, must be that passion, and deeply seated in my heart, which even thy treachery could not eradicate! Twice shipwrecked! twice rescued from the jaws of death!—Just Heaven! I do not, dare not murmur, nor can I doubt but that thy hand invisibly is stretched forth to save me, and, through this labyrinth of sorrow, to conduct me to repose.

Enter PATERSON.

Pat. Now, madam, if you will trust yourself to my convoy, I'll bring you into harbour, where you shall never suffer shipwreck more. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—SIR BENJAMIN DOVE'S *house.*

Enter SIR BENJAMIN DOVE *and* LADY DOVE.

Sir Ben. Upon these terms and stipulations, lady Dove, I consent to your remaining at Cropley castle. Enjoy you your own prerogative, and leave me in possession of mine. Above all things, my dear, I must insist, that Mr Paterson be henceforward considered as my friend and companion, and not your ladyship's.

Lady Dove. Nay, but indeed and indeed, my dear sir Benjamin, this is being too hard with me, to debar me the common gratifications of every woman of distinction: Mr Paterson, you know, is my very particular friend.

Sir Ben. 'Tis for his being so very particular, my dear, that I object to him.

Lady Dove. Friendship, sir Benjamin, is the virtuous recreation of delicate and susceptible minds—Would you envy me that innocent pleasure? Why, you know, my dearest, that your

passion for me, which was once so violent, is now softened and subsided into mere friendship.

Sir Ben. True, my dear—and, therefore, I am afraid lest my love having, by easy degrees, slackened into friendship, his friendship should, by as natural a transition, quicken into love—say no more, therefore, upon this point, but leave me to Mr Paterson, and Mr Paterson to me—Go—send Sophia to me—oh, here she comes: your ladyship need not be present at our conference; I think my own daughter surely belongs to my province, and not yours. Good morning to you! [*Exit* LADY DOVE.

Enter SOPHIA.

Well, daughter, are you prepared to comply with my desires, and give your hand to Andrew Belfield this morning?

Sophia. Sir!

Sir Ben. My heart is fixed upon this event—I have watched late and early to bring it to bear; and you'll find, my child, when you come to peruse your marriage settlement, how tenderly I have consulted your happiness in this match.

Sophia. Alas! I should never think of searching for happiness amongst deeds and conveyances—'tis the man, and not the money, that is likely to determine my lot.

Sir Ben. Well, and is not Mr Belfield a man? a fine man, as I take it, he is, and a fine estate I'm sure he has got—then it lies so handy and contiguous to my own—only a hedge betwixt us—think of that, Sophy! only a hedge that parts his manor from mine—then consider, likewise, how this alliance will accommodate matters in the borough of Knavestown, where I and my family have stood three contested elections with his, and lost two of them—that sport will now be at an end, and our interests will be consolidated by this match, as well as our estates.

Sophia. Still you mistake my meaning—I talk of the qualities of a man, you of his possessions—I require in a husband, good morals, good nature, and good sense—what has all this to do with contiguous estates, connected interests, and contested elections?

Sir Ben. I don't rightly understand what you would have, child—but this I well know, that if money alone will not make a woman happy, 'twill always purchase that that will. I hope, Sophy, you've done thinking of that rambling, idle young fellow, Bob Belfield?

Sophia. Perish all thought of him for ever! Nothing can be more contrary, more impossible in nature, than my union with young Belfield: age, ugliness, ill-nature—bring any thing to my arms, rather than him.

Sir Ben. But why so angry with him, child? This violent detestation and abhorrence is as favourable a symptom as any reasonable lover could wish for.

Enter PATERSON.

Pat. Joy to you, sir Benjamin! all joy attend you both! the bridegroom by this time is arrived; we saw his equipage enter the avenue, as ours drove into the court.

Sir Ben. Mr Paterson, sir, I know not if yet your friend is to be a bridegroom. I find my daughter here so cold and uncomplying, for my own part, I don't know how I shall look Mr Belfield in the face.

Pat. Fear nothing, sir Benjamin: make haste and receive your son-in-law. I have news to communicate to Miss Dove, which, I am confident, will dispose her to comply with your wishes.

Sir Ben. Well, sir, I shall leave her to your tutorage. This obliging gentleman undertakes not only for my wife, but my daughter, too.

[*Exit* SIR BEN.

Sophia. I am surprized, Mr Paterson——

Pat. Hold, madam, for one moment: I have made a discovery of the last importance to your welfare: you are in an error with regard to young Belfield—Violetta, the lady you believed him married to, is here in the house. I have brought her hither at your request, and from her I learn that the elder brother is her husband; he, who, this very morning, but for my discovery, had been your's also.

Sophia. What's this you tell me, sir? Where is this lady? where is Violetta? where is young Belfield?

Pat. Violetta, madam, I have put under safe convoy, and by this time your waiting-woman has lodged her privately in the closet of your bedchamber: there you will find her, and learn the whole process of this providential escape. I'll only speak a word to sir Benjamin, and come to you without any further delay.

[*Exit* SOPHIA.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN DOVE *and* BELFIELD *sen.*

Sir Ben. Well, Mr Paterson, what says my daughter?

Pat. Every thing that becomes an obedient daughter to say; so that, if this gentleman is not made completely happy within this hour, the fault will lie at his door, and not with Miss Sophia.

Sir Ben. This is good news, Paterson; but I am impatient to have the ceremony concluded; the bells are ringing, the parson is waiting, and the equipages are at the door. Step up to Sophia, and tell her to hasten; and hark'e, my friend? as you go by lady Dove's door, give her a call—do you mind me, only a call at the door: don't you go in; she's busy at work upon a large parcel of ribbands, which I've given her to make into wedding favours. She'll be very angry if you go into her chamber. Go, go, get you gone.

[*Exit* PATERSON.

Bel. sen. How comes it to pass, sir Benjamin, that Mr Paterson becomes so necessary an agent in the female affairs of your family? I confess to you my pride is wounded, when I find I am to thank him for your daughter's consent to marry me. The man that can prevail upon a woman to act against her liking, what may he not persuade her to do with it?

Sir Ben. Your remark is just. Paterson has certainly some secret faculty of persuasion; and all that can be said is, that 'tis better to see your danger before marriage, than to be feeling it out, as I have done, afterwards.

Enter CAPTAIN IRONSIDES, *and* BELFIELD *jun.*

Sir Ben. What, old acquaintance, are you come to rejoice with me on this occasion?—Bob Belfield, too, as I live! you are both heartily welcome—I could have spared their visit notwithstanding. [*Aside.*

Bel. sen. My brother here! vexation!

Bel. jun. Sir Benjamin, I come now to claim your promise of one hour's conversation with your daughter?

Sir Ben. The devil you do!

Bel. sen Ridiculous!

Bel. jun. To you, sir, obligations of this sort may be matter of ridicule; but while I religiously observe all promises I make to others, I shall expect others to be as observant of those they make to me.

Bel. sen. Sir, I have a most profound veneration for your principles, and am happy to find your understanding so much cultivated by travel—but, in spite of your address, you will find it rather difficult to induce me to wave my right to Miss Dove, in favour of a professed adventurer.

Bel. jun. Shameless, unfeeling man! an adventurer, do you call me? You, whose unbrotherly persecution drove me to this hazardous, this humiliating occupation?

Iron. Sirrah! Bob! no reflections upon privateering—it has lined your pockets well, you young rogue; and you may tell your fine brother there, that we have landed treasure enough upon his estate to buy the fee-simple of it: ay, and for what I know, of sir Wiseacre's here into the bargain.

Sir Ben. What's that you say, captain Ironsides? Let's have a word in a corner with you.

Bel. sen. Look'e, sir, if you conceive yourself wronged by me, there is but one way—You know your remedy.

Bel. jun. I know your meaning, brother; and, to demonstrate how much greater my courage is than yours, I must confess to you, I dare not accept your proposal.

Sir Ben. No, no; I have given him enough of that, I believe.

Iron. Bob Belfield, if I did not know thee for a lad of mettle, I should tell what to make of all this: for my own part, I understand none of your scruples and refinements, not I—a man is a man—and if I take care to give an affront to no man, I think I have a right to take an affront from no man.

Sir Ben. Come, gentlemen, suspend your dispute. Here comes my daughter; let her decide betwixt you.

Bel. jun. Let me receive my sentence from her lips, and I will submit to it.

Enter SOPHIA, PATERSON, *and* LADY DOVE.

Sir Ben. Here's a young gentleman, daughter, that will take no denial; he comes to forbid the banns, just when you are both going into the church to be married.

Sophia. Upon my word, this is something extraordinary! What are the gentleman's reasons for this behaviour?

Sir Ben. He claims a sort of promise from me, that he should be indulged in an hour's conversation with you, before you give your hand to his brother.

Sophia. An hour's conversation! What little that gentleman can have to say to me, I believe, may be said in a very few minutes.

Bel. sen. I think, brother, this conversation don't promise a great deal.

Sophia. In the first place, then, I own to this gentleman, and the company present, that there was a time, when I entertained the highest opinion of his merit. Nay, I will not scruple to confess, that I had conceived a regard for him of the tenderest sort.

Iron. And pray, young lady, how came my nephew to forfeit your good opinion?

Sophia. By a conduct, sir, that must for ever forfeit not my esteem only, but yours, and all mankind's: I am sorry to be his accuser, but I will appeal to you, Mr Belfield, who are his brother, whether it is reconcileable, either to honour or humanity, to prosecute an affair of marriage with one woman, when you are previously and indispensably engaged to another?

Bel. sen. Hum!

Sophia. Yet this, sir, is the treatment I have received: judge, therefore, if I can desire or consent to have any long conversation with a gentleman, who is under such engagements; nay, whom I can prove actually married to another woman in this very house, and ready to vouch the truth of what I assert. Judge for me, Mr Belfield, could you believe any man capable of such complicated, such inconceivable villainy?

Bel. sen. Heavens! This touches me too closely.

Sir Ben. Sir, I would fain know what excuse you can have for this behaviour? I can tell you, sir, I don't understand it.

Lady Dove. Oh! fie! fie upon you, Mr Belfield! I wonder you are not ashamed to shew your face in this family.

Sir Ben. Who desired you to put in your oar?

Iron. Why, sirrah, would not one wife content you? 'Tis enough in all reason for one man; is it not, sir Benjamin?

Bel. jun. Sir, when it is proved I am married, accuse me.

Iron. Look'e, Bob, I don't accuse you for marrying; 'twas an indiscretion, and I can forgive it—but to deny it, is a meanness, and I abhor it.

Sophia. Mr Belfield, do you say nothing upon this occasion!

Bel. sen. Paterson, I am struck to the heart—I cannot support my guilt—I am married to Violetta—save me the confusion of relating it: this dishonourable engagement for ever I renounce; nor will I rest till I have made atonement to an injured wife. Madam, I beg leave to withdraw for a few minutes.

Bel. jun. Hold, sir! this contrivance is of your forging—you have touched me too near—and now, if you dare draw your sword, follow me!

Sophia. Hold, gentlemen! you forget the lady is now in the house—she is a witness that will effectually put an end to your dispute—I will conduct her hither. [*Exit* SOPHIA.

Bel. jun. I agree to it.

Iron. Hark'e, nephew? I shrewdly suspect you have been laying a train to blow yourself up: if once Bob comes fairly alongside of you, you'll find your quarters too hot to hold you: I never yet found my boy out in a lie, and shan't tamely see a lie imposed upon him; for while he is honest, and I have breath, he shall never want a friend to stand by him, or a father to protect him.

Bel. sen. Mr Paterson, explain my story—I will depart this instant in search of Violetta.

Enter SOPHIA *and* VIOLETTA.

Sophia. Stay! I conjure you—stay, turn, and look back upon this lady, before you go.

[*Presenting* VIOLETTA.

Bel. sen. My wife!

Sir Ben. Hey-day! here's a turn.

Iron. I thought how 'twould be.

Vio. Yes, sir, your faithful, your forsaken wife.

Bel. sen. How shall I look upon you? What shall I say? Where shall I hide my confusion? Oh! take me to your arms, and, in that soft shelter, let me find forgiveness and protection.

Vio. Be this your only punishment! and this!

Bel. jun. Was it, then, a sister I preserved from death?

Bel. sen. What's this I hear! Oh! brother, can you pardon, too?

Bel. jun. Be indeed a brother, and let this providential event be the renovation of our friendship.

Bel. sen. What shall I say to you, madam?—[*To* SOPHIA.] Paterson, you know my heart: bear witness to its remorse. By Heaven, my secret resolution was, instantly to have departed in search of this my injured wife—but I'm not worthy even of your resentment: here is one that merits, and returns your love.

[*Turning to his brother.*

Iron. Come, god-daughter, we can never say the fleet's fairly come to an anchor, while the admiral's ship is out at sea. [*Presenting* BELFIELD *junior.*] My nephew here is as honest a lad as lives, and loves you at the soul of him: give him your hand, and I'll broach the last chest of dollars, to make him a fortune deserving you.—What say you, my old friend?

Sir Ben. Here's my hand! I've spoke the word—she's his own. Lady Dove, I won't hear a syllable to the contrary.

Iron. Then, the galleon is thy own, boy——What should an old fellow like me do with money? Give me a warm night-cap, a tiff of punch, and an elbow-chair in your chimney-corner, and I'll lay up for the rest of my days.

Bel. jun. How shall I give utterance to my gratitude, or my love!

Enter GOODWIN, FANNY, FRANCIS, PHILIP, *and* LUCY.

Sir Ben. So, so! more work for the parson!

Iron. What, Francis! hast thou chosen a mate, and art bound upon a matrimonial cruize, as well as thy master?

Fran. Ay, sir; so he is happy as well as myself, and has no objection to my choice.

Bel. sen. What! Are you all assembled to overwhelm me with confusion? Like some poor culprit, surrounded by a crowd of witnesses, I stand convicted and appalled. But all your wrongs shall be redressed—yours, Goodwin—Philip's—Lucy's: my whole life shall be employed in acts of justice and atonement. Virtue, and this virtuous woman, were my first ruling passions.

Now they resume their social, soft controul,
And love and happiness possess my soul.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

WEST INDIAN.

BY

CUMBERLAND.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

STOCKWELL, *a merchant, father to* BELCOUR.
BELCOUR, *the West Indian, attached to* LOUISA.
CAPTAIN DUDLEY, *an old officer on half-pay.*
CHARLES DUDLEY, *his son, attached to* CHARLOTTE RUSPORT.
MAJOR O'FLAHERTY, *an Irishman.*
STUKELY, *principal clerk to* STOCKWELL.
FULMER.
VARLAND, *a lawyer.*
Sailor.
Servant to STOCKWELL.
Servant to LADY RUSPORT

WOMEN.

LADY RUSPORT, *attached to* MAJOR O'FLAHERTY.
CHARLOTTE, *her daughter.*
LOUISA, *daughter to* DUDLEY.
MRS FULMER, *wife to* FULMER.
LUCY, *maid to* CHARLOTTE RUSPORT.
Housekeeper belonging to STOCKWELL.

Clerks belonging to STOCKWELL, *Servants, Sailors, Negroes, &c.*

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A merchant's counting-house.*

In an inner room, set off by glass-doors, are discovered several clerks, employed at their desks. A writing-table in the front room. STOCKWELL *is discovered, reading a letter;* STUKELY *comes gently out of the back room, and observes him some time before he speaks.*

Stuke. He seems disordered: something in that letter, and I'm afraid of an unpleasant sort. He has many ventures of great account at sea; a ship richly freighted for Barcelona; another for Lisbon; and others expected from Cadiz, of still greater value. Besides these, I know he has many deep concerns in foreign bottoms, and underwritings to a vast amount. I'll accost him.—— Sir! Mr Stockwell!

Stock. Stukely!——Well, have you shipped the cloths?

Stuke. I have, sir; here's the bill of lading, and copy of the invoice: the assortments are all compared: Mr Traffick will give you the policy upon 'Change.

Stock. 'Tis very well; lay these papers by; and no more of business for a while. Shut the door, Stukely. I have had long proof of your friendship and fidelity to me; a matter of most infinite concern lies on my mind, and 'twill be a sensible relief to unbosom myself to you. I have just now been informed of the arrival of the young West

Indian, I have so long been expecting; you know whom I mean?

Stuke. Yes, sir; Mr Belcour, the young gentleman who inherited old Belcour's great estates in Jamaica.

Stock. Hush, not so loud; come a little nearer this way. This Belcour is now in London; part of his baggage is already arrived; and I expect him every minute. Is it to be wondered at, if his coming throws me into some agitation, when I tell you, Stukely, he is my son!

Stuke. Your son!

Stock. Yes, sir, my only son. Early in life I accompanied his grandfather to Jamaica, as his clerk; he had an only daughter, somewhat older than myself, the mother of this gentleman: it was my chance (call it good or ill) to engage her affections; and, as the inferiority of my condition made it hopeless to expect her father's consent, her fondness provided an expedient, and we were privately married: the issue of that concealed engagement is, as I have told you, this Belcour.

Stuke. That event, surely, discovered your connexion?

Stock. You shall hear. Not many days after our marriage, old Belcour set out for England; and, during his abode here, my wife was, with great secrecy, delivered of this son. Fruitful in expedients to disguise her situation, without parting from her infant, she contrived to have it laid and received at her door as a foundling. After some time, her father returned, having left me here; in one of those favourable moments, that decide the fortunes of prosperous men, this child was introduced: from that instant, he treated him as his own, gave him his name, and brought him up in his family.

Stuke. And did you never reveal this secret, either to old Belcour, or your son.

Stock. Never.

Stuke. Therein you surprise me; a merchant of your eminence, and a member of the British parliament, might surely aspire, without offence, to the daughter of a planter. In this case, too, natural affection would prompt to a discovery.

Stock. Your remark is obvious; nor could I have persisted in this painful silence, but in obedience to the dying injunctions of a beloved wife. The letter, you found me reading, conveyed those injunctions to me; it was dictated in her last illness, and almost in the article of death (you'll spare me the recital of it); she there conjures me, in terms as solemn as they are affecting, never to reveal the secret of our marriage, or withdraw my son, while her father survived.

Stuke. But on what motives did your unhappy lady found these injunctions?

Stock. Principally, I believe, from apprehension on my account, lest old Belcour, on whom, at her decease, I wholly depended, should withdraw his protection: in part, from consideration of his repose, as well knowing the discovery would deeply affect his spirit, which was haughty, vehement, and unforgiving: and lastly, in regard to the interest of her infant, whom he had warmly adopted, and for whom, in case of a discovery, every thing was to be dreaded from his resentment. And, indeed, though the alteration in my condition might have justified me in discovering myself, yet I always thought my son safer in trusting to the caprice, than to the justice, of his grandfather. My judgment has not suffered by the event; old Belcour is dead, and has bequeathed his whole estate to him we are speaking of.

Stuke. Now, then, you are no longer bound to secrecy.

Stock. True: but before I publicly reveal myself, I could wish to make some experiment of my son's disposition. This can only be done by letting his spirit take its course without restraint; by these means, I think I shall discover much more of his real character, under the title of his merchant, than I should under that of his father.

A Sailor enters, ushering in several black servants, carrying portmanteaus, trunks, &c.

Sai. Save your honour—is your name Stockwell, pray?

Stock. It is.

Sai. Part of my master Belcour's baggage, an't please you: there's another cargo not far a-stern of us, and the cock-swain has got charge of the dumb creatures.

Stock. Prithee, friend, what dumb creatures do you speak of? has Mr Belcour brought over a collection of wild beasts?

Sai. No, lord love him! no, not he: let me see; there's two green monkies, a pair of grey parrots, a Jamaica sow and pigs, and a Mangrove dog; that's all.

Stock. Is that all?

Sai. Yes, your honour; yes, that's all; bless his heart, a'might have brought over the whole island if he would; a didn't leave a dry eye in it.

Stock. Indeed! Stukely, shew them where to bestow their baggage. Follow that gentleman.

Sai. Come, bear a hand, my lads; bear a hand.

[*Exit with* STUKELY *and servants.*

Stock. If the principal tallies with his purveyors, he must be a singular spectacle in this place: he has a friend, however, in this sea-faring fellow: 'tis no bad prognostic of a man's heart, when his shipmates give him a good word. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to a drawing-room.*

A servant discovered setting the chairs by, &c. A woman servant enters to him.

House. Why, what a fuss does our good master put himself in about this West Indian! See what a bill of fare I've been forced to draw out: seven and nine, I'll assure you, and only a family dinner, as he calls it: why, if my lord mayor was

expected, there couldn't be a greater to do about him.

Ser. I wish to my heart you had but seen the loads of trunks, boxes, and portmanteaus he has sent hither. An ambassador's baggage, with all the smuggled goods of his family, does not exceed it.

House. A fine pickle he'll put the house into! had he been master's own son, and a Christian Englishman, there couldn't be more rout than there is about this Creolian, as they call them.

Ser. No matter for that; he's very rich, and that's sufficient. They say he has rum and sugar enough belonging to him, to make all the water in the Thames into punch. But I see my master's coming. [*Exeunt.*

STOCKWELL *enters, followed by a Servant.*

Stock. Where is Mr Belcour? Who brought this note from him?

Ser. A waiter from the London tavern, sir; he says the young gentleman is just dressed, and will be with you directly.

Stock. Shew him in when he arrives.

Ser. I shall, sir. I'll have a peep at him first, however; I've a great mind to see this outlandish spark. The sailor fellow says he'll make rare doings amongst us. [*Aside.*

Stock. You need not wait—leave me. [*Exit Servant.*] Let me see——— [*Reads.*

'SIR,

'I write to you under the hands of the hair-'dresser. As soon as I have made myself decent, 'and slipped on some fresh clothes, I will have 'the honour of paying you my devoirs.

'Yours,

BELCOUR.'

He writes at his ease; for he's unconscious to whom his letter is addressed; but what a palpitation does it throw my heart into! a father's heart! 'Tis an affecting interview; when my eyes meet a son, whom yet they never saw, where shall I find constancy to support it? Should he resemble his mother, I am overthrown. All the letters I have had from him (for I industriously drew him into a correspondence with me), bespeak him of quick and ready understanding.—All the reports I ever received, give me favourable impressions of his character; wild, perhaps, as the manner of his country is; but, I trust, not frantic or unprincipled.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, the foreign gentleman is come.

Enter another Servant.

Ser. Mr Belcour.

BELCOUR *enters.*

Stock. Mr Belcour, I'm rejoiced to see you; you're welcome to England.

Bel. I thank you heartily, good Mr Stockwell: you and I have long conversed at a distance; now we are met; and the pleasure this meeting gives me, amply compensates for the perils I have run through in accomplishing it.

Stock. What perils, Mr Belcour? I could not have thought you would have made a bad passage at this time o' year.

Bel. Nor did we: courier-like, we came posting to your shores, upon the pinions of the swiftest gales that ever blew; 'tis upon English ground all my difficulties have arisen; 'tis the passage from the river-side I complain of.

Stock. Ay, indeed! What obstructions can you have met between this and the river-side?

Bel. Innumerable! Your town's as full of defiles as the island of Corsica; and, I believe, they are as obstinately defended: so much hurry, bustle, and confusion on our quays; so many sugar-casks, porter-butts, and common-councilmen in your streets, that, unless a man marched with artillery in his front, 'tis more than the labour of a Hercules can effect, to make any tolerable way through your town.

Stock. I am sorry you have been so incommoded.

Bel. Why, faith, 'twas all my own fault. Accustomed to a land of slaves, and out of patience with the whole tribe of custom-house extortioners, boatmen, tide-waiters, and water-bailiffs, that beset me on all sides, worse than a swarm of musquetoes, I proceeded a little too roughly to brush them away with my rattan: the sturdy rogues took this in dudgeon, and beginning to rebel, the mob chose different sides, and a furious scuffle ensued; in the course of which, my person and apparel suffered so much, that I was obliged to step into the first tavern to refit, before I could make my approaches in any decent trim.

Stock. All without is as I wish; dear Nature, add the rest, and I am happy! [*Aside.*] Well, Mr Belcour, 'tis a rough sample you have had of my countrymen's spirit; but, I trust, you'll not think the worse of them for it.

Bel. Not at all, not at all; I like them the better. Was I only a visitor, I might, perhaps, wish them a little more tractable; but, as a fellow subject, and a sharer in their freedom, I applaud their spirit, though I feel the effects of it in every bone of my skin.

Stock. That's well; I like that well. How gladly I could fall upon his neck, and own myself his father! [*Aside.*

Bel. Well, Mr Stockwell, for the first time in my life, here am I in England; at the fountain head of pleasure, in the land of beauty, of arts, and elegancies. My happy stars have given me

a good estate, and the conspiring winds have blown me hither to spend it.

Stock. To use it, not to waste it, I should hope; to treat it, Mr Belcour, not as a vassal, over whom you have a wanton and despotic power: but as a subject, which you are bound to govern with a temperate and restrained authority.

Bel. True, sir; most truly said! Mine's a commission, not a right: I am the offspring of distress, and every child of sorrow is my brother. While I have hands to hold, therefore, I will hold them open to mankind: but, sir, my passions are my masters; they take me where they will; and oftentimes they leave to reason and to virtue nothing but my wishes and my sighs.

Stock. Come, come; the man, who can accuse, corrects himself.

Bel. Ah! that's an office I am weary of: I wish a friend would take it up: I would to Heaven you had leisure for the employ! but did you drive a trade to the four corners of the world, you would not find the task so toilsome as to keep me free from faults.

Stock. Well, I am not discouraged: this candour tells me, I should not have the fault of self-conceit to combat; that, at least, is not among the number.

Bel. No; if I knew that man on earth, who thought more humbly of me than I do of myself, I would take up his opinion, and forego my own.

Stock. And, was I to choose a pupil, it should be one of your complexion: so, if you will come along with me, we'll agree upon your admission, and enter on a course of lectures directly.

Bel. With all my heart. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to a room in* LADY RUSPORT'S *house.*

Enter LADY RUSPORT *and* CHARLOTTE.

Lady Rus. Miss Rusport, I desire to hear no more of captain Dudley and his destitute family: not a shilling of mine shall ever cross the hands of any of them: because my sister chose to marry a beggar, am I bound to support him and his posterity?

Char. I think you are.

Lady Rus. You think I am? and, pray, where do you find the law that tells you so?

Char. I am not proficient enough to quote chapter and verse; but I take charity to be a main clause in the great statute of Christianity.

Lady Rus. I say charity, indeed! And pray, miss, are you sure that it is charity, pure charity, which moves you to plead for captain Dudley? Amongst all your pity, do you find no spice of a certain anti-spiritual passion, called love? Don't mistake yourself; you are no saint, child, believe me; and, I am apt to think, the distresses of old Dudley, and of his daughter into the bargain, would never break your heart, if there was not a certain young fellow of two and twenty in the case; who, by the happy recommendation of a good person, and the brilliant appointments of an ensigncy, will, if I am not mistaken, cozen you out of a fortune of twice twenty thousand pounds, as soon as ever you are of age to bestow it upon him.

Char. A nephew of your ladyship's can never want any other recommendation with me; and, if my partiality for Charles Dudley is acquitted by the rest of the world, I hope lady Rusport will not condemn me for it.

Lady Rus. I condemn you! I thank Heaven, Miss Rusport, I am no ways responsible for your conduct; nor is it any concern of mine how you dispose of yourself: you are not my daughter; and, when I married your father, poor sir Stephen Rusport, I found you a forward, spoiled miss of fourteen, far above being instructed by me.

Char. Perhaps, your ladyship calls this instruction?

Lady Rus. You're strangely pert; but 'tis no wonder. Your mother, I am told, was a fine lady; and according to the modern style of education you was brought up. It was not so in my young days; there was, then, some decorum in the world, some subordination, as the great Locke expresses it. Oh! it was an edifying sight, to see the regular deportment observed in our family: no giggling, no gossiping was going on there; my good father, sir Oliver Roundhead, never was seen to laugh himself, nor ever allowed it in his children.

Char. Ay; those were happy times, indeed!

Lady Rus. But, in this forward age, we have coquettes in the egg-shell, and philosophers in the cradle; girls of fifteen, that lead the fashion in new caps and new opinions; that have their sentiments and their sensations; and the idle fops encourage them in it. O' my conscience, I wonder what it is the men can see in such babies!

Char. True, madam: but all men do not overlook the maturer beauties of your ladyship's age; witness your admirer, Major Dennis O'Flaherty: there's an example of some discernment. I declare to you, when your ladyship is by, the major takes no more notice of me, than if I was part of the furniture of your chamber.

Lady Rus. The major, child, has travelled through various kingdoms and climates, and has more enlarged notions of female merit than falls to the lot of an English home-bred lover; in most other countries, no woman on your side forty would ever be named in a polite circle.

Char. Right, madam; I've been told, that in Vienna they have coquettes upon crutches, and Venuses in their grand climacteric: a lover there celebrates the wrinkles, not the dimples, in his mistress's face. The major, I think, has served in the Imperial army.

Lady Rus. Are you piqued, my young madam? Had my sister, Louisa, yielded to the addresses of one of Major O'Flaherty's person and appearance, she would have had some excuse: but to run away, as she did, at the age of sixteen too, with a man of old Dudley's sort——

Char. Was, in my opinion, the most venial trespass that ever girl of sixteen committed; of a noble family, an engaging person, strict honour, and sound understanding, what accomplishment was there wanting in Captain Dudley, but that which the prodigality of his ancestors had deprived him of?

Lady Rus. They left him as much as he deserves: Hasn't the old man captain's half pay? And is not the son an ensign?

Char. An ensign! Alas, poor Charles! Would to Heaven he knew what my heart feels and suffers, for his sake!

Enter Servant.

Ser. Ensign Dudley, to wait upon your ladyship.

Lady Rus. Who? Dudley? What can have brought him to town?

Char. Dear madam, 'tis Charles Dudley; 'tis your nephew.

Lady Rus. Nephew! I renounce him as my nephew! Sir Oliver renounced him as his grandson. Wasn't he son of the eldest daughter, and only male descendant of sir Oliver? and didn't he cut him off with a shilling? Didn't the poor, dear, good man leave his whole fortune to me, except a small annuity to my maiden sister, who spoiled her constitution with nursing him? And, depend upon it, not a penny of that fortune shall ever be disposed of otherwise, than according to the will of the donor.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

So, young man, whence come you? What brings you to town?

Charles. If there is any offence in my coming to town, your ladyship is in some degree responsible for it; for part of my errand was to pay my duty here.

Lady Rus. I hope you have some better excuse than all this.

Charles. 'Tis true, madam, I have other motives; but, if I consider my trouble repaid by the pleasure I now enjoy, I should hope my aunt would not think my company the less welcome for the value I set upon hers.

Lady Rus. Coxcomb! And where is your father, child? and your sister? Are they in town, too?

Charles. They are.

Lady Rus. Ridiculous! I don't know what people do in London, who have no money to spend in it.

Char. Dear madam, speak more kindly to your nephew; how can you oppress a youth of his sensibility?

Lady Rus. Miss Rusport, I insist upon your retiring to your apartment: when I want your advice, I'll send to you. [*Exit* CHARLOTTE.] So, you have put on a red coat, too, as well as your father? 'tis plain what value you set upon the good advice sir Oliver used to give you: how often has he cautioned you against the army?

Charles. Had it pleased my grandfather to enable me to have obeyed his caution, I would have done it; but you well know how destitute I am; and 'tis not to be wondered at, if I prefer the service of my king to that of any other master.

Lady Rus. Well, well; take your own course; 'tis no concern of mine: you never consulted me.

Charles. I frequently wrote to your ladyship, but could obtain no answer; and, since my grandfather's death, this is the first opportunity I have had of waiting upon you.

Lady Rus. I must desire you not to mention the death of that dear good man in my hearing; my spirits cannot support it.

Charles. I shall obey you: permit me to say, that, as that event has richly supplied you with the materials of bounty, the distresses of my family can furnish you with objects of it.

Lady Rus. The distresses of your family, child, are quite out of the question at present: had sir Oliver been pleased to consider them, I should have been well content; but he has absolutely taken no notice of you in his will, and that, to me, must and shall be a law. Tell your father and your sister I totally disapprove of their coming up to town.

Charles. Must I tell my father that, before your ladyship knows the motive that brought him hither?——Allured by the offer of exchanging for a commission on full pay, the veteran, after thirty years service, prepares to encounter the fatal heats of Senegambia; but wants a small supply to equip him for the expedition.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Major O'Flaherty, to wait on your ladyship.

Enter MAJOR O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. Spare your speeches, young man; don't you think her ladyship can take my word for that? I hope, madam, 'tis evidence enough of my being present, when I've the honour of telling you so myself.

Lady Rus. Major O'Flaherty, I am rejoiced to see you. Nephew Dudley, you perceive I'm engaged.

Charles. I shall not intrude upon your ladyship's more agreeable engagements. I presume I have my answer.

Lady Rus. Your answer, child! What answer can you possibly expect? or how can your re-

mantic father suppose that I am to abet him in all his idle and extravagant undertakings? Come, major, let me shew you the way into my dressing-room, and let us leave this young adventurer to his meditation. [*Exit.*

O'Fla. I follow you, my lady. Young gentleman, your obedient! Upon my conscience, as fine a young fellow as I would wish to clap my eyes on: he might have answered my salute, however—well, let it pass: fortune, perhaps, frowns upon the poor lad; she's a damned slippery lady, and very apt to jilt us poor fellows, that wear cockades in our hats. Fare thee well, honey, whoever thou art. [*Exit.*

Charles. So much for the virtues of a puritan! Out upon it! her heart is flint; yet that woman, that aunt of mine, without one worthy particle in her composition, would, I dare be sworn, as soon set her foot in a pest house as in a play-house. [*Going.*

MISS RUSPORT *enters to him.*

Char. Stop, stay a little, Charles; whither are you going in such haste?

Charles. Madam! Miss Rusport! what are your commands?

Char. Why so reserved? We had used to answer to no other names than those of Charles and Charlotte.

Charles. What ails you? You have been weeping.

Char. No, no; or if I have——your eyes are full, too. But I have a thousand things to say to you. Before you go, tell me, I conjure you, where you are to be found; here, write me your direction; write it upon the back of this visiting-ticket——Have you a pencil?

Charles. I have: but why should you desire to find us out? 'tis a poor, little, inconvenient place; my sister has no apartment fit to receive you in.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Madam, my lady desires your company directly.

Char. I am coming—well, have you wrote it? Give it me. O Charles! either you do not, or you will not, understand me. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A room in* FULMER'S *house.*

Enter FULMER *and* MRS FULMER.

Mrs Ful. WHY, how you sit, musing and moaning, sighing and desponding! I'm ashamed of you, Mr Fulmer: is this the country you described to me, a second Eldorado, rivers of gold and rocks of diamonds? You found me in a pretty snug retired way of life at Boulogne, out of the noise and bustle of the world, and wholly at my ease; you, indeed, was upon the wing, with a fiery persecution at your back: but, like a true son of Loyola, you had then a thousand ingenious devices to repair your fortune: and this, your native country, was to be the scene of your performances: fool that I was, to be inveigled into it by you! but, thank Heaven, our partnership is revocable. I am not your wedded wife, praised be my stars! for what have we got, whom have we gulled, but ourselves? which of all your trains has taken fire? even this poor expedient of your bookseller's shop seems abandoned; for if a chance customer drops in, who is there, pray, to help him to what he wants?

Ful. Patty, you know it is not upon slight grounds that I despair; there had used to be a livelihood to be picked up in this country, both for the honest and dishonest: I have tried each walk, and am likely to starve at last: there is not a point to which the wit and faculty of man can turn, that I have not set mine to; but in vain, I am beat through every quarter of the compass.

Mrs Ful. Ah! common efforts all: strike me a master-stroke, Mr Fulmer, if you wish to make any figure in this country.

Ful. But where, how, and what? I have blustered for prerogative; I have bellowed for freedom; I have offered to serve my country; I have engaged to betray it. A master-stroke, truly! why, I have talked treason, writ treason; and, if a man can't live by that, he can live by nothing. Here I set up as a bookseller, why men left off reading; and, if I was to turn butcher, I believe, on my conscience, they'd leave off eating.

CAPTAIN DUDLEY *crosses the stage.*

Mrs Ful. Why, there now's your lodger, old captain Dudley, as he calls himself; there's no flint without fire; something might be struck out of him, if you had the wit to find the way.

Ful. Hang him, an old dry-skinned curmudgeon! you may as well think to get truth out of a courtier, or candour out of a critic: I can make nothing of him; besides, he's poor, and therefore not for our purpose.

Mrs Ful. The more fool he! Would any man be poor that had such a prodigy in his possession?

Ful. His daughter, you mean? she is, indeed, uncommonly beautiful.

Mrs Ful. Beautiful! Why, she need only be seen, to have the first men in the kingdom at her feet. Egad, I wish I had the leasing of her beauty; what would some of our young nabobs give——

Ful. Hush! here comes the captain; good

girl, leave us to ourselves, and let me try what I can make of him.

Mrs Ful. Captain, truly! i'faith, I'd have a regiment, had I such a daughter, before I was three months older. [*Exit* MRS FUL.

Enter CAPTAIN DUDLEY.

Ful. Captain Dudley, good morning to you!

Dud. Mr Fulmer, I have borrowed a book from your shop; 'tis the sixth volume of my deceased friend Tristram: he is a flattering writer to us poor soldiers; and the divine story of Le Fevre, which makes part of this book, in my opinion of it, does honour, not to its author only, but to human nature.

Ful. He's an author I keep in the way of trade, but one I never relished: he is much too loose and profligate for my taste.

Dud. That's being too severe: I hold him to be a moralist in the noblest sense: he plays, indeed, with the fancy, and sometimes, perhaps, too wantonly; but, while he thus designedly masks his main attack, he comes at once upon the heart; refines, amends it, softens it; beats down each selfish barrier from about it, and opens every sluice of pity and benevolence.

Ful. We of the catholic persuasion are not much bound to him.——Well, sir, I shall not oppose your opinion; a favourite author is like a favourite mistress; and there, you know, captain, no man likes to have his taste arraigned.

Dud. Upon my word, sir, I don't know what a man likes in that case; 'tis an experiment I never made.

Ful. Sir!—Are you serious?

Dud. 'Tis of little consequence whether you think so.

Ful. What a formal old prig it is! [*Aside.*] I apprehend you, sir; you speak with caution; you are married?

Dud. I have been.

Ful. And this young lady, which accompanies you—

Dud. Passes for my daughter.

Ful. Passes for his daughter! humph—[*Aside.*] She is exceedingly beautiful, finely accomplished, of a most enchanting shape and air.

Dud. You are much too partial; she has the greatest defect a woman can have.

Ful. How so, pray?

Dud. She has no fortune.

Ful. Rather say that you have none; and that's a sore defect in one of your years, Captain Dudley: you've served, no doubt?

Dud. Familiar coxcomb! But I'll humour him. [*Aside.*

Ful. A close old fox! But I'll unkennel him. [*Aside.*

Dud. Above thirty years I've been in the service, Mr Fulmer.

Ful. I guessed as much; I had it at no less: why, 'tis a wearisome time; 'tis an apprenticeship to a profession, fit only for a patriarch. But preferment must be closely followed: you never could have been so far behind-hand in the chase, unless you had palpably mistaken your way. You'll pardon me; but I begin to perceive you have lived in the world, not with it.

Dud. It may be so; and you, perhaps, can give me better council. I'm now soliciting a favour; an exchange to a company on full pay; nothing more; and yet I meet a thousand bars to that; though, without boasting, I should think the certificate of services, which I sent in, might have purchased that indulgence to me.

Ful. Who thinks or cares about them? Certificate of services, indeed! Send in a certificate of your fair daughter; carry her in your hand with you.

Dud. What! Who? My daughter! Carry my daughter! Well, and what then?

Ful. Why, then your fortune's made, that's all.

Dud. I understand you: and this you call knowledge of the world? Despicable knowledge! but, sirrah, I will have you know——— [*Threatening him.*

Ful. Help! Who's within? Would you strike me, sir? Would you lift your hand against a man in his own house?

Dud. In a church, if he dare insult the poverty of a man of honour.

Ful. Have a care what you do! remember there is such a thing in law as an assault and battery; ay, and such trifling forms as warrants and indictments.

Dud. Go, sir; you are too mean for my resentment: 'tis that, and not the law, protects you. ——Hence!

Ful. An old, absurd, incorrigible blockhead! I'll be revenged of him. [*Aside.*

[*Exit* FUL.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

Cha. What is the matter, sir? Sure I heard an outcry as I entered the house?

Dud. Not unlikely; our landlord and his wife are for ever wrangling.—Did you find your aunt Dudley at home?

Cha. I did.

Dud. And what was your reception?

Cha. Cold as our poverty, and her pride, could make it.

Dud. You told her the pressing occasion I had for a small supply to equip me for this exchange; has she granted me the relief I asked?

Cha. Alas, sir, she has peremptorily refused it.

Dud. That's hard: that's hard, indeed! My petition was for a small sum; she has refused it, you say? well, be it so; I must not complain. Did you see the broker about the insurance on my life?

Cha. There, again, I am the messenger of ill

news; I can raise no money, so fatal is the climate: alas, that ever my father should be sent to perish in such a place!

LOUISA *enters hastily.*

Dud. Louisa, what's the matter? you seem frightened!

Lou. I am, indeed: coming from Miss Rusport's, I met a young gentleman in the streets, who has beset me in the strangest manner.

Cha. Insufferable! was he rude to you?

Lou. I cannot say he was absolutely rude to me, but he was very importunate to speak to me, and once or twice attempted to lift up my hat: he followed me to the corner of the street, and there I gave him the slip.

Dud. You must walk no more in the streets, child, without me or your brother.

Lou. O, Charles, Miss Rusport desires to see you directly; lady Rusport is gone out, and she has something particular to say to you.

Cha. Have you any commands for me, sir?

Dud. None, my dear; by all means wait upon Miss Rusport. Come, Louisa, I shall desire you to go up to your chamber and compose yourself. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter BELCOUR, *after peeping in at the door.*

Bel. Not a soul, as I'm alive! Why, what an odd sort of a house is this! Confound the little jilt, she has fairly given me the slip. A plague upon this London, I shall have no luck in it: such a crowd, and such a hurry, and such a number of shops, and one so like the other, that whether the wench turned into this house or the next, or whether she went up stairs or down stairs (for there's a world above and a world below, it seems), I declare, I know no more than if I was in the Blue Mountains. In the name of all the devils at once, why did she run away? If every handsome girl I meet in this town is to lead me such a wild-goose chase, I had better have staid in the torrid zone. I shall be wasted to the size of a sugar-cane. What shall I do? give the chase up! Hang it, that's cowardly. Shall I, a true-born son of Phœbus, suffer this little nimble-footed Daphne to escape me?———Forbid it, honour, and forbid it, love.———Hush, hush——— here she comes.——Oh, the devil!——— What tawdry thing have we got here?——

Enter MRS FULMER.

Mrs Ful. Your humble servant, sir.

Bel. Your humble servant, madam.

Mrs Ful. A fine summer's day, sir.

Bel. Yes, madam, and so cool, that if the calendar did not call it July, I should swear it was January.

Mrs Ful. Sir!

Bel. Madam!

Mrs Ful. Do you wish to speak to Mr Fulmer, sir?

Bel. Mr Fulmer, madam? I have not the honour of knowing such a person.

Mrs Ful. No, I'll be sworn, have you not; thou art much too pretty a fellow, and too much of a gentleman, to be an author thyself, or to have any thing to say to those that are so. 'Tis the captain, I suppose, you are waiting for?

Bel. I rather suspect it is the captain's wife.

Mrs Ful. The captain has no wife, sir.

Bel. No wife! I'm heartily sorry for it; for then, she's his mistress; and that I take to be the more desperate case of the two. Pray, madam, was not there a lady just now turned into your house? 'Twas with her I wished to speak.

Mrs Ful. What sort of a lady, pray?

Bel. One of the loveliest sort my eyes ever beheld; young, tall, fresh, fair; in short, a goddess.

Mrs Ful. Nay, but dear, dear sir, now I'm sure you flatter: for 'twas me you followed into the shop-door this minute.

Bel. You! No, no, take my word for it, it was not you, madam.

Mrs Ful. But what is it you laugh at?

Bel. Upon my soul, I ask your pardon; but it was not you, believe me: be assured, it was not.

Mrs Ful. Well, sir, I shall not contend for the honour of being noticed by you; I hope you think you would not have been the first man that noticed me in the streets. However, this I'm positive of, that no living woman but myself has entered these doors this morning.

Bel. Why, then, I'm mistaken in the house, that's all; for 'tis not humanly possible I can be so far out in the lady. [*Going.*

Mrs Ful. Coxcomb! But hold—a thought occurs; as sure as can be, he has seen Miss Dudley. A word with you, young gentleman; come back.

Bel. Well, what's your pleasure?

Mrs Ful. You seem greatly captivated with this young lady; are you apt to fall in love thus at first sight?

Bel. Oh, yes: 'tis the only way I can ever fall in love: any man may tumble into a pit by surprise; none but a fool would walk into one by choice.

Mrs Ful. You are a hasty lover, it seems; have you spirit to be a generous one? They that will please the eye, must not spare the purse.

Bel. Try me; put me to the proof! bring me to an interview with the dear girl that has thus captivated me, and see whether I have spirit to be grateful.

Mrs Ful. But how, pray, am I to know the girl you have set your heart on?

Bel. By an indescribable grace, that accompanies every look and action that falls from her: there can be but one such woman in the world, and nobody can mistake that one.

Mrs Ful. Well, if I should stumble upon this

angel in my walks, where am I to find you? What's your name?

Bel. Upon my soul, I can't tell you my name.

Mrs Ful. Not tell me! Why so?

Bel. Because I don't know what it is myself; as yet, I have no name.

Mrs Ful. No name?

Bel. None; a friend, indeed, lent me his; but he forbad me to use it on any unworthy occasion.

Mrs Ful. But where is your place of abode?

Bel. I have none; I never slept a night in England in my life.

Mrs Ful. Hey-day!

Enter FULMER.

Ful. A fine case, truly, in a free country! a pretty pass things are come to, if a man is to be assaulted in his own house!

Mrs Ful. Who has assaulted you, my dear?

Ful Who? why this captain Drawcansir, this old Dudley, my lodger: but I'll unlodge him; I'll unharbour him, I warrant.

Mrs Ful. Hush! hush! hold your tongue, man; pocket the affront, and be quiet; I've a scheme on foot will pay you a hundred beatings. Why, you surprise me, Mr Fulmer; Captain Dudley assault you? Impossible!

Ful. Nay, I can't call it an absolute assault; but he threatened me.

Mrs Ful. Oh, was that all? I thought how it would turn out——A likely thing, truly, for a person of his obliging compassionate turn! no, no, poor captain Dudley; he has sorrows and distresses enough of his own to employ his spirits, without setting them against other people. Make it up as fast as you can: watch this gentleman out; follow him wherever he goes; and bring me word who and what he is; be sure you don't lose sight of him; I've other business in hand.

[*Exit* MRS FUL.

Bel. Pray, sir, what sorrows and distresses have befallen this old gentleman you speak of?

Ful. Poverty, disappointment, and all the distresses attendant thereupon: sorrow enough of all conscience: I soon found how it was with him, by his way of living, low enough of all reason; but what I overheard this morning put it out of all doubt.

Bel. What did you overhear this morning?

Ful. Why, it seems he wants to join his regiment, and has been beating the town over to raise a little money for that purpose upon his pay; but the climate, I find, where he is going, is so unhealthy, that nobody can be found to lend him any.

Bel. Why then, your town is a damned good-for-nothing town: and I wish I had never come into it.

Ful. That's what I say, sir; the hard-heartedness of some folks is unaccountable. There's an old lady Rusport, a near relation of this gentleman's; she lives hard by here, opposite to Stockwell's, the great merchant; he sent to her a begging, but to no purpose; though she is as rich as a Jew, she would not furnish him with a farthing.

Bel. Is the captain at home?

Ful. He is up stairs, sir.

Bel. Will you take the trouble to desire him to step hither? I want to speak to him.

Ful. I'll send him to you directly. I don't know what to make of this young man; but, if I live, I will find him out, or know the reason why.

[*Exit* FUL.

Bel. I've lost the girl, it seems; that's clear: she was the first object of my pursuit; but the case of this poor officer touches me: and, after all, there may be as much true delight in rescuing a fellow-creature from distress, as there would be in plunging one into it——But, let me see—— It's a point that must be managed with some delicacy——Apropos! there's pen and ink——I've struck upon a method that will do.—[*Writes.*]—Ay, ay, this is the very thing: 'twas devilish lucky I happened to have these bills about me. There, there, fare you well; I'm glad to be rid of you; you stood a chance of being worse applied, I can tell you.

[*Encloses and seals the paper.*

FULMER *brings in* CAPTAIN DUDLEY.

Ful. That's the gentleman, sir.—I shall make bold, however, to lend an ear. [*Exit* FUL.

Dud. Have you any commands for me, sir?

Bel. Your name is Dudley, sir?

Dud. It is.

Bel. You command a company, I think, Captain Dudley?

Dud. I did: I am now upon half-pay.

Bel. You've served some time?

Dud. A pretty many years; long enough to see some people of more merit, and better interest than myself, made general officers.

Bel. Their merit I may have some doubt of; their interest I can readily give credit to: there is little promotion to be looked for in your profession, I believe, without friends, captain?

Dud. I believe so, too: have you any other business with me, may I ask?

Bel. Your patience for a moment. I was informed you was about to join your regiment in distant quarters abroad?

Dud. I have been soliciting an exchange to a company on full-pay, quartered at James's Fort, in Senegambia; but, I'm afraid, I must drop the undertaking.

Bel. Why so, pray?

Dud. Why so, sir? 'Tis a home question for a perfect stranger to put; there is something very particular in all this.

Bel. If it is not impertinent, sir, allow me to ask you what reason you have for despairing of success.

Dud. Why really, sir, mine is an obvious reason for a soldier to have———Want of money; simply that.

Bel. May I beg to know the sum you have occasion for?

Dud. Truly, sir, I cannot exactly tell you on a sudden; nor is it, I suppose, of any great consequence to you to be informed; but I should guess, in the gross, that two hundred pounds would serve.

Bel. And do you find a difficulty in raising that sum upon your pay? 'Tis done every day.

Dud. The nature of the climate makes it difficult; I can get no one to insure my life.

Bel. Oh! that's a circumstance may make for you, as well as against: in short, captain Dudley, it so happens, that I can command the sum of two hundred pounds: seek, therefore, no farther; I'll accommodate you with it upon easy terms.

Dud. Sir! do I understand you rightly?——I beg your pardon; but am I to believe that you are in earnest?

Bel. What is your surprise? Is it an uncommon thing for a gentleman to speak truth? Or is it incredible that one fellow-creature should assist another!

Dud. I ask your pardon———May I beg to know to whom———Do you propose this in the way of business?

Bel. Entirely: I have no other business on earth.

Dud. Indeed!——You are not a broker, I'm persuaded?

Bel. I am not.

Dud. Nor an army agent, I think?

Bel. I hope you will not think the worse of me for being neither; in short, sir, if you will peruse this paper, it will explain to you who I am, and upon what terms I act. While you read it, I will step home, and fetch the money, and we will conclude the bargain without loss of time. In the mean while, good day to you. [*Exit hastily.*

Dud. Humph! there's something very odd in all this——let me see what we've got here——This paper is to tell me who he is, and what are his terms: in the name of wonder, why has he sealed it?——Hey-day! what's here? two bank-notes of a hundred each! I can't comprehend what this means. Hold; here's a writing; perhaps that will shew me. 'Accept this trifle; 'pursue your fortune, and prosper.' Am I in a dream? Is this a reality?

Enter MAJOR O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. Save you, my dear! Is it you now that are captain Dudley, I would ask? Whuh!—what's the hurry the man's in? If 'tis the lad that ran out of the shop you would overtake, you might as well stay where you are; by my soul, he's as nimble as a Croat; you are a full hour's march in the rear—Ay, faith, you may as well turn back, and give over the pursuit. Well, captain Dudley, if that's your name, there's a letter for you. Read, man; read it; and I'll have a word with you after you have done.

Dud. More miracles on foot! So, so, from lady Rusport.

O'Fla. You're right; it's from her ladyship.

Dud. Well, sir, I have cast my eye over it; 'tis short and peremptory; are you acquainted with the contents?

O'Fla. Not at all, my dear; not at all.

Dud. Have you any message from lady Rusport?

O'Fla. Not a syllable, honey; only, when you've digested the letter, I've a little bit of a message to deliver you from myself.

Dud. And may I beg to know who yourself is?

O'Fla. Dennis O'Flaherty, at your service; a poor major of grenadiers; nothing better.

Dud. So much for your name and title, sir; now, be so good to favour me with your message.

O'Fla. Why, then, captain, I must tell you, I have promised lady Rusport you shall do whatever it is she bids you to do in that letter there.

Dud. Ay, indeed? have you undertaken so much, major, without knowing either what she commands, or what I can perform?

O'Fla. That's your concern, my dear, not mine; I must keep my word, you know.

Dud. Or else, I suppose, you and I must measure swords?

O'Fla. Upon my soul, you've hit it!

Dud. That would hardly answer to either of us: you and I have, probably, had enough of fighting in our time before now.

O'Fla. Faith and troth, master Dudley, you may say that: 'tis thirty years, come the time, that I have followed the trade, and in a pretty many countries. Let me see—In the war before last I served in the Irish brigade, d'ye see; there, after bringing off the French monarch, I left his service, with a British bullet in my body, and this ribbon in my button-hole. Last war I followed the fortunes of the German eagle, in the corps of grenadiers; there I had my belly full of fighting, and a plentiful scarcity of every thing else. After six-and-twenty engagements, great and small, I went off, with this gash on my scull, and a kiss of the empress queen's sweet hand, (Heaven bless it!) for my pains. Since the peace, my dear, I took a little turn with the confederates there in Poland—but such another set of madcaps! by the lord Harry, I never knew what it was they were scuffling about!

Dud. Well, major, I won't add another action to the list—you shall keep your promise with lady Rusport; she requires me to leave London; I shall go in a few days, and you may take what credit you please from my compliance.

O'Fla. Give me your hand, my dear boy!

This will make her my own: when that's the case, we shall be brothers, you know, and we'll share her fortune between us.

Dud. Not so, major: the man who marries lady Rusport will have a fair title to her whole fortune without division. But, I hope, your expectations of prevailing are founded upon good reasons?

O'Fla. Upon the best grounds in the world.—First, I think she will comply, because she is a woman: secondly, I am persuaded she won't hold out long, because she's a widow: and thirdly, I make sure of her, because I've married five wives (*en militaire* captain), and never failed yet; and, for what I know, they're all alive and merry at this very hour.

Dud. Well, sir, go on and prosper: if you can inspire lady Rusport with half your charity, I shall think you deserve all her fortune: at present, I must beg your excuse: good morning to you. [*Exit.*

O'Fla. A good sensible man, and very much of a soldier! I did not care if I was better acquainted with him: but 'tis an awkward kind of country for that: the English, I observe, are close friends, but distant acquaintance. I suspect the old lady has not been over generous to poor Dudley; I shall give her a little touch about that: upon my soul, I know but one excuse a person can have for giving nothing——and that is, like myself, having nothing to give.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to* LADY RUSPORT'S *house. A dressing room.*

Enter MISS RUSPORT *and* LUCY.

Char. Well, Lucy, you've dislodged the old lady at last; but methought you was a tedious time about it.

Lucy. A tedious time, indeed; I think they, who have least to spare, contrive to throw the most away. I thought I should never have got her out of the house.

Char. Why, she's as deliberate in canvassing every article of her dress, as an ambassador would be in settling the preliminaries of a treaty.

Lucy. There was a new hood and handkerchief, that had come express from Holborn-hill on the occasion, that took as much time in adjusting——

Char. As they did in making, and she was as vain of them as an old maid of a young lover.

Lucy. Or a young lover of himself. Then, madam, this being a visit of great ceremony to a person of distinction, at the west end of the town, the old chariot was dragged forth on the occasion, with strict charges to dress out the box with the leopard-skin hammer-cloth.

Char. Yes, and to hang the false tails on the miserable stumps of the old crawling cattle.——Well, well, pray Heaven the crazy affair don't break down again with her—at least, till she gets to her journey's end! But where's Charles Dudley? Run down, dear girl, and be ready to let him in: I think he's as long in coming as she was in going.

Lucy. Why, indeed, madam, you seem the more alert of the two, I must say. [*Exit.*

Char. Now, the deuce take the girl for putting that notion into my head! I'm sadly afraid Dudley does not like me: so much encouragement as I have given him to declare himself, I never could get a word from him on the subject. This may be very honourable, but upon my life it's very provoking. By the way, I wonder how I look to-day: Oh, shockingly! hideously pale! like a witch! This is the old lady's glass; and she has left some of her wrinkles on it. How frightfully have I put on my cap! all awry! and my hair dressed so unbecomingly! altogether, I am a most complete fright.

CHARLES DUDLEY *comes in, unobserved.*

Cha. That I deny.

Char. Ah!

Cha. Quarrelling with your glass, cousin?—Make it up; make it up, and be friends: it cannot compliment you more, than by reflecting you as you are.

Char. Well, I vow, my dear Charles, that is delightfully said, and deserves my very best curtsey: your flattery, like a rich jewel, has a value not only from its superior lustre, but from its extraordinary scarceness: I verily think this is the only civil speech you ever directed to my person in your life.

Cha. And I ought to ask pardon of your good sense for having done it now.

Char. Nay, now you relapse again: don't you know, if you keep well with a woman on the great score of beauty, she'll never quarrel with you on the trifling article of good sense? But any thing serves to fill up a dull yawning hour with an insipid cousin; you have brighter moments, and warmer spirits, for the dear girl of your heart.

Cha. Oh, fie upon you! fie upon you!

Char. You blush, and the reason is apparent: you are a novice in hypocrisy; but no practice can make a visit of ceremony pass for a visit of choice. Love is ever before its time; friendship is apt to lag a little after it: pray, Charles, did you make any extraordinary haste hither?

Cha. By your question, I see you acquit me of the impertinence of being in love.

Char. But why impertinence? Why the impertinence of being in love? You have one language for me, Charles, and another for the woman of your affection.

Cha. You are mistaken; the woman of my affection shall never hear any other language from me, than what I use to you.

Char. I am afraid, then, you'll never make yourself understood by her.

Cha. It is not fit I should; there is no need of love to make me miserable; 'tis wretchedness enough to be a beggar.

Char. A beggar, do you call yourself? O Charles, Charles! rich in every merit and accomplishment, whom may you not aspire to? And why think you so unworthily of our sex, as to conclude there is not one to be found with sense to discern your virtue, and generosity to reward it?

Cha. You distress me; I must beg to hear no more.

Char. Well, I can be silent. Thus does he always serve me, whenever I am about to disclose myself to him. [*Aside.*

Cha. Why do you not banish me and my misfortunes for ever from your thoughts?

Char. Ay, wherefore do I not, since you never allowed me a place in yours? But go, sir; I have no right to stay you; go where your heart directs you; go to the happy, the distinguished fair one.

Cha. Now, by all that's good, you do me wrong: there is no such fair one for me to go to; nor have I an acquaintance among the sex, yourself excepted, which answers to that description.

Char. Indeed!

Cha. In very truth: there, then, let us drop the subject. May you be happy, though I never can.

Char. O, Charles! give me your hand: if I have offended you, I ask your pardon: you have been long acquainted with my temper, and know how to bear with its infirmities.

Cha. Thus, my dear Charlotte, let us seal our reconciliation. [*Kissing her hand.*] Bear with thy infirmities! By Heaven, I know not any one failing in thy whole composition, except that of too great a partiality for an undeserving man.

Char. And you are now taking the very course to augment that failing. A thought strikes me: I have a commission that you must absolutely execute for me; I have immediate occasion for the sum of two hundred pounds: you know my fortune is shut up till I am of age; take this paltry box (it contains my ear-rings, and some other baubles I have no use for), carry it to our opposite neighbour, Mr Stockwell (I don't know where else to apply), leave it as a deposit in his hands, and beg him to accommodate me with that sum.

Cha. Dear Charlotte, what are you about to do? How can you possibly want two hundred pounds?

Char. How can I possibly do without it, you mean? Doesn't every lady want two hundred pounds? Perhaps, I have lost it at play; perhaps, I mean to win as much to it; perhaps, I want it for two hundred different uses.

Cha. Pooh! pooh! all this is nothing; don't I know you never play?

Char. You mistake; I have a spirit to set not only this trifle, but my whole fortune, upon a stake; therefore, make no wry faces, but do as I bid you: you will find Mr Stockwell a very honourable gentleman.

Enter LUCY *in haste.*

Lucy. Dear madam, as I live, here comes the old lady in a hackney-coach.

Char. The old chariot has given her a second tumble: away with you! you know your way out without meeting her: take the box, and do as I desire you.

Cha. I must not dispute your orders. Farewell!

[*Exeunt* CHARLES *and* CHARLOTTE.

SCENE V.

Enter LADY RUSPORT, *leaning on* MAJOR O'FLAHERTY'S *arm.*

O'Fla. Rest yourself upon my arm; never spare it; 'tis strong enough: it has stood harder service than you can put it to.

Lucy. Mercy upon me, what is the matter! I am frightened out of my wits: has your ladyship had an accident?

Lady Rus. O, Lucy! the most untoward one in nature! I know not how I shall repair it.

O'Fla. Never go about to repair it, my lady; even build a new one; 'twas but a crazy piece of business at best.

Lucy. Bless me! is the old chariot broke down with you again?

Lady Rus. Broke, child? I don't know what might have been broke, if, by great good fortune, this obliging gentleman had not been at hand to assist me.

Lucy. Dear madam, let me run and fetch you a cup of the cordial drops.

Lady Rus. Do, Lucy. Alas, sir! ever since I lost my husband, my poor nerves have been shook to pieces: there hangs his beloved picture: that precious relic, and a plentiful jointure, is all that remains to console me for the best of men.

O'Fla. Let me see: i'faith a comely personage! by his fur cloak, I suppose he was in the Russian service; and, by the gold chain round his neck, I should guess he had been honoured with the order of St Catharine.

Lady Rus. No, no; he meddled with no St Catharines: that's the habit he wore in his mayoralty; sir Stephen was lord-mayor of London: but he is gone, and has left me a poor, weak, solitary widow behind him.

O'Fla. By all means, then, take a strong, able, hearty man to repair his loss. If such a plain fellow as one Dennis O'Flaherty can please you, I think I may venture to say, without any dis-

paragement to the gentleman in the fur-gown there——

Lady Rus. What are you going to say? Don't shock my ears with any comparisons, I desire.

O'Fla. Not I, by my soul! I don't believe there's any comparison in the case.

Lady Rus. Oh, are you come? Give me the drops; I'm all in a flutter!

O'Fla. Hark'e, sweetheart, what are those same drops? have you any more left in the bottle? I didn't care if I took a little sip of them myself.

Lucy. Oh, sir, they are called the cordial restorative elixir, or the nervous golden drops;—they are only for ladies' cases.

O'Fla. Yes, yes, my dear, there are gentlemen as well as ladies that stand in need of those same golden drops: they'd suit my case to a tittle. [*Drinks.*

Lady Rus. Well, major, did you give old Dudley my letter? and will the silly man do as I bid him, and be gone?

O'Fla. You are obeyed; he's on his march.

Lady Rus. That's well; you have managed this matter to perfection. I did'nt think he would have been so easily prevailed upon.

O'Fla. At the first word; no difficulty in life; 'twas the very thing he was determined to do, before I came: I never met a more obliging gentleman.

Lady Rus. Well, 'tis no matter: so I am but rid of him, and his distresses: would you believe it, major O'Flaherty, it was but this morning he sent a-begging to me for money to fit him out upon some wild-goose expedition to the coast of Africa, I know not where?

O'Fla. Well, you sent him what he wanted?

Lady Rus. I sent him what he deserved, a flat refusal.

O'Fla. You refused him?

Lady Rus. Most undoubtedly.

O'Fla. You sent him nothing?

Lady Rus. Not a shilling.

O'Fla. Good morning to you—Your servant— [*Going.*

Lady Rus. Hey-day! what ails the man? where are you going?

O'Fla. Out of your house, before the roof falls on my head—to poor Dudley, to share the little modicum that thirty years hard service has left me. I wish it was more for his sake.

Lady Rus. Very well, sir; take your course; I shan't attempt to stop you: I shall survive it; it will not break my heart, if I never see you more.

O'Fla. Break your heart! No, o' my conscience will it not. You preach, and you pray, and you turn up your eyes, and all the while you're as hard-hearted as an hyena! An hyena, truly! By my soul, there isn't, in the whole creation, so savage an animal as a human creature without pity! [*Exit.*

Lady Rus. A hyena, truly! Where did the fellow blunder upon that word? Now the deuce take him for using it, and the Macaronies for inventing it! [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A room in* STOCKWELL'S *house.*

Enter STOCKWELL *and* BELCOUR.

Stock. GRATIFY me so far, however, Mr Belcour, as to see Miss Rusport; carry her the sum she wants, and return the poor girl her box of diamonds, which Dudley left in my hands; you know what to say on the occasion better than I do: that part of your commission I leave to your own discretion, and you may season it with what gallantry you think fit.

Bel. You could not have pitched upon a greater bungler at gallantry than myself, if you had rummaged every company in the city, and the whole court of aldermen into the bargain. Part of your errand, however, I will do; but whether it shall be with an ill grace or a good one, depends upon the caprice of a moment, the humour of the lady, the mode of our meeting, and a thousand undefinable small circumstances, that nevertheless determine us upon all the great occasions of life.

Stock. I persuade myself you will find Miss Rusport an ingenious, worthy, animated girl.

Bel. Why, I like her the better, as a woman; but name her not to me as a wife! No, if ever I marry, it must be a staid, sober, considerate damsel, with blood in her veins as cold as a turtle's; quick of scent as a vulture, when danger's in the wind; wary and sharp-sighted as a hawk, when treachery is on foot: with such a companion at my elbow, for ever whispering in my ear—have a care of this man, he's a cheat! don't go near that woman, she's a jilt! over head there's a scaffold! under foot there's a well! Oh! sir, such a woman might lead me up and down this great city without difficulty or danger; but, with a girl of Miss Rusport's complexion! heaven and earth, sir! we should be duped, undone, and distracted, in a fortnight.

Stock. Ha, ha, ha! Why, you are become wondrous circumspect of a sudden, pupil; and if you can find such a prudent damsel as you describe, you have my consent——only beware how you chuse! Discretion is not the reigning quality amongst the fine ladies of the present time; and I think, in Miss Rusport's particular, I have given you no bad counsel.

Bel. Well, well, if you'll fetch me the jewels, I believe I can undertake to carry them to her; but as for the money, I'll have nothing to do with

that; Dudley would be your fittest ambassador on that occasion, and, if I mistake not, the most agreeable to the lady.

Stock. Why, indeed, from what I know of the matter, it may not improbably be destined to find its way into his pockets. [*Exit.*

Bel. Then, depend upon it, these are not the only trinkets she means to dedicate to captain Dudley. As for me, Stockwell indeed wants me to marry; but till I can get this bewitching girl, this incognita, out of my head, I can never think of any other woman.

Enter Servant, and delivers a letter.

Hey-day! Where can I have picked up a correspondent already! 'Tis a most execrable manuscript—Let me see—Martha Fulmer—Who is Martha Fulmer? Pshaw! I won't be at the trouble of decyphering her damned pot-hooks. Hold, hold, hold! what have we got here?

'Dear sir,

'I've discovered the lady you was so much 'smitten with, and can procure you an interview 'with her. If you can be as generous to a pretty 'girl, as you was to a paltry old captain,'—how did she find that out!—'you need not despair. 'Come to me immediately; the lady is now in my 'house, and expects you.

'Yours,

'MARTHA FULMER.'

O thou dear, lovely, and enchanting paper, which I was about to tear into a thousand scraps, devoutly I entreat thy pardon! I have slighted thy contents, which are delicious; slandered thy characters, which are divine; and all the atonement I can make, is implicitly to obey thy mandates.

STOCKWELL *returns.*

Stock. Mr Belcour, here are the jewels; this letter incloses bills for the money; and, if you will deliver it to Miss Rusport, you'll have no farther trouble on that score.

Bel. Ah, sir! the letter which I have been reading disqualifies me for delivering the letter which you have been writing: I have other game on foot; the loveliest girl my eyes ever feasted upon, is started in view, and the world cannot now divert me from pursuing her.

Stock. Hey-day! what has turned you thus on a sudden?

Bel. A woman: one that can turn, and overturn me and my tottering resolutions every way she will. Oh, sir, if this is folly in me, you must rail at nature: you must chide the sun, that was vertical at my birth, and would not wink upon my nakedness, but swaddled me in the broadest, hottest glare of his meridian beams.

Stock. Mere rhapsody! mere childish rhapsody! the libertine's familiar plea——Nature made us, 'tis true; but we are the responsible creators of our own faults and follies.

Bel. Sir!

Stock. Slave of every face you meet, some hussy has inveigled you, some handsome profligate (the town is full of them); and, when once fairly bankrupt in constitution, as well as fortune, nature no longer serves as your excuse for being vicious, necessity, perhaps, will stand your friend, and you'll reform.

Bel. You are severe.

Stock. It fits me to be so—it well becomes a father——I would say a friend——How strangely I forget myself—How difficult it is to counterfeit indifference, and put a mask upon the heart! ——I've struck him hard; he reddens!

Bel. How could you tempt me so? Had you not inadvertently dropped the name of father, I fear our friendship, short as it has been, would scarce have held me—— But even your mistake I reverence——Give me your hand—'tis over.

Stock. Generous young man!—let me embrace you—How shall I hide my tears? I have been to blame; because I bore you the affection of a father, I rashly took up the authority of one. I ask your pardon——pursue your course; I have no right to stop it——What would you have me do with these things?

Bel. This, if I might advise; carry the money to Miss Rusport immediately: never let generosity wait for its materials; that part of the business presses. Give me the jewels; I'll find an opportunity of delivering them into her hands; and your visit may pave the way for my reception. [*Exit.*

Stock. Be it so: good morning to you. Farewell advice! Away goes he upon the wing for pleasure! What various passions he awakens in me! He pains, yet pleases me; affrights, offends, yet grows upon my heart. His very failings set him off—for ever trespassing, for ever atoning. I almost think he would not be so perfect, were he free from fault: I must dissemble longer; and yet how painful the experiment!——Even now he's gone upon some wild adventure; and who can tell what mischief may befal him? O nature, what it is to be a father! Just such a thoughtless headlong thing was I, when I beguiled his mother into love. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* FULMER'S *house.*

Enter FULMER *and his wife.*

Ful. I tell you, Patty, you are a fool to think of bringing him and Miss Dudley together; 'twill ruin every thing, and blow your whole scheme up to the moon at once.

Mrs Ful. Why, sure, Mr Fulmer, I may be allowed to rear a chicken of my own hatching, as they say! Who first sprung the thought but I, pray? Who first contrived the plot? Who proposed the letter, but I, I?

Ful. And who dogged the gentleman home? Who found out his name, fortune, connexions; that he was a West Indian, fresh landed, and full of cash: a gull to our heart's content: a hot-brained, head-long spark, that would run into our trap, like a wheat-ear under a turf?

Mrs Ful. Hark! he's come! disappear, march, and leave the field open to my machinations.

[*Exit* FULMER.

Enter BELCOUR.

Bel. O, thou dear minister to my happiness, let me embrace thee! Why, thou art my polar star, my propitious constellation, by which I navigate my impatient bark into the port of pleasure and delight!

Mrs Ful. Oh, you men are sly creatures! Do you remember now, you cruel, what you said to me this morning?

Bel. All a jest, a frolic; never think on't; bury it for ever in oblivion. Thou! why, thou art all over nectar and ambrosia, powder of pearl and odour of roses; thou hast the youth of Hebe, the beauty of Venus, and the pen of Sappho! But, in the name of all that's lovely, where's the lady? I expected to find her with you.

Mrs Ful. No doubt you did; and these raptures were designed for her; but where have you loitered? the lady's gone; you are too late. Girls of her sort are not to be kept waiting, like negro slaves in your sugar plantations.

Bel. Gone! whither is she gone? tell me, that I may follow her.

Mrs Ful. Hold, hold! not so fast, young gentleman; this is a case of some delicacy; should captain Dudley know that I introduced you to his daughter, he is a man of such scrupulous honour——

Bel. What do you tell me! is she daughter to the old gentleman I met here this morning?

Mrs Ful. The same; him you was so generous to.

Bel. There's an end of the matter, then, at once; it shall never be said of me, that I took advantage of the father's necessities to trepan the daughter. [*Going.*

Mrs Ful. So, so, I've made a wrong cast; he's one of your conscientious sinners, I find; but I won't lose him thus——Ha, ha, ha!

Bel. What is it you laugh at?

Mrs Ful. Your absolute inexperience: have you lived so very little time in this country, as not to know, that, between young people of equal ages, the term of sister often is a cover for that of mistress? This young lady is, in that sense of the word, sister to young Dudley, and consequently daughter to my old lodger.

Bel. Indeed! are you serious?

Mrs Ful. Can you doubt it! I must have been pretty well assured of that before I invited you hither.

Bel. That's true: she cannot be a woman of honour; and Dudley is an unconscionable young rogue to think of keeping one fine girl in pay, by raising contributions on another: he shall therefore give her up; she is a dear, bewitching, mischievous, little devil; and he shall positively give her up.

Mrs Ful. Ay, now the freak has taken you again! I say, give her up!—there's one way, indeed, and certain of success.

Bel. What's that?

Mrs Ful. Out-bid him; never dream of outblustering him; buy out his lease of possession, and leave her to manage his ejectment.

Bel. Is she so venal? Never fear me then: when beauty is the purchase, I shan't think much of the price.

Mrs Ful. All things, then, will be made easy enough: let me see; some little genteel present to begin with: what have you got about you? Ay, search; I can bestow it to advantage; there's no time to be lost.

Bel. Hang it! confound it; a plague upon't, say I! I hav'n't a guinea left in my pocket; I parted from my whole stock here this morning, and have forgot to supply myself since.

Mrs Ful. Mighty well! let it pass; there's an end; think no more of the lady, that's all.

Bel. Distraction! think no more of her? Let me only step home, and provide myself, I'll be back with you in an instant.

Mrs Ful. Pooh, pooh! that's a wretched shift: have you nothing of value about you? Money's a coarse, slovenly vehicle, fit only to bribe electors in a borough; there are more graceful ways of purchasing a lady's favours; rings, trinkets, jewels!

Bel. Jewels! Gadso, I protest I had forgot! I have a case of jewels—but they won't do, I must not part from them: no, no; they are appropriated; they are none of my own.

Mrs Ful. Let me see, let me see! Ay, now, this were something-like:——pretty creatures, how they sparkle! these would ensure success.

Bel. Indeed!

Mrs Ful. These would make her your own for ever.

Bel. Then, the deuce take them for belonging to another person! I could find in my heart to give them the girl, and swear I've lost them.

Mrs Ful. Ay, do; say they were stolen out of your pocket.

Bel. No, hang it, that's dishonourable: here, give me the paltry things; I'll give you an order on my merchant for double their value.

Mrs Ful. An order! No; order me no orders upon merchants, with their value received, and three days grace; their noting, protesting, and indorsing, and all their counting-house formalities; I'll have nothing to do with them: leave your diamonds with me, and give your order for the value of them to the owner: the mo-

ney would be as good as the trinkets, I warrant you.

Bel. Hey! how! I never thought of that: but a breach of trust—'tis impossible; I never can consent; therefore, give me the jewels back again.

Mrs Ful. Take them: I am now to tell you the lady is in this house.

Bel. In this house!

Mrs Ful. Yes, sir, in this very house—but what of that? You have got what you like better—your toys, your trinkets. Go, go! oh! you're a man of a notable spirit, are you not?

Bel. Provoking creature! bring me to the sight of the dear creature, and dispose of me as you think fit.

Mrs Ful. And of the diamonds, too?

Bel. Damn them! I would there was not such a bauble in nature! But come, come, dispatch: if I had the throne of Delhi, I should give it to her.

Mrs Ful. Swear to me, then, that you will keep within bounds—remember, she passes for the sister of young Dudley. Oh! if you come to your flights and your rhapsodies, she'll be off in an instant.

Bel. Never fear me.

Mrs Ful. You must expect to hear her talk of her father, as she calls him, and her brother, and your bounty to her family.

Bel. Ay, ay; never mind what she talks of, only bring her.

Mrs Ful. You'll be prepared upon that head?

Bel. I shall be prepared, never fear: away with you!

Mrs Ful. But hold! I had forgot: not a word of the diamonds—leave that matter to my management.

Bel. Hell and vexation! Get out of the room, or I shall run distracted. [*Exit* MRS FULMER.] Of a certain, Belcour, thou art born to be the fool of woman: sure no man sins with so much repentance, or repents with so little amendment, as I do. I cannot give away another person's property—honour forbids me: and I positively cannot give up the girl—love, passion, constitution—every thing protests against that. How shall I decide? I cannot bring myself to break a trust; and I am not at present in the humour to baulk my inclination. Is there no middle way? Let me consider——There is, there is: my good genius has presented me with one—apt, obvious, honourable: the girl shall not go without her baubles—I'll not go without the girl—Miss Rusport sha'n't lose her diamonds—I'll save Dudley from destruction—and every party shall be a gainer by the project.

Enter MRS FULMER, *introducing* MISS DUDLEY.

Mrs Ful. Miss Dudley, this is the worthy gentleman you wish to see; this is Mr Belcour.

Lou. As I live, the very man that beset me in the streets! [*Aside.*

Bel. An angel, by this light! Oh, I am gone past all retrieving! [*Aside.*

Lou. Mrs Fulmer, sir, informs me you are the gentleman from whom my father has received such civilities.

Bel. Oh! never name them.

Lou. Pardon me, Mr Belcour; they must be both named and remembered; and if my father was here——

Bel. I am much better pleased with his representative.

Lou. That title is my brother's, sir; I have no claim to it.

Bel. I believe it.

Lou. But as neither he nor my father were fortunate enough to be at home, I could not resist the opportunity——

Bel. Nor I neither, by my soul, madam! let us improve it, therefore. I am in love with you to distraction—I was charmed at the first glance—I attempted to accost you—you fled—I followed—but was defeated of an interview: at length I have obtained one, and seize the opportunity of casting my person and fortune at your feet.

Lou. You astonish me! Are you in your senses? or do you make a jest of my misfortunes? Do you ground pretences on your generosity, or do you make a practice of this folly with every woman you meet?

Bel. Upon my life, no: as you are the handsomest woman I ever met, so you are the first to whom I ever made the like professions: as for my generosity, madam, I must refer you, on that score, to this good lady, who, I believe, has something to offer in my behalf.

Lou. Don't build upon that, sir; I must have better proofs of your generosity, than the mere divestment of a little superfluous dross, before I can credit the sincerity of a profession so abruptly delivered. [*Exit hastily.*

Bel. O ye gods and goddesses! how her anger animates her beauty! [*Going out.*

Mrs Ful. Stay, sir; if you stir a step after her, I renounce your interest for ever: why, you'll ruin every thing!

Bel. Well, I must have her, cost what it will: I see she understands her own value, though; a little superfluous dross, truly! She must have better proofs of my generosity!

Mrs Ful. 'Tis exactly as I told you—your money she calls dross—she's too proud to stain her fingers with your coin: bate your hook well with jewels—try that experiment, and she's your own.

Bel. Take them—let them go—lay them at her feet—I must get out of the scrape as I can—my propensity is irresistible—there—you have them—they are yours—they are hers—but remember they are a trust—I commit them to her

keeping till I can buy them off with something she shall think more valuable; now, tell me when shall I meet her?

Mrs Fal. How can I tell that! Don't you see what an alarm you've put her into? Oh, you're a rare one! But go your ways for this while; leave her to my management, and come to me at seven this evening; but remember not to bring empty pockets with you—Ha, ha, ha!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.—LADY RUSPORT'S *house.*

Enter MISS RUSPORT, *followed by a servant.*

Char. Desire Mr Stockwell to walk in.

[*Exit servant.*

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. Madam, your most obedient servant: I am honoured with your commands, by captain Dudley, and have brought the money with me as you directed—I understand the sum you have occasion for is two hundred pounds.

Char. It is, sir—I am quite confounded at your taking this trouble upon yourself, Mr Stockwell.

Stock. There is a bank-note, madam, to the amount: your jewels are in safe hands, and will be delivered to you directly. If I had been happy in being better known to you, I should have hoped you would not have thought it necessary to place a deposit in my hands for so trifling a sum as you have now required me to supply you with.

Char. The baubles I sent you may very well be spared; and, as they are the only security in my present situation I can give you, I could wish you would retain them in your hands: when I am of age (which, if I live a few months, I shall be), I will replace your favour with thanks.

Stock. It is obvious, Miss Rusport, that your charms will suffer no impeachment by the absence of those superficial ornaments; but they should be seen in the suite of a woman of fashion, not as creditors, to whom you are indebted for your appearance, but as subservient attendants, which help to make up your equipage.

Char. Mr Stockwell is determined not to wrong the confidence I reposed in his politeness.

Stock. I have only to request, madam, that you will allow Mr Belcour, a young gentleman in whose happiness I particularly interest myself, to have the honour of delivering you the box of jewels.

Char. Most gladly; any friend of yours cannot fail of being welcome here.

Stock. I flatter myself you will not find him totally undeserving your good opinion—an education, not of the strictest kind, and strong animal spirits, are apt, sometimes, to betray him into youthful irregularities: but an high principle of honour, and an uncommon benevolence, in the eye of candour will, I hope, atone for any faults, by which these good qualities are not impaired.

Char. I dare say Mr Belcour's behaviour wants no apology—we've no right to be over strict in canvassing the morals of a common acquaintance.

Stock. I wish it may be my happiness to see Mr Belcour in the list, not of your common, but particular acquaintance—of your friends, Miss Rusport—I dare not be more explicit.

Char. Nor need you, Mr Stockwell: I shall be studious to deserve his friendship; and, though I have long since unalterably placed my affection on another, I trust, I have not left myself insensible to the merits of Mr Belcour; and hope that neither he nor you will, for that reason, think me less worthy of your good opinion and regards.

Stock. Miss Rusport, I sincerely wish you happy: I have no doubt you have placed your affection on a deserving man; and I have no right to combat your choice. [*Exit.*

Char. How honourable is that behaviour! Now, if Charles were here, I should be happy. The old lady is so fond of her new Irish acquaintance, that I have the whole house at my disposal.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Enter BELCOUR, *preceded by a Servant.*

Ser. I ask your honour's pardon; I thought my young lady was here: who shall I inform her would speak to her?

Bel. Belcour is my name, sir; and pray beg your lady to put herself in no hurry on my account; for I'd sooner see the devil than see her face.—[*Exit Servant.*]—In the name of all that's mischievous, why did Stockwell drive me hither in such haste? A pretty figure, truly, I shall make! an ambassador without credentials. Blockhead that I was, to charge myself with her diamonds——officious, meddling puppy! Now they are irretrievably gone: that suspicious jade Fulmer wou'dn't part even with a sight of them, though I would have ransomed them at twice their value.—Now must I trust to my poor wits to bring me off: a lamentable dependance! Fortune be my helper:——Here comes the girl.—— If she is noble-minded, as she is said to be, she will forgive me——if not, 'tis a lost cause; for I have not thought of one word in my excuse.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Char. Mr Belcour, I'm proud to see you: your friend, Mr Stockwell, prepared me to expect this honour; and I am happy in the opportunity of being known to you.

Bel. A fine girl, by my soul! Now what a cursed hang-dog do I look like! [*Aside.*

Char. You are newly arrived in this country, sir?

Bel. Just landed, madam, just set a-shore,

with a large cargo of Muscavado sugars, rum-puncheons, mahogany slabs, wet sweetmeats, and green paroquets.

Char. May I ask you how you like London, sir?

Bel. To admiration: I think the town and the town's-folk are exactly suited; 'tis a great, rich, overgrown, noisy, tumultuous place: the whole morning is a bustle to get money, and the whole afternoon is a hurry to spend it.

Char. Are these all the observations you have made?

Bel. No, madam; I have observed the women are very captivating, and the men very soon caught.

Char. Ay, indeed! Whence do you draw that conclusion?

Bel. From infallible guides; the first remark I collect from what I now see, the second from I now feel.

Char. Oh, the deuce take you! But, to wave this subject—I believe, sir, this was a visit of business, not compliment: was it not?

Bel. Ay—now comes on my execution.

Char. You have some foolish trinkets of mine, Mr Belcour; hav'n't you?

Bel. No, in truth, they are gone in search of a trinket, still more foolish than themselves.

[*Aside.*

Char. Some diamonds, I mean, sir. Mr Stockwell informed me you was charged with them.

Bel. Oh, yes, madam—but I have the most treacherous memory in life—here they are: pray put them up; they're all right; you need not examine them. [*Gives a box.*

Char. Hey-day—right, sir! Why these are not my diamonds; these are quite different; and, as it should seem, of much greater value.

Bel. Upon my life, I'm glad on't! for then, I hope, you value them more than your own.

Char. As a purchaser I should, but not as an owner: you mistake; these belong to somebody else.

Bel. 'Tis yours, I'm afraid, that belong to somebody else.

Char. What is it you mean? I must insist upon your taking them back again.

Bel. Pray, madam, don't do that; I shall infallibly lose them: I have the worst luck with diamonds of any man living.

Char. That you might well say, was you to give me these in the place of mine. But pray, sir, what is the reason of all this? Why have you changed the jewels, and where have you disposed of mine?

Bel. Miss Rusport, I cannot invent a lie for my life; and, if it was to save it, I cou'dn't tell one: I am an idle, dissipated, unthinking fellow, not worth your notice: in short, I am a West Indian; and you must try me according to the charter of my colony, not by a jury of English spinsters. The truth is, I've given away your jewels; caught with a pair of sparkling eyes, whose lustre blinded theirs; I served your property as I should my own, and lavished it away. Let me not totally despair of your forgiveness! I frequently do wrong, but never with impunity: if your displeasure is added to my own, my punishment will be too severe. When I parted from the jewels, I had not the honour of knowing their owner.

Char. Mr Belcour, your sincerity charms me! I enter at once into your character, and I make all the allowances for it you can desire. I take your jewels for the present, because I know there is no other way of reconciling you to yourself; but, if I give way to your spirit in one point, you must yield to mine in another: remember, I will not keep more than the value of my own jewels: there is no need to be pillaged by more than one woman at a time, sir.

Bel. Now, may every blessing that can crown your virtues, and reward your beauty, be showered upon you! May you meet admiration without envy, love without jealousy, and old age without malady! May the man of your heart be ever constant, and may you never meet a less penitent or less grateful offender than myself!

Enter Servant, who delivers a letter.

Char. Does your letter require such haste?

Ser. I was bade to give it into your own hands, madam.

Char. From Charles Dudley, I see——Have I your permission? Good Heaven, what do I read? Mr Belcour, you are concerned in this—'Dear 'Charlotte, in the midst of our distress, Provi-'dence has cast a benefactor in our way, after 'the most unexpected manner: a young West 'Indian, rich, and with a warmth of heart, pecu-'liar to his climate, has rescued my father from 'his troubles, satisfied his wants, and enabled 'him to accomplish his exchange: when I relate 'to you the manner in which this was done, you 'will be charmed. I can only now add, that it 'was by chance we found out that his name is 'Belcour, and that he is a friend of Mr Stock-'well's. I lose not a moment's time in making 'you acquainted with this fortunate event, for 'reasons which delicacy obliges me to suppress; 'but, perhaps, if you have not received the mo-'ney on your jewels, you will not think it neces-'sary now to do it. I have the honour to be,

'Dear madam,

'Most faithfully yours,

'CHARLES DUDLEY.'

Is this your doing, sir? Never was generosity so worthily exerted.

Bel. Or so greatly overpaid.

Char. After what you have now done for this noble, but indigent family, let me not scruple to unfold the whole situation of my heart to you.—

Know, then, sir, (and don't think the worse of me for the frankness of my declaration), that such is my attachment to the son of that worthy officer, whom you relieved, that the moment I am of age, and in possession of my fortune, I should hold myself the happiest of women to share it with young Dudley.

Bel. Say you so, madam? then, let me perish if I don't love and reverence you above all woman-kind! and, if such is your generous resolution, never wait till you're of age; life is too short, pleasure too fugitive; the soul grows narrower ever hour. I'll equip you for your escape: I'll convey you to the man of your heart, and away with you, then, to the first hospitable parson that will take you in.

Char. O blessed be the Torrid Zone for ever, whose rapid vegetation quickens nature into such benignity! These latitudes are made for politics and philosophy; friendship has no root in this soil. But, had I spirit to accept your offer, which is not improbable, would'nt it be a mortifying thing for a fond girl to find herself mistaken, and sent back to her home like a vagrant? and such, for what I know, might be my case.

Bel. Then, he ought to be proscribed the society of mankind for ever——Ay, ay; 'tis the sham sister that makes him thus indifferent; 'twill be a meritorious office to take that girl out of the way.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Miss Dudley to wait on you, madam.

Bel. Who?

Ser. Miss Dudley.

Char. What's the matter, Mr Belcour? Are you frighted at the name of a pretty girl? 'Tis the sister of him we were speaking of—Pray, admit her.

Bel. The sister! So, so! he has imposed on her, too—This is an extraordinary visit, truly!—Upon my soul, the assurance of some folks is not to be accounted for. [*Aside.*

Char. I insist upon your not running away; you'll be charmed with Louisa Dudley.

Bel. Oh, yes, I am charmed with her.

Char. You have seen her, then, have you?

Bel. Yes, yes; I've seen her.

Char. Well, isn't she a delightful girl?

Bel. Very delightful.

Char. Why, you answer as if you was in a court of justice! O' my conscience, I believe you are caught! I've a notion she has tricked you out of your heart.

Bel. I believe she has, and you out of your jewels; for, to tell you the truth, she's the very person I gave them to.

Char. You gave her my jewels! Louisa Dudley my jewels? Admirable! inimitable! Oh, the sly little jade! But hush, here she comes; I don't know how I shall keep my countenance.

Enter LOUISA.

My dear, I'm rejoiced to see you: how d'ye do? I beg leave to introduce Mr Belcour, a very worthy friend of mine: I believe, Louisa, you have seen him before.

Lou. I have met the gentleman.

Char. You have met the gentleman! well, sir, and you have met the lady: in short, you have met each other; why, then, don't you speak to each other? How you both stand! tongue-tied, and fixed as statues!———Ha, ha, ha! Why you'll fall asleep by-and-by.

Lou. Fy upon you, fy upon you! is this fair?

Bel. Upon my soul, I never looked so like a fool in my life! the assurance of that girl puts me quite down. [*Aside.*

Char. Sir——Mr Belcour——Was it your pleasure to advance any thing? Not a syllable. Come, Louisa, women's wit, they say, is never at a loss—Nor you neither? Speechless both——Why, you was merry enough before this lady came in.

Lou. I am sorry I have been any interruption to your happiness, sir.

Bel. Madam!

Char. Madam! Is that all you can say? But come, my dear girl, I won't tease you. Apropos, I must shew you what a present this dumb gentleman has made me: are not these handsome diamonds?

Lou. Yes, indeed, they seem very fine; but I am no judge of these things.

Char. Oh, you wicked little hypocrite! you are no judge of these things, Louisa; you have no diamonds! not you!

Lou. You know I have not, Miss Rusport: you know those things are infinitely above my reach.

Char. Ha, ha, ha!

Bel. She does tell a lie with an admirable countenance, that's true enough.

Lou. What ails you, Charlotte? What impertinence have I been guilty of, that you should find it necessary to humble me at such a rate? If you are happy, long may you be so; but, surely, it can be no addition to it to make me miserable.

Char. So serious! there must be some mystery in this——Mr Belcour, will you leave us together? You see I treat you with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance already.

Bel. Oh, by all means, pray command me.—Miss Rusport, I am your most obedient. By your condescension in accepting these poor trifles, I am under eternal obligations to you—To you, Miss Dudley, I shall not offer a word on that subject: you despise finery; you have a soul above it; I adore your spirit; I was rather unprepared for meeting you here; but I shall

hope for an opportunity of making myself better known to you. [*Exit.*

Char. Louisa Dudley, you surprise me; I never saw you act thus before: can't you bear a little innocent raillery before the man of your heart?

Lou. The man of my heart, madam? Be assured I never was so visionary to aspire to any man whom Miss Rusport honours with her choice.

Char. My choice, my dear! Why, we are playing at cross-purposes: how entered it into your head that Mr Belcour was the man of my choice?

Lou. Why, did not he present you with those diamonds?

Char. Well, perhaps he did——and, pray, Louisa, have you no diamonds?

Lou. I diamonds, truly! Who should give me diamonds?

Char. Who, but this very gentleman? apropos, here comes your brother.

Enter CHARLES.

I insist upon referring our dispute to him: your sister and I, Charles, have a quarrel. Belcour, the hero of your letter, has just left us—some how or other, Louisa's bright eyes have caught him; and the poor fellow's fallen desperately in love with her—(don't interrupt me, hussy)—Well, that's excusable enough, you'll say; but the jest of the story is, that this hair-brained spark, who does nothing like other people, has given her the very identical jewels which you pledged for me to Mr Stockwell; and will you believe, that this little demure slut made up a face, and squeezed out three or four hypocritical tears, because I rallied her about it!

Cha. I'm all astonishment! Louisa, tell me, without reserve, has Mr Belcour given you any diamonds?

Lou. None; upon my honour!

Cha. Has he made any professions to you?

Lou. He has; but altogether in a style so whimsical and capricious, that the best which can be said of them is to tell you, that they seemed more the result of good spirits than good manners.

Char. Ay, ay; now the murder's out; he's in love with her, and she has no very great dislike to him; trust to my observation, Charles, for that: as to the diamonds, there's some mistake about them, and you must clear it up: three minutes conversation with him will put every thing in a right train; go, go, Charles; 'tis a brother's business; about it instantly; ten to one you'll find him over the way at Mr Stockwell's.

Cha. I confess I'm impatient to have the case cleared up. I'll take your advice, and find him out: good bye to you.

Char. Your servant; my life upon it you'll find Belcour a man of honour. Come, Louisa, let us adjourn to my dressing room. I've a little private business to transact with you, before the old lady comes up to tea and interrupts us.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—FULMER'S *house.*

Enter FULMER *and* MRS FULMER.

Ful. PATTY, was not Mr Belcour with you?

Mrs Ful. He was; and is now shut up in my chamber, in high expectation of an interview with Miss Dudley; she's at present with her brother, and 'twas with some difficulty I persuaded my hot-headed spark to wait till he has left her.

Ful. Well, child; and what then?

Mrs Ful. Why then, Mr Fulmer, I think it will be time for you and me to steal a march, and be gone.

Ful. So, this is all the fruit of your ingenious project? a shameful overthrow, or a sudden flight?

Mrs Ful. Why, my project was a mere impromptu, and can, at worst, but quicken our departure a few days; you know we had fairly outlived our credit here, and a trip to Boulogne is no ways unseasonable. Nay, never droop, man. Hark! Hark! here's enough to bear charges.

[*Shewing a purse.*

Ful. Let me see, let me see: this weighs well; this is of the right sort: why your West Indian bled freely.

Mrs Ful. But that's not all: look here! Here are the sparklers! [*Shewing the jewels.*] Now, what d'ye think of my performances! eh? a foolish scheme, is not it—a silly woman—?

Ful. Thou art a Judith, a Joan of Arc, and I'll march under thy banners, girl, to the world's end. Come, let's begone; I've little to regret; my creditors may share the old books amongst them; they'll have occasion for philosophy to support their loss; they'll find enough upon my shelves: the world is my library; I read mankind—Now, Patty, lead the way.

Mrs Ful. Adieu, Belcour! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY *and* LOUISA.

Cha. Well, Louisa, I confess the force of what you say: I accept Miss Rusport's bounty; and, when you see my generous Charlotte, tell her—but have a care! there is a selfishness even in gratitude, when it is too profuse: to be overthankful for any one favour, is in effect to lay out for another; the best return I could make my benefactress would be, never to see her more.

Lou. I understand you.

Cha. We that are poor, Louisa, should be cautious: for this reason, I would guard you against Belcour; at least, till I can unravel the mystery of Miss Rusport's diamonds. I was disappointed of finding him at Mr Stockwell's, and am now going in search of him again: he may intend honourably; but, I confess to you, I am staggered; think no more of him, therefore, for the present: of this be sure, while I have life, and you have honour, I will protect you, or perish in your defence. [*Exit* CHA.

Lou. Think of him no more! Well, I'll obey; but if a wandering uninvited thought should creep by chance into my bosom, must I not give the harmless wretch a shelter? Oh! yes; the great artificer of the human heart knows every thread he wove into its fabric, nor puts his work to harder uses than it was made to bear: my wishes then, my guiltless ones, I mean, are free: how fast they spring within me at that sentence! Down, down, ye busy creatures! Whither would you carry me? Ah! there is one amongst you, a forward, new intruder, that, in the likeness of an offending, generous man, grows into favour with my heart. Fye, fye upon it! Belcour pursues, insults me; yet, such is the fatality of my condition, that what should rouse resentment, only calls up love.

Enter BELCOUR.

Bel. Alone, by all that's happy!

Lou. Ah!

Bel. Oh! shriek not, start not, stir not, loveliest creature! but let me kneel, and gaze upon your beauties!

Lou. Sir! Mr Belcour, rise! What is it you do?

Bel. See, I obey you; mould me as you will, behold your ready servant! New to your country, ignorant of your manners, habits, and desires, I put myself into your hands for instruction; make me only such as you can like yourself, and I shall be happy.

Lou. I must not hear this, Mr Belcour: go; should he, that parted from me but this minute, now return, I tremble for the consequence.

Bel. Fear nothing; let him come: I love you, madam; he'll find it hard to make me unsay that.

Lou. You terrify me! your impetuous temper frightens me; you know my situation; it is not generous to pursue me thus.

Bel. True; I do know your situation, your real one, Miss Dudley, and am resolved to snatch you from it: 'twill be a meritorious act. The old captain shall rejoice; Miss Rusport shall be made happy; and even he, even your beloved brother, with whose resentment you threaten me, shall, in the end, applaud and thank me. Come, thou art a dear, enchanting girl, and I'm determined not to live a minute longer without thee!

Lou. Hold! are you mad? I see you are a bold, assuming man, and know not where to stop.

Bel. Who, that beholds such beauty, can? By Heaven, you put my blood into a flame! Provoking girl! is it within the stretch of my fortune to content you? What is it you can further ask that I am not ready to grant?

Lou. Yes, with the same facility that you bestowed upon me Miss Rusport's diamonds. For shame! for shame! was that a manly story?

Bel. So! so! these devilish diamonds meet me every where—Let me perish if I meant you any harm. Oh! I could tear my tongue out for saying a word about the matter.

Lou. Go to her, then, and contradict it; till that is done, my reputation is at stake.

Bel. Her reputation! Now she has got upon that, she'll go on for ever.—What is there I will not do for your sake? I will go to Miss Rusport.

Lou. Do so; restore her own jewels to her, which, I suppose, you kept back for the purpose of presenting others to her of a greater value; but, for the future, Mr Belcour, when you would do a gallant action to that lady, don't let it be at my expence.

Bel. I see where she points: she is willing enough to give up Miss Rusport's diamonds, now she finds she shall be a gainer by the exchange. Be it so! 'tis what I wished!—[*Aside.*]—Well, madam, I will return Miss Rusport her own jewels, and you shall have others of tenfold their value.

Lou. No, sir; you err most widely; it is my good opinion, not my vanity, which you must bribe.

Bel. Why, what the devil would she have now?—Miss Dudley, it is my wish to obey and please you, but I have some apprehension that we mistake each other.

Lou. I think we do: tell me, then, in a few words, what is it you aim at?

Bel. In few words, then, and in plain honesty, I must tell you, so entirely am I captivated with you, that had you but been such as it would have become me to have called my wife, I had been happy in knowing you by that name; as it is, you are welcome to partake my fortune: give me, in return, your person, give me pleasure, give me love; free, disencumbered, anti-matrimonial love!

Lou. Stand off! and let me never see you more.

Bel. Hold, hold, thou dear, tormenting, tantalizing girl! Upon my knees, I swear, you shall not stir till you've consented to my bliss.

Lou. Unhand me, sir: O Charles! protect me, rescue me, redress me! [*Exit* LOU.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

Cha. How's this! Rise, villain, and defend yourself!

Bel. Villain!

Cha. The man who wrongs that lady is a villain!—Draw!

Bel. Never fear me, young gentleman! Brand me for a coward, if I baulk you!

Cha. Yet hold! Let me not be too hasty: your name, I think, is Belcour?

Bel. Well, sir?

Cha. How is it, Mr Belcour, you have done this mean, unmanly wrong; beneath the mask of generosity, to give this fatal stab to our domestic peace? You might have had my thanks, my blessing; take my defiance now. 'Tis Dudley speaks to you; the brother, the protector of that injured lady.

Bel. The brother? Give yourself a truer title.

Cha. What is it you mean?

Bel. Come, come, I know both her and you. I found you, sir, (but how, or why, I know not) in the good graces of Miss Rusport—(yes, colour at the name!) I gave you no disturbance there, never broke in upon you in that rich and plenteous quarter; but, when I could have blasted all your projects with a word, spared you, in foolish pity spared you, nor rouzed her from the fond credulity in which your artifice had lulled her.

Cha. No, sir, nor boasted to her of the splendid present you had made my poor Louisa—the diamonds, Mr Belcour! How was that? What can you plead to that arraignment?

Bel. You question me too late; the name of Belcour, and of villain, never met before; had you inquired of me before you uttered that rash word, you might have saved yourself or me a mortal error: now, sir, I neither give nor take an explanation; so, come on! [*They fight.*

Enter LOUISA, *and afterwards* O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. Hold, hold! for Heaven's sake, hold! Charles! Mr Belcour! Help! Sir, sir; make haste, they'll murder one another!

O'Fla. Hell and confusion! What's all this uproar for? Can't you leave off cutting one another's throats, and mind what the poor girl says to you? You've done a notable thing, have not you both, to put her into such a flurry? I think, o' my conscience, she's the most frighted of the three.

Cha. Dear Louisa, recollect yourself; why did you interfere? 'Tis in your cause.

Bel. Now could I kill him for caressing her!

O'Fla. O sir, your most obedient! You are the gentleman I had the honour of meeting here before; you was then running off at full speed like a Calmuck; now you are tilting and driving like a Bedlamite with this lad here, that seems as mad as yourself: 'tis pity but your country had a little more employment for you both.

Bel. Mr Dudley, when you've recovered the lady, you know where I am to be found.

[*Exit* BEL.

O'Fla. Well, then, can't you stay where you are, and that will save the trouble of looking after you? Yon volatile fellow thinks to give a man the meeting by getting out of his way: by my soul, 'tis a roundabout method that of his! But, I think he called you Dudley. Hark'e, young man, are you the son of my friend the old captain?

Cha. I am. Help me to convey this lady to her chamber, and I shall be more at leisure to answer your questions.

O'Fla. Ay, will I: come along, pretty one. If you've had wrong done you, young man, you need look no further for a second; Dennis O'Flaherty's your man for that: but never draw your sword before a woman, Dudley; damn it, never, while you live, draw your sword before a woman.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—LADY RUSPORT'S *house.*

Enter LADY RUSPORT *and Servant.*

Ser. An elderly gentleman, who says his name is Varland, desires leave to wait on your ladyship.

Lady Rus. Shew him in; the very man I wish to see! Varland—he was sir Oliver's solicitor, and privy to all his affairs. He brings some good tidings; some fresh mortgage, or another bond come to light; they start up every day.

Enter VARLAND.

Mr Varland, I'm glad to see you; you're heartily welcome, honest Mr Varland; you and I have not met since our late irreparable loss: how have you passed your time this age?

Var. Truly, my lady, ill enough: I thought I must have followed good sir Oliver.

Lady Rus. Alack-a-day, poor man! Well, Mr Varland, you find me here, overwhelmed with trouble and fatigue; torn to pieces with a multiplicity of affairs; a great fortune poured upon me, unsought for and unexpected: 'twas my good father's will and pleasure it should be so, and I must submit.

Var. Your ladyship inherits under a will made in the year forty-five, immediately after captain Dudley's marriage with your sister.

Lady Rus. I do so, Mr Varland; I do so.

Var. I well remember it; I engrossed every syllable; but I am surprised to find your ladyship set so little store by this vast accession.

Lady Rus. Why, you know, Mr Varland, I am a moderate woman; I had enough before; a small matter satisfies me; and sir Stephen Rusport (Heaven be his portion!) took care I should not want that.

Var. Very true; very true, he did so; and I am overjoyed at finding your ladyship in this disposition; for, truth to say, I was not without apprehension the news I have to communicate would have been of some prejudice to your ladyship's tranquillity.

Lady Rus. News, sir! What news have you for me?

Var. Nay, nothing to alarm you: a trifle, in your present way of thinking: I have a will of sir Oliver's you have never seen.

Lady Rus. A will! Impossible! How came you by it, pray?

Var. I drew it up, at his command, in his last illness: it will save you a world of trouble; it gives his whole estate from you to his grandson, Charles Dudley.

Lady Rus. To Dudley! His estate to Charles Dudley! I can't support it! I shall faint! You've killed me, you vile man! I never shall survive it!

Var. Look'e there, now! I protest, I thought you would have rejoiced at being clear of the incumbrance.

Lady Rus. 'Tis false; 'tis all a forgery, concerted between you and Dudley; why, else, did I never hear of it before?

Var. Have patience, my lady, and I'll tell you.—By sir Oliver's direction, I was to deliver this will into no hands but his grandson, Dudley's: the young gentleman happened to be then in Scotland; I was dispatched thither in search of him: the hurry and fatigue of my journey brought on a fever by the way, which confined me in extreme danger for several days: upon my recovery, I pursued my journey, found young Dudley had left Scotland in the interim, and am now directed hither; where, as soon as I can find him, doubtless, I shall discharge my conscience, and fulfil my commission.

Lady Rus. Dudley, then, as yet, knows nothing of this will?

Var. Nothing; that secret rests with me.

Lady Rus. A thought occurs! by this fellow's talking of his conscience, I should guess it was upon sale.—[*Aside.*]—Come, Mr Varland, if 'tis as you say, I must submit. I was somewhat flurried at first, and forgot myself; I ask your pardon: this is no place to talk of business; step with me into my room; we will there compare the will, and resolve accordingly——Oh! would your fever had you, and I had your paper!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Enter MISS RUSPORT, CHARLES, *and* O'FLAHERTY.

Char. So, so! My lady and her lawyer have retired to close confabulation: now, major, if you are the generous man I take you for, grant me one favour.

O'Fla. Faith will I, and not think much of my generosity neither; for, though it may not be in my power to do the favour you ask, look you, it can never be in my heart to refuse it.

Cha. Could this man's tongue do justice to his thoughts, how eloquent would he be! [*Aside.*

Char. Plant yourself, then, in that room: keep guard, for a few moments, upon the enemy's motions, in the chamber beyond; and, if they should attempt a sally, stop their march a moment, till your friend here can make good his retreat down the back-stairs.

O'Fla. A word to the wise! I'm an old campaigner; make the best use of your time; and trust me for tying the old cat up to the picket.

Char. Hush! hush! not so loud.

Cha. 'Tis the office of a centinel, major, you have undertaken, rather than that of a field-officer.

O'Fla. 'Tis the office of a friend, my dear boy; and, therefore, no disgrace to a general.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.

Enter CHARLES *and* CHARLOTTE.

Char. Well, Charles, will you commit yourself to me for a few minutes?

Cha. Most readily; and let me, before one goes by, tender you the only payment I can ever make for your abundant generosity.

Char. Hold, hold! so vile a thing as money must not come between us. What shall I say? O Charles! O Dudley! What difficulties have you thrown upon me! Familiarly as we have lived, I shrink now at what I'm doing; and, anxiously as I have sought this opportunity, my fears almost persuade me to abandon it.

Cha. You alarm me.

Char. Your looks and actions have been so distant, and, at this moment, are so deterring, that, was it not for the hope that delicacy, and not disgust, inspires this conduct in you, I should sink with shame and apprehension: but time presses, and I must speak—and plainly too—— Was you now in possession of your grandfather's estate, as justly you ought to be; and was you inclined to seek a companion for life, should you, or should you not, in that case, honour your unworthy Charlotte with your choice?

Cha. My unworthy Charlotte! So judge me Heaven, there is not a circumstance on earth so valuable as your happiness, so dear to me as your person; but, to bring poverty, disgrace, reproach from friends, ridicule from all the world, upon a generous benefactress; thievishly to steal into an open, unreserved, ingenuous heart, O Charlotte! dear, unhappy girl, it is not to be done.

Char. Nay, now you rate too highly the poor advantages fortune alone has given me over you; how otherwise could we bring our merits to any balance? Come, my dear Charles, I have enough; make that enough still more, by sharing it with me: sole heiress of my father's fortune, a short time will put it in my disposal; in the mean while, you will be sent to join your regiment: let us prevent a separation, by setting out this very night for that happy country, where marriage still is free: carry me this moment to Belcour's lodgings.

Cha. Belcour's?——The name is ominous! there's murder in it: bloody inexorable honour! [*Aside.*

Char. D'ye pause? Put me into his hands, while you provide the means for our escape: he is the most generous, the most honourable of men.

Cha. Honourable! most honourable!

Char. Can you doubt it? Do you demur? Have you forgot your letter? Why, Belcour 'twas that prompted me to this proposal, that promised to supply the means, that nobly offered his unasked assistance——

Enter O'FLAHERTY, *hastily.*

O'Fla. Run, run! for holy St Antony's sake, to horse and away! The conference is broke up, and the old lady advances upon a full Piedmontese trot, within pistol-shot of your encampment.

Char. Here, here! down the back-stairs! O Charles, remember me!

Cha. Farewell! Now, now I feel myself a coward. [*Exit.*

Char. What does he mean?

O'Fla. Ask no questions, but be gone: she has cooled the lad's courage, and wonders he feels like a coward. There's a damned deal of mischief brewing between this hyena and her lawyer: egad, I'll step behind this screen and listen: a good soldier must sometimes fight in ambush, as well as open field. [*Retires.*

Enter LADY RUSPORT *and* VARLAND.

Lady Rus. Sure I heard somebody. Hark! No; only the servants going down the back-stairs. Well, Mr Varland, I think then we are agreed: you'll take my money; and your conscience no longer stands in your way.

Var. Your father was my benefactor; his will ought to be sacred; but, if I commit it to the flames, how will he be the wiser? Dudley, 'tis true, has done me no harm; but five thousand pounds will do me much good: so, in short, madam, I take your offer; I will confer with my clerk, who witnessed the will; and to-morrow morning put it into your hands, upon condition you put five thousand good pounds into mine.

Lady Rus. 'Tis a bargain: I'll be ready for you: farewell. [*Exit.*

Var. Let me consider—Five thousand pounds, prompt payment, for destroying this scrap of paper, not worth five farthings; 'tis a fortune easily earned; yes; and 'tis another man's fortune easily thrown away: 'tis a good round sum to be paid down at once for a bribe; but 'tis a damned rogue's trick in me to take it.

O'Fla. So, so! this fellow speaks truth to himself, though he lies to other people——But hush! [*Aside.*

Var. 'Tis breaking the trust of my benefactor; that's a foul crime! but he's dead, and can never reproach me with it: and 'tis robbing young Dudley of his lawful patrimony; that's a hard case: but he's alive, and knows nothing of the matter.

O'Fla. These lawyers are so used to bring off the rogueries of others, that they are never without an excuse for their own. [*Aside.*

Var. Were I assured now, that Dudley would give me half the money for producing this will, that lady Rusport does for concealing it, I would deal with him, and be an honest man at half price. I wish every gentleman of my profession could lay his hand on his heart, and say the same thing.

O'Fla. A bargain, old gentleman! Nay, never start nor stare! you wasn't afraid of your own conscience, never be afraid of me.

Var. Of you, sir! who are you, pray?

O'Fla. I'll tell you who I am: you seem to wish to be honest, but want the heart to set about it. Now, I am the very man in the world to make you so; for, if you do not give me up that paper this very instant, by the soul of me, fellow, I will not leave one whole bone in your skin that shan't be broken.

Var. What right have you, pray, to take this paper from me?

O'Fla. What right have you, pray, to keep it from young Dudley? I don't know what it contains, but I am apt to think it will be safer in my hands than in yours; therefore, give it me without more words, and save yourself a beating: do now; you had best.

Var. Well, sir, I may as well make a grace of necessity. There! I have acquitted my conscience, at the expence of five thousand pounds.

O'Fla. Five thousand pounds! Mercy upon me!—When there are such temptations in the law, can we wonder if some of the corps are a disgrace to it?

Var. Well, you have got the paper; if you are an honest man, give it to Charles Dudley.

O'Fla. An honest man! look at me, friend. I am a soldier; this is not the livery of a knave: I am an Irishman, honey; mine is not the country of dishonour. Now, sirrah, be gone; if you enter these doors, or give lady Rusport the least item of what has passed, I will cut off both your ears, and rob the pillory of its due.

Var. I wish I was once fairly out of his sight! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.—*A room in* STOCKWELL'S *House.*

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. I must disclose myself to Belcour; this noble instance of his generosity, which old Headley has been relating, alike to him at once; concealment becomes too painful: I shall be proud to own him for my son——But see, he's here!

BELCOUR *enters, and throws himself upon a sofa.*

Bel. O my curst tropical constitution! Would to Heaven I had been dropt upon the snows of Lapland, and never felt the blessed influence of the sun, so I had never burnt with these inflammatory passions!

Stock. So, so! you seem disordered, Mr Belcour?

Bel. Disordered, sir! Why did I ever quit the soil in which I grew? what evil planet drew me from that warm sunny region, where naked nature walks without disguise, into this cold, contriving, artificial country?

Stock. Come, sir, you've met a rascal—what of that? general conclusions are illiberal.

Bel. No, sir; I've met reflection by the way; I've come from folly, noise, and fury, and met a silent monitor—Well, well, a villain!—'twas not to be pardoned—pray, never mind me, sir.

Stock. Alas, my heart bleeds for him!

Bel. And yet I might have heard him: now, plague upon that blundering Irishman for coming in as he did! the hurry of the deed might palliate the event: deliberate execution has less to plead—Mr Stockwell, I am bad company to you.

Stock. Oh, sir, make no excuse. I think you have not found me forward to pry into the secrets of your pleasures and pursuits; 'tis not my disposition; but there are times, when want of curiosity would be want of friendship.

Bel. Ah, sir, mine is a case wherein you and I shall never think alike; the punctilious rules, by which I am bound, are not to be found in your ledgers, nor will pass current in the counting-house of a trader.

Stock. 'Tis very well, sir: if you think I can render you any service, it will be worth your trial to confide in me; if not, your secret is safer in your own bosom.

Bel. That sentiment demands my confidence: pray, sit down by me. You must know, I have an affair of honour on my hands with young Dudley; and, though I put up with no man's insult, yet I wish to take away no man's life.

Stock. I know the young man, and am apprised of your generosity to his father: what can have bred a quarrel between you?

Bel. A foolish passion on my side, and a haughty provocation on his. There is a girl, Mr Stockwell, whom I have unfortunately seen, of most uncommon beauty. She has, withal, an air of so much natural modesty, that had I not had good assurance of her being an attainable wanton, I declare I should as soon have thought of attempting the chastity of Diana.

Enter Servant.

Stock. Hey-day, do you interrupt us?

Ser. Sir, there's an Irish gentleman will take no denial; he says he must see Mr Belcour directly, upon business of the last consequence.

Bel. Admit him: 'tis the Irish officer that parted us, and brings me young Dudley's challenge: I should have made a long story of it, and he'll tell you in three words.

Enter O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. Save you, my dear: and you, sir! I have a little bit of a word in private for you.

Bel. Pray deliver your commands: this gentleman is my intimate friend.

O'Fla. Why, then, ensign Dudley will be glad to measure swords with you, yonder, at the London Tavern, in Bishopsgate-street, at nine o'clock—you know the place!

Bel. I do; and shall observe the appointment.

O'Fla. Will you be of the party, sir? We shall want a fourth hand.

Stock. Savage as the custom is, I close with your proposal; and, though I am not fully informed of the occasion of your quarrel, I shall rely on Mr Belcour's honour for the justice of it; and willingly stake my life in his defence.

O'Fla. Sir, you're a gentleman of honour, and I shall be glad of being better known to you—— But hark'e, Belcour, I had like to have forgot part of my errand: there is the money you gave old Dudley; you may tell it over, 'faith; 'tis a receipt in full: now the lad can put you to death with a safe conscience; and when he has done that job for you, let it be a warning how you attempt the sister of a man of honour.

Bel. The sister!

O'Fla. Ay, the sister; 'tis English, is it not? Or Irish; 'tis all one: you understand me? his sister, or Louisa Dudley, that's her name, I think, call her which you will. By St Patrick, 'tis a foolish piece of a business, Belcour, to go about to take away a poor girl's virtue from her, when there are so many to be met in this town, who have disposed of theirs to your hands. [*Exit.*

Stock. Why, I am thunderstruck! What is it you have done, and what is the shocking business in which I have engaged? If I understood him right, 'tis the sister of young Dudley you've been attempting: you talked to me of a professed wanton! the girl he speaks of has beauty enough indeed to inflame your desires, but she has honour, innocence, and simplicity, to awe the most licentious passion: if you have done that, Mr Belcour, I renounce you, I abandon you, I forswear all fellowship or friendship with you for ever.

Bel. Have patience for a moment: we do indeed speak of the same person—but she is not innocent, she is not young Dudley's sister.

Stock. Astonishing! Who told you this?

Bel. The woman where she lodges; the person who put me on the pursuit, and contrived our meetings.

Stock. What woman? what person?

Bel. Fulmer her name is: I warrant you I did not proceed without good grounds.

Stock. Fulmer! Fulmer!——Who waits?

Enter a Servant.

Send Mr Stukely hither directly. [*Exit Ser.*] I begin to see my way into this dark transaction. Mr Belcour, Mr Belcour! you are no match for the cunning and contrivances of this intriguing town.

Enter STUKELY.

Prithee, Stukely, what is the name of the woman and her husband, who were stopt upon suspicion of selling stolen diamonds at our next-door neighbour's, the jeweller?

Stuke. Fulmer.

Stock. So!

Bel. Can you procure me a sight of those diamonds?

Stuke. They are now in my hand; I was desired to shew them to Mr Stockwell.

Stock. Give them to me: what do I see? As I live, the very diamonds Miss Rusport sent hither, and which I intrusted to you to return.

Bel. Yes, but I betrayed that trust, and gave them to Mrs Fulmer to present to Miss Dudley.

Stock. With a view, no doubt, to bribe her to compliance?

Bel. I own it.

Stock. For shame, for shame! and 'twas this woman's intelligence you relied upon for Miss Dudley's character?

Bel. I thought she knew her; by Heaven, I would have died sooner than have insulted a woman of virtue, or a man of honour!

Stock. I think you would: but mark the danger of licentious courses: you are betrayed, robbed, abused, and, but for this providential discovery, in a fair way of being sent out of the world with all your follies on your head———Dear Stukely, go to my neighbour, tell him I have an owner for the jewels, and beg him to carry the people under custody to the London tavern, and wait for me there.—[*Exit* STUKELY.]—I fear the law does not provide a punishment to reach the villainy of these people; but how, in the name of wonder, could you take any thing on the word of such an informer?

Bel. Because I had not lived long enough in your country to know how few informers' words are to be taken: persuaded, however, as I was of Miss Dudley's guilt, I must own to you, I was staggered with the appearance of such innocence, especially when I saw her admitted into Miss Rusport's company.

Stock. Good Heaven! did you meet her at Miss Rusport's, and could you doubt of her being a woman of reputation?

Bel. By you, perhaps, such a mistake could not have been made; but in a perfect stranger, I hope, it is venial. I did not know what artifices young Dudley might have used to conceal her character; I did not know what disgrace attended the detection of it.

Stock. I see it was a trap laid for you, which you have narrowly escaped; you addressed a woman of honour with all the loose incense of a profane admirer, and you have drawn upon you the resentment of a man of honour, who thinks himself bound to protect her.——Well, sir, you must atone for this mistake.

Bel. To the lady, the most penitent submission I can make is justly due; but, in the execution of an act of justice, it shall never be said my soul was swayed by the least particle of fear: I have received a challenge from her brother; now, though I would give my fortune, almost my life itself, to purchase her happiness, yet I cannot abate her one scruple of my honour; I have been branded with the name of villain.

Stock. Ay, sir, you mistook her character, and he mistook yours; error begets error.

Bel. Villain, Mr Stockwell, is a harsh word.

Stock. It is a harsh word, and should be unsaid.

Bel. Come, come; it shall be unsaid.

Stock. Or else what follows? Why, the sword is drawn, and, to heal the wrongs you have done to the reputation of the sister, you make an honourable amends, by murdering the brother.

Bel. Murdering!

Stock. 'Tis thus religion writes and speaks the word; in the vocabulary of modern honour there is no such term—But come, I don't despair of satisfying the one, without alarming the other; that done, I have a discovery to unfold, that you will then, I hope, be fitted to receive.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The London tavern.*

Enter O'FLAHERTY, STOCKWELL, CHARLES, *and* BELCOUR.

O'Fla. GENTLEMEN, well met! you understand each other's minds; and, as I see you have brought nothing but your swords, you may set to without any further ceremony.

Stock. You will not find us backward in any worthy cause; but, before we proceed any further, I would ask this young gentleman, whether he has any explanation to require of Mr Belcour.

Cha. Of Mr Belcour none; his actions speak for themselves: but to you, sir, I would fain propose one question.

Stock. Name it.

Cha. How is it, Mr Stockwell, that I meet a man of your character on this ground?

Stock. I will answer you directly, and my answer shall not displease you. I come hither in defence of the reputation of Miss Dudley, to redress the injuries of an innocent young lady.

O'Fla. By my soul the man knows he's to fight, only he mistakes which side he's to be of.

Stock. You are about to draw your sword to refute a charge against your sister's honour; you would do well, if there were no better means within reach; but the proofs of her innocence are lodged in our bosoms, and, if we fall, you destroy the evidence that most effectually can clear her fame.

Cha. How's that, sir?

Stock. This gentleman could best explain it to you, but you have given him an undeserved name that seals his lips against you: I am not under the same inhibition; and, if your anger can keep cool for a few minutes, I desire I may call in two witnesses, who will solve all difficulties at once. Here, waiter! bring those people in that are without.

O'Fla. Out upon it, what need is there for so much talking about the matter? can't you settle your differences first, and dispute about them afterwards?

FULMER *and* MRS FULMER *brought in.*

Cha. Fulmer and his wife in custody?

Stock. Yes, sir; these are your honest landlord and landlady, now in custody for defrauding this gentleman of certain diamonds intended to have been presented to your sister.—Be so good, Mrs Fulmer, to inform the company why you so grossly scandalized the reputation of an innocent lady, by persuading Mr Belcour, that Miss Dudley was not the sister, but the mistress, of this gentleman.

Mrs Ful. Sir, I don't know what right you have to question me, and I shall not answer till I see occasion.

Stock. Had you been as silent heretofore, madam, it would have saved you some trouble; but we don't want your confession. This letter, which you wrote to Mr Belcour, will explain your design; and these diamonds, which, of right, belong to Miss Rusport, will confirm your guilt: the law, Mrs Fulmer, will make you speak, though I can't. Constable, take charge of your prisoners.

Ful. Hold a moment! Mr Stockwell, you are a gentleman that knows the world, and a member of parliament; we shall not attempt to impose upon you; we know we are open to the law, and we know the utmost it can do against us. Mr Belcour has been ill used, to be sure, and so has Miss Dudley; and, for my own part, I always condemned the plot as a very foolish plot; but it was a child of Mrs Fulmer's brain, and she would not be put out of conceit with it.

Mrs Ful. You are a very foolish man, Mr Fulmer; so, prithee, hold your tongue.

Ful. Therefore, as I was saying, if you send her to Bridewell, it won't be amiss; and if you give her a little wholesome discipline, she may be the better for that too: but for me, Mr Stockwell, who am a man of letters, I must beseech you, sir, not to bring any disgrace upon my profession.

Stock. 'Tis you, Mr Fulmer, not I, that disgrace your profession; therefore begone, nor expect that I will betray the interests of mankind so far as to shew favour to such incendiaries. Take them away; I blush to think such wretches should have the power to set two honest men at variance. [*Exeunt* FULMER, *&c.*

Cha. Mr Belcour, we have mistaken each other; let us exchange forgiveness. I am convinced you intended no affront to my sister, and ask your pardon for the expression I was betrayed into.

Bel. 'Tis enough, sir; the error began on my side, and was Miss Dudley here, I would be the first to atone.

Stock. Let us all adjourn to my house, and conclude the evening like friends: you will find a little entertainment ready for you; and, if I am not mistaken, Miss Dudley and her father will make part of our company. Come, major, do you consent?

O'Fla. Most readily, Mr Stockwell; a quarrel, well made up, is better than a victory hardly earned. Give me your hand, Belcour; o' my conscience, you are too honest for the country you live in. And now, my dear lad, since peace is concluded on all sides, I have a discovery to make to you, which you must find out for yourself; for deuce take me if I rightly comprehend

it, only that your aunt Rusport is in a conspiracy against you, and a vile rogue of a lawyer, whose name I forget, at the bottom of it.

Cha. What conspiracy? Dear major, recollect yourself.

O'Fla. By my soul, I've no faculty at recollecting myself; but I've a paper somewhere about me, that will tell you more of the matter than I can. When I get to the merchant's, I will endeavour to find it.

Cha. Well, it must be in your own way; but I confess you have thoroughly roused my curiosity. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—STOCKWELL'S *house.*

Enter CAPTAIN DUDLEY, LOUISA, *and* STUKELY.

Dud. And are those wretches, Fulmer and his wife, in safe custody?

Stuke. They are in good hands; I accompanied them to the tavern, where your son was to be, and then went in search of you. You may be sure Mr Stockwell will enforce the law against them as far as it will go.

Dud. What mischief might their cursed machinations have produced, but for this timely discovery!

Lou. Still I am terrified!—I tremble with apprehension lest Mr Belcour's impetuosity, and Charles's spirit, should not wait for an explanation, but drive them both to extremes, before the mistake can be unravelled.

Stuke. Mr Stockwell is with them, madam, and you have nothing to fear—you cannot suppose he would ask you hither for any other purpose but to celebrate their reconciliation, and to receive Mr Belcour's atonement.

Dud. No, no, Louisa. Mr Stockwell's honour and discretion guard us against all danger or offence—he well knows we will endure no imputation on the honour of our family, and he certainly has invited us to receive satisfaction on that score in an amicable way.

Lou. Would to Heaven they were returned!

Stuke. You may expect them every minute; and see, madam, agreeable to your wish, they are here. [*Exit* STUKE.

Enter CHARLES, *and afterwards* STOCKWELL *and* O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. O Charles! O brother! how could you serve me so? how could you tell me you was going to lady Rusport's, and then set out with a design of fighting Mr Belcour? But where is he? Where is your antagonist?

Stock. Captain, I am proud to see you; and you, Miss Dudley, do me particular honour. We have been adjusting, sir, a very extraordinary and dangerous mistake, which, I take for granted, my friend Stukely has explained to you

Dud. He has. I have too good an opinion of Mr Belcour to believe he could be guilty of a designed affront to an innocent girl; and I am much too well acquainted with your character, to suppose you could abet him in such design; I have no doubt, therefore, all things will be set to rights in very few words, when we have the pleasure of seeing Mr Belcour.

Stock. He has only stept into the compting-house, and will wait upon you directly. You will not be over strict, madam, in weighing Mr Belcour's conduct to the minutest scruple. His manners, passions, and opinions, are not, as yet, assimilated to this climate; he comes amongst you a new character, an inhabitant of a new world; and both hospitality, as well as pity, recommend him to our indulgence.

Enter BELCOUR, *who bows to* MISS DUDLEY.

Bel. I am happy, and ashamed, to see you—no man in his senses would offend you—I forfeited mine, and erred against the light of the sun, when I overlooked your virtues—but your beauty was predominant, and hid them from my sight—I now perceive I was the dupe of a most improbable report, and humbly entreat your pardon.

Lou. Think no more of it; 'twas a mistake.

Bel. My life has been composed of little else; 'twas founded in mystery, and has continued in error: I was once given to hope, Mr Stockwell, that you was to have delivered me from these difficulties; but, either I do not deserve your confidence, or I was deceived in my expectations.

Stock. When this lady has confirmed your pardon, I shall hold you deserving of my confidence.

Lou. That was granted the moment it was asked.

Bel. To prove my title to his confidence, honour me so far with yours, as to allow me a few minutes conversation in private with you.

[*She turns to her father.*

Dud. By all means, Louisa; come, Mr Stockwell, let us go into another room.

Cha. And now, major O'Flaherty, I claim your promise of a sight of the paper, that is to unravel this conspiracy of my aunt Rusport's: I think I have waited with great patience.

O'Fla. I have been endeavouring to call to mind what it was I overheard—I've got the paper, and will give you the best account I can of the whole transaction.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter BELCOUR *and* LOUISA.

Bel. Miss Dudley, I have solicited this audience, to repeat to you my penitence and confusion. How shall I atone? What reparation can I make to you and virtue?

Lou. To me there's nothing due, nor any thing

demanded of you, but your more favourable opinion for the future, if you should chance to think of me. Upon the part of virtue, I'm not empowered to speak; but if, hereafter, as you range through life, you should surprise her in the person of some wretched female, poor as myself, and not so well protected, enforce not your advantage, complete not your licentious triumph, but raise her, rescue her from shame and sorrow, and reconcile her to herself again.

Bel. I will, I will: by bearing your idea ever present in my thoughts, virtue shall keep an advocate within me. But tell me, loveliest, when you pardon the offence, can you, all perfect as you are, approve of the offender? As I now cease to view you in that false light I lately did, can you, and, in the fulness of your bounty, will you, cease also to reflect upon the libertine addresses I have paid you, and look upon me as your reformed, your rational admirer?

Lou. Are sudden reformations apt to last? and how can I be sure the first fair face you meet will not ensnare affections so unsteady, and that I shall not lose you lightly as I gained you?

Bel. Because, though you conquered me by surprise, I have no inclination to rebel; because, since the first moment that I saw you, every instant has improved you in my eyes; because, by principle as well as passion, I am unalterably yours: in short, there are ten thousand causes for my love to you:—would to Heaven I could plant one in your soft bosom, that might move you to return it!

Lou. Nay, Mr Belcour——

Bel. I know I am not worthy your regard. I know I'm tainted with a thousand faults, sick of a thousand follies; but there's a healing virtue in your eyes that makes recovery certain. I cannot be a villain in your arms.

Lou. That you can never be: whomever you shall honour with your choice, my life upon't that woman will be happy: it is not from suspicion that I hesitate, it is from honour: 'tis the severity of my condition: it is the world, that never will interpret fairly in our case.

Bel. Oh, what am I? and who in this wide world concerns himself for such a nameless, such a friendless thing as I am? I see, Miss Dudley, I've not yet obtained your pardon.

Lou. Nay, that you are in full possession of.

Bel. Oh, seal it with your hand then, loveliest of women; confirm it with your heart; make me honourably happy, and crown your penitent, not with your pardon only, but your love.

Lou. My love!——

Bel. By Heaven, my soul is conquered with your virtues, more than my eyes are ravished with your beauty! Oh, may this soft, this sensitive alarm, be happy, be auspicious! Doubt not, deliberate not, delay not. If happiness be the end of life, why do we slip a moment?

Enter O'FLAHERTY, *and afterwards* DUDLEY *and* CHARLES *with* STOCKWELL.

O'Fla. Joy, joy, joy! Sing, dance, leap, laugh for joy! Ha' done making love, and fall down on your knees to every saint in the calendar; for they're all on your side, and honest St. Patrick at the head of them.

Cha. O Louisa, such an event! By the luckiest chance in life, we have discovered a will of my grandfather's, made in his last illness, by which he cuts off my aunt Rusport with a small annuity, and leaves me heir to his whole estate, with a fortune of fifteen thousand pounds to yourself.

Lou. What is it you tell me? O, sir, instruct me to support this unexpected turn of fortune.

[*To her father.*

Dud. Name not fortune; 'tis the work of Providence——'tis the justice of Heaven, that would not suffer innocence to be oppressed, nor your base aunt to prosper in her cruelty and cunning.

[*A servant whispers* BELCOUR, *and he goes out.*]

O'Fla. You shall pardon me, captain Dudley, but you must not overlook St Patrick neither;—for, by my soul, if he had not put it into my head to slip behind the screen when your righteous aunt and the lawyer were plotting togegether, I don't see how you would ever have come at the paper there, that master Stockwell is reading.

Dud. True, my good friend; you are the father of this discovery; but how did you contrive to get this will from the lawyer?

O'Fla. By force, my dear—the only way of getting any thing from a lawyer's clutches.

Stock. Well, major, when he brings his action of assault and battery against you, the least Dudley can do is, to defend you with the weapons you have put into his hands.

Cha. That I am bound to do; and after the happiness I shall have in sheltering a father's age from the vicissitudes of life, my next delight will be in offering you an asylum in the bosom of your country.

O'Fla. And upon my soul, my dear, 'tis high time I was there; for 'tis now thirty long years since I set foot in my native country—and, by the power of St Patrick I swear, I think it's worth all the rest of the world put together.

Dud. Ay, major, much about that time have I been beating the round of service, and 'twere well for us both to give over: we have stood many a tough gale, and abundance of hard blows; but Charles shall lay us up in a little private, but safe, harbour, where we'll rest from our labours, and peacefully wind up the remainder of our days.

O'Fla. Agreed; and you may take it as a proof of my esteem, young man, that major O'Flaherty accepts a favour at your hands——for,

by Heaven, I'd sooner starve than say, 'I thank you' to the man I despise. But I believe you are an honest lad, and I am glad you have trounced the old cat—for, on my conscience, I believe I must otherwise have married her myself, to have let you in for a share of her fortune.

Stock. Hey-day, what's become of Belcour?

Lou. One of your servants called him out just now, and seemingly on some earnest occasion.

Stock. I hope, Miss Dudley, he has atoned to you as a gentleman ought?

Lou. Mr Belcour, sir, will always do what a gentleman ought—and, in my case, I fear only you will think he has done too much.

Stock. What has he done? and what can be too much? Pray, Heaven, it may be as I wish! [*Aside.*

Dud. Let us hear it, child?

Lou. With confusion for my own unworthiness, I confess to you he has offered me——

Stock. Himself?

Lou. 'Tis true.

Stock. Then, I am happy: all my doubts, my cares are over, and I may own him for my son. Why, these are joyful tidings: come, my good friend, assist me in disposing your lovely daughter to accept this returning prodigal: he is no unprincipled, no hardened libertine; his love for you and virtue is the same.

Dud. 'Twere vile ingratitude in me to doubt his merit—What says my child?

O'Fla. Begging your pardon now, 'tis a frivolous sort of a question, that of yours; for you may see plainly enough, by the young lady's looks, that she says a great deal, though she speaks never a word.

Cha. Well, sister, I believe the major has fairly interpreted the state of your heart.

Lou. I own it; and what must that heart be, which love, honour and benevolence, like Mr Belcour's, can make no impression on?

Stock. I thank you. What happiness has this hour brought to pass!

O'Fla. Why don't we all sit down to supper, then, and make a night on't?

Stock. Hold, here comes Belcour.

BELCOUR *introducing* MISS RUSPORT.

Bel. Mr Dudley, here is a fair refugee, who properly comes under your protection: she is equipt for Scotland; but your good fortune, which I have related to her, seems inclined to save you both the journey——Nay, madam, never go back; you are amongst friends.

Cha. Charlotte!

Char. The same; that fond officious girl, that haunts you every where; that persecuting spirit——

Cha. Say rather, that protecting angel: such you have been to me.

Char. O, Charles! you have an honest, but proud heart.

Cha. Nay, chide me not, dear Charlotte.

Bel. Seal up her lips, then; she is an adorable girl; her arms are open to you; and love and happiness are ready to receive you.

Cha. Thus, then, I claim my dear, my destined wife. [*Embracing her.*

Enter LADY RUSPORT.

Lady Rus. Hey-day! mighty fine! wife truly! mighty well! kissing, embracing——did ever any thing equal this? Why, you shameless hussy! But I won't condescend to waste a word upon you. You, sir, you, Mr Stockwell, you fine, sanctified, fair-dealing man of conscience, is this the principle you trade upon? Is this your neighbourly system, to keep a house of reception for run-away daughters, and young beggarly fortune-hunters?

O'Fla. Be advised now, and don't put yourself in such a passion; we were all very happy till you came.

Lady Rus. Stand away, sir! have not I a reason to be in a passion?

O'Fla. Indeed, honey, and you have, if you knew all.

Lady Rus. Come, madam, I have found out your haunts; dispose yourself to return home with me. Young man, let me never see you within my doors again. Mr Stockwell, I shall report your behaviour, depend upon it.

Stock. Hold, madam; I cannot consent to lose Miss Rusport's company this evening, and I am persuaded you won't insist upon it: 'tis an unmotherly action to interrupt your daughter's happiness in this manner; believe me it is.

Lady Rus. Her happiness, truly! upon my word! and I suppose 'tis an unmotherly action to interrupt her ruin; for, what but ruin must it be to marry a beggar? I think my sister had a proof of that, sir, when she made choice of you. [*To* CAPT. DUDLEY.

Dud. Don't be too lavish of your spirits, lady Rusport.

O'Fla. By my soul, you'll have occasion for a sip of the cordial elixir, by and by.

Stock. It don't appear to me, madam, that Mr Dudley can be called a beggar.

Lady Rus. But it appears to me, Mr Stockwell—I am apt to think a pair of colours cannot furnish settlement quite sufficient for the heiress of sir Stephen Rusport.

Char. But a good estate, in aid of a commission, may do something.

Lady Rus. A good estate, truly! where should he get a good estate, pray?

Stock. Why, suppose now a worthy old gentleman, on his death bed, should have taken it in mind to leave him one——

Lady Rus. Ha! what's that you say?

O'Fla. O ho! you begin to smell a plot, do you?

Stock. Suppose there should be a paper in the world that runs thus——'I do hereby give and 'bequeath all my estates, real and personal, to 'Charles Dudley, son of my late daughter, Lou-'isa,' &c. &c. &c.

Lady Rus. Why, I am thunderstruck! By what contrivance, what villainy, did you get possession of that paper?

Stock. There was no villainy, madam, in getting possession of it: the crime was in concealing it, none in bringing it to light.

Lady Rus. Oh, that cursed lawyer, Varland!

O'Fla. You may say that, faith! he is a cursed lawyer, and a cursed piece of work I had to get the paper from him. Your ladyship now was to have paid him five thousand pounds for it—I forced him to give it me of his own accord, for nothing at all, at all.

Lady Rus. Is it you that have done this? Am I foiled by your blundering contrivances, after all?

O'Fla. 'Twas a blunder, faith, but as natural a one as if I had made it o' purpose.

Cha. Come, let us not oppress the fallen; do right even now, and you shall have no cause to complain.

Lady Rus. Am I become an object of your pity, then? Insufferable! Confusion light amongst you! Marry and be wretched: let me never see you more. [*Exit.*

Char. She is outrageous; I suffer for her, and blush to see her thus exposed.

Cha. Come, Charlotte, don't let this angry woman disturb our happiness: we will save her in spite of herself; your father's memory shall not be stained by the discredit of his second choice.

Char. I trust implicitly to your discretion, and am in all things yours.

Bel. Now, lovely but obdurate, does not this example soften?

Lou. What can you ask for more? Accept my hand, accept my willing heart.

Bel. O bliss unutterable! brother, father, friend, and you, the author of this general joy—

O'Fla. Blessings of St Patrick upon us all! 'Tis a night of wonderful and surprising ups and downs: I wish we were all fairly set down to supper, and there was an end on't.

Stock. Hold for a moment! I have yet one word to interpose——Entitled, by my friendship, to a voice in your disposal, I have approved your match: there yet remains a father's consent to be obtained.

Bel. Have I a father!

Stock. You have a father: did not I tell you I had a discovery to make? Compose yourself: you have a father, who observes, who knows, who loves you.

Bel. Keep me no longer in suspense! my heart is softened for the affecting discovery, and nature fits me to receive his blessing.

Stock. I am your father.

Bel. My father! Do I live?

Stock. I am your father.

Bel. It is too much; my happiness overpowers me: to gain a friend, and find a father, is too much: I blush to think how little I deserve you.

[*They embrace.*

Dud. See, children, how many new relations spring from this night's unforeseen events, to endear us to each other.

O'Fla. O' my conscience, I think we shall be all related by and by.

Stock. How happily has this evening concluded, and yet how threatening was its approach! Let us repair to the supper-room, where I will unfold to you every circumstance of my mysterious story. Yes, Belcour, I have watched you with a patient, but inquiring eye; and I have discovered, through the veil of some irregularities, a heart beaming with benevolence, an animated nature, fallible, indeed, but not incorrigible; and your election of this excellent young lady makes me glory in acknowledging you to be my son.

Bel. I thank you—and, in my turn, glory in the father I have gained: sensibly impressed with gratitude for such extraordinary dispensations, I beseech you, amiable Louisa, for the time to come, whenever you perceive me deviating into error or offence, bring only to my mind the Providence of this night, and I will turn to reason, and obey.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER:

OR,

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT.

BY

GOLDSMITH.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR CHARLES MARLOW.
YOUNG MARLOW, *his son.*
HARDCASTLE, *an old country gentleman.*
HASTINGS, *friend to* YOUNG MARLOW.
TONY LUMPKIN, *a country booby.*
DIGGORY, *butler to* HARDCASTLE.

WOMEN.

MRS HARDCASTLE, *affecting the airs of fashion.*
MISS HARDCASTLE, *her daughter.*
MISS NEVILLE, *her niece, attached to* HASTINGS.
Maid.
Landlord, servants, &c.

Scene—An English county; chiefly MR HARDCASTLE'S *house.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.——*A chamber in an old-fashioned house.*

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE *and* MR HARDCASTLE

Mrs Hard. I vow, Mr Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country, but ourselves, that does not take a trip to town now and then, to rub off the rust a little! There's the two Miss Hoggs, and our neighbour, Mrs Grigsby, go to take a month's polishing every winter.

Hard. Ay, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us; but now, they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down, not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.

Mrs Hard. Ay, your times were fine times, indeed: you have been telling us of them for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling mansion, that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs Oddfish, the curate's wife and little Cripplegate, the lame dancing master; and all our entertainment your old stories of Prince Eugene and the duke of Marlborough. I hate such old-fashioned trumpery.

Hard. And I love it. I love every thing that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine; and, I believe, Dorothy, [*To-*

king her hand.] you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

Mrs Hard. Lord, Mr Hardcastle, you're for ever at your Dorothy's, and your old wife's. You may be a Darby, but I'll be no Joan, I promise you. I'm not so old as you'd make me by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that.

Hard. Let me see—twenty added to twenty, makes just fifty and seven.

Mrs Hard. Its false, Mr Hardcastle: I was but twenty when I was brought to bed of Tony, that I had by Mr Lumpkin, my first husband: and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

Hard. Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Ay, you have taught him finely.

Mrs Hard. No matter, Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year.

Hard. Learning, quotha! a mere composition of tricks and mischief.

Mrs Hard. Humour, my dear: nothing but humour. Come, Mr Hardcastle, you must allow the boy a little humour.

Hard. I'd sooner allow him an horse-pond. If burning the footmen's shoes, frighting the maids, worrying the kittens, be humour, he has it. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popt my bald head in Mrs Frizzle's face.

Mrs Hard. And am I to blame? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good. A school would be his death. When he comes to be a little stronger, who knows what a year or two's Latin may do for him?

Hard. Latin for him! A cat and a fiddle. No, no; the ale-house and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to.

Mrs Hard. Well, we must not snub the poor boy now, for I believe we shan't have him long among us. Any body that looks in his face may see he's consumptive.

Hard. Ay, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms.

Mrs Hard. He coughs sometimes.

Hard. Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way.

Mrs Hard. I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

Hard. And truly so am I; for he sometimes whoops like a speaking trumpet—[*Tony hallooing behind the scenes.*]—O there he goes!—A very consumptive figure, truly!

Enter TONY, *crossing the stage.*

Mrs Hard. Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give papa and I a little of your company, lovee?

Tony. I'm in haste, mother; I cannot stay.

Mrs Hard. You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear: You look most shockingly.

Tony. I can't stay, I tell you. The Three Pigeons expects me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

Hard. Ay—the ale-house, the old place: I thought so.

Mrs Hard. A low, paltry set of fellows.

Tony. Not so low neither. There's Dick Muggins, the exciseman, Jack Slang, the horse doctor, Little Aminadab, that grinds the music box, and Tom Twist, that spins the pewter platter.

Mrs Hard. Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least!

Tony. As for disappointing them, I should not so much mind; but I can't abide to disappoint myself.

Mrs Hard. [*Detaining him.*] You shan't go.

Tony. I will, I tell you.

Mrs Hard. I say, you shan't.

Tony. We'll see which is strongest, you or I. [*Exit, hawling her out.*

Hard. Ay, there goes a pair that only spoil each other. But is not the whole age in a combination to drive sense and discretion out of doors? There's my pretty darling Kate; the fashions of the times have almost infected her, too. By living a year or two in town, she is as fond of gauze, and French frippery, as the best of them.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE.

Blessings on my pretty innocence!—Drest out as usual, my Kate. Goodness! What a quantity of superfluous silk hast thou got about thee, girl! I could never teach the fools of this age, that the indigent world could be clothed out of the trimmings of the vain.

Miss Hard. You know our agreement, sir.—You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner; and, in the evening, I put on my housewife's dress to please you.

Hard. Well, remember, I insist on the terms of our agreement; and, by the by, I believe I shall have occasion to try your obedience this very evening.

Miss Hard. I protest, sir, I don't comprehend your meaning.

Hard. Then, to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman, I have chosen to be your husband, from town this very day. I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out, and that he intends to follow himself shortly after.

Miss Hard. Indeed! I wish I had known something of this before! Bless me, how shall I behave? It is a thousand to one I shan't like him; our meeting will be so formal, and so like a thing of business, that I shall find no room for friendship or esteem.

Hard. Depend upon it, child, I'll never controul your choice: but Mr Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend

Sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me talk so often. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar, and is designed for an employment in the service of his country. I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding.

Miss Hard. Is he?

Hard. Very generous.

Miss Hard. I believe I shall like him.

Hard. Young and brave.

Miss Hard. I'm sure I shall like him.

Hard. And very handsome.

Miss Hard. My dear papa, say no more [*kissing his hand.*]; he's mine, I'll have him.

Hard. And, to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world.

Miss Hard. Eh! you have frozen me to death again. That word, reserved, has undone all the rest of his accomplishments. A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband.

Hard. On the contrary, modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues. It was the very feature in his character that first struck me.

Miss Hard. He must have more striking features to catch me, I promise you. However, if he be so young, so handsome, and so every thing, as you mention, I believe he'll do still. I think I'll have him.

Hard. Ay, Kate, but there is still an obstacle. It's more than an even wager he may not have you.

Miss Hard. My dear papa, why will you mortify one so?—Well, if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at his indifference, I'll only break my glass for its flattery; set my cap to some newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer.

Hard. Bravely resolved! In the mean time, I'll go prepare the servants for his reception. As we seldom see company, they want as much training as a company of recruits, the first day's muster. [*Exit.*

Miss Hard. Lud! this news of papa's puts me all in a flutter. Young, handsome! these he put last; but I put them foremost. Sensible, good-natured; I like all that. But then reserved, and sheepish! that's much against him. Yet can't he be cured of his timidity, by being taught to be proud of his wife? Yes, and can't I—But I vow I'm disposing of the husband, before I have secured the lover.

Enter MISS NEVILLE.

I'm glad you're come, Neville, my dear. Tell me, Constance, how do I look this evening! Is there any thing whimsical about me? Is it one of my well looking days, child? Am I in face to day?

Miss Nev. Perfectly, my dear. Yet now I look again—bless me!—sure no accident has happened among the canary birds, or the gold fishes. Has your brother or the cat been meddling? Or has the last novel been too moving?

Miss Hard. No; nothing of all this. I have been threatened—I can scarce get it out—I have been threatened—with a lover.

Miss Nev. And his name——

Miss Hard. Is Marlow.

Miss Nev. Indeed!

Miss Hard. The son of sir Charles Marlow.

Miss Nev. As I live, the most intimate friend of Mr Hastings, my admirer! They are never asunder. I believe you must have seen him when we lived in town.

Miss Hard. Never.

Miss Nev. He's a very singular character, I assure you. Among women of reputation and virtue, he is the modestest man alive; but his acquaintance give him a very different character among creatures of another stamp: you understand me?

Miss Hard. An odd character, indeed! I shall never be able to manage him. What shall I do? Pshaw, think no more of him, but trust to occurrences for success. But how goes on your own affair, my dear? has my mother been courting you for my brother Tony, as usual?

Miss Nev. I have just come from one of our agreeable tete-a-tetes. She has been saying a hundred tender things, and setting off her pretty monster as the very pink of perfection.

Miss Hard. And her partiality is such, that she actually thinks him so. A fortune like yours is no small temptation. Besides, as she has the sole management of it, I'm not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family.

Miss Nev. A fortune like mine, which chiefly consists in jewels, is no such mighty temptation. But, at any rate, if my dear Hastings be but constant, I make no doubt to be too hard for her at last. However, I let her suppose that I am in love with her son, and she never once dreams that my affections are fixed upon another.

Miss Hard. My good brother holds out stoutly. I could almost love him for hating you so.

Miss Nev. It is a good natured creature at bottom, and I'm sure would wish to see me married to any body but himself. But my aunt's bell rings for our afternoon's walk round the improvements. Allons! Courage is necessary, as our affairs are critical.

Miss Hard. Would it were bed time, and all were well! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An alehouse room.*

Several shabby fellows, with punch and tobacco. TONY *at the head of the table, a little higher than the rest: A mallet in his hand.*

Omnes. Hurrea, hurrea, hurrea! bravo!

1*st Fel.* Now, gentlemen, silence for a song.

The 'Squire is going to knock himself down for a song.

Omnes. Ay, a song, a song!

Tony. Then I'll sing you, gentlemen, a song I made upon this ale-house, the Three Pigeons.

SONG.

Let school-masters puzzle their brain,
With grammar, and nonsense, and learning;
Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,
Gives Genius a better discerning.
Let them brag of their Heathenish Gods,
Their Lethes, their Styxes, and Stygians:
Their Quis, and their Quas, and their Quods,
They're all but a parcel of Pigeons.
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

When Methodist preachers come down,
A preaching that drinking is sinful,
I'll wager the rascals a crown,
They always preach best with a skinful.
But when you come down with your pence,
For a slice of their scurvy religion,
I'll leave it to all men of sense,
But you my good friends are the Pigeon.
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

Then come, put the jorum about,
And let us be merry and clever,
Our hearts and our liquors are stout,
Here's the Three Jolly Pigeons for ever!
Let some cry up woodcock or hare,
Your bustards, your ducks, and your widgeons;
But of all the birds in the air,
Here's a health to the Three Jolly Pigeons!
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

Omnes. Bravo, bravo!

1st Fel. The 'Squire has got spunk in him.

2d Fel. I loves to hear him sing, bekeays he never gives us nothing that's low.

3d Fel. O, damn any thing that's low! I cannot bear it.

4th Fel. The genteel thing is the genteel thing at any time. If so be that a gentleman bees in a comcatenation accordingly.

3d Fel. I like the maxum of it, Master Muggins. What though I am obligated to dance a bear, a man may be a gentleman for all that. May this be my poison, if my bear ever dances but to the very genteelest of tunes! Water Parted, or the minuet in Ariadne.

2d Fel. What a pity it is the 'squire is not come to his own! It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him.

Tony. Ecod, and so it would, Master Slang. I'd then shew what it was to keep choice of company.

2d Fel. O he takes after his own father for that. To be sure, old 'squire Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on. For winding the streight horn, or beating a thicket for a hare, or a wench, he never had his fellow. It was a saying in the place, that he kept the best horses, dogs, and girls, in the whole county.

Tony. Ecod, and when I'm of age, I'll be no bastard, I promise you. I have been thinking of Bett Bouncer and the miller's grey mare to begin with. But come, my boys, drink about and be merry, for you pay no reckoning. Well Stingo, what's the matter?

Enter Landlord.

Land. There be two gentlemen in a post-chaise at the door. They have lost their way upon the forest; and they are talking something about Mr Hardcastle.

Tony. As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister. Do they seem to be Londoners?

Land. I believe they may. They look woundily like Frenchmen.

Tony. Then desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling. [*Exit Landlord.*] Gentlemen, as they may'nt be good enough company for you, step down for a moment, and I'll be with you in the squeezing of a lemon.

[*Exeunt Mob.*

Father-in-law has been calling me whelp, and hound, this half year. Now, if I pleased, I could be so revenged upon the old grumbletonian! But, then, I'm afraid—afraid of what! I shall soon be worth fifteen hundred a-year, and let him frighten me out of that, if he can.

Enter LANDLORD, *conducting* MARLOW *and* HASTINGS.

Mar. What a tedious uncomfortable day have we had of it! We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come above threescore.

Hast. And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of yours, that would not let us inquire more frequently on the way.

Mar. I own, Hastings, I am unwilling to lay myself under an obligation to every one I meet; and often stand the chance of an unmannerly answer.

Hast. At present, however, we are not likely to receive any answer.

Tony. No offence, gentlemen. But I'm told you have been inquiring for one Mr Hardcastle, in these parts. Do you know what part of the country you are in?

Hast. Not in the least, sir; but should thank you for information.

Tony. Nor the way you came?

Hast. No, sir; but if you can inform us——

Tony. Why, gentlemen, if you know neither the road you are going, nor where you are, nor

the road you came, the first thing I have to inform you is, that—You have lost your way.

Mar. We wanted no ghost to tell us that!

Tony. Pray, gentlemen, may I be so bold as to ask the place from whence you came?

Mar. That's not necessary towards directing us where we are to go.

Tony. No offence: but question for question is all fair, you know. Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardcastle a cross-grained, old fashioned, whimsical fellow, with an ugly face, a daughter, and a pretty son?

Hast. We have not seen the gentleman, but he has the family you mention.

Tony. The daughter, a tall trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole———The son, a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that every body is fond of.

Mar. Our information differs in this. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful; the son, an awkward booby, reared up, and spoiled at his mother's apron-string.

Tony. He-he-hem——Then, gentlemen, all I have to tell you is, that you won't reach Mr Hardcastle's house this night, I believe.

Hast. Unfortunate!

Tony. It's a damned long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way. Stingo, tell the gentlemen the way to Mr Hardcastle's;—[*Winking upon the landlord.*] Mr Hardcastle's, of Quagmire Marsh; you understand me?

Land. Master Hardcastle's! Lock-a-daisy, my masters, you're come a deadly deal wrong! When you came to the bottom of the hill, you should have crossed down Squash-lane.

Mar. Cross down Squash-lane!

Land. Then you were to keep straight forward, 'till you came to four roads.

Mar. Come to where four roads meet!

Tony. Ay; but you must be sure to take only one of them.

Mar. O sir, you're facetious.

Tony. Then keeping to the right, you are to go sideways till you come upon Crack-skull common: there you must look sharp for the track of the wheel, and go forward, till you come to farmer Murrain's barn. Coming to the farmer's barn, you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill———

Mar. Zounds, man! we could as soon find out the longitude!

Hast. What's to be done, Marlow?

Mar. This house promises but a poor reception; though, perhaps, the landlord can accommodate us.

Land. Alack, master, we have but one spare bed in the whole house.

Tony. And, to my knowledge, that's taken up by three lodgers already. [*After a pause, in which the rest seem disconcerted.*] I have hit it. Don't you think, Stingo, our landlady could accommodate the gentlemen by the fireside, with——three chairs and a bolster?

Hast. I hate sleeping by the fireside.

Mar. And I detest your three chairs and a bolster.

Tony. You do, do you?—then let me see—what—if you go on a mile further, to the Buck's Head; the old Buck's Head on the hill, one of the best inns in the whole country?

Hast. O ho! so we have escaped an adventure for this night, however.

Land. [*Apart to Tony.*] Sure, you be'nt sending them to your father's as an inn, be you?

Tony. Mum, you fool you! Let them find that out. [*To them.*] You have only to keep on streight forward, till you come to a large old house by the road side. You'll see a pair of large horns over the door. That's the sign. Drive up the yard, and call stoutly about you.

Hast. Sir, we are obliged to you. The servants can't miss the way?

Tony. No, no: But I tell you, though, the landlord is rich, and going to leave off business; so he wants to be thought a gentleman, saving your presence, he, he, he! He'll be for giving you his company, and, ecod, if you mind him, he'll persuade you that his mother was an alderman, and his aunt a justice of peace!

Land. A troublesome old blade, to be sure; but a keeps as good wines and beds as any in the whole country.

Mar. Well, if he supplies us with these, we shall want no further connexion. We are to turn to the right, did you say?

Tony. No, no; straight forward. I'll just step myself, and shew you a piece of the way. [*To the landlord.*] Mum!

Land. Ah, bless your heart, for a sweet, pleasant—damned mischievous son of a whore!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An old fashioned house.*

Enter HARDCASTLE, *followed by three or four awkward servants.*

Hard. WELL, I hope you're perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your places, and can shew that you have been used to good company, without stirring from home.

Omnes. Ay, ay!

Hard. When company comes, you are not to pop out and stare, and then run in again, like frighted rabbits in a warren.

Omnes. No, no.

Hard. You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a shew at the side table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind my chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger; and from your head, you blockhead you! They're a little too stiff, indeed; but that's no great matter.

Dig. Ay, mind how I hold them! I learned to hold my hands this way, when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill—

Hard. You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us talk, and not think of talking; you must see us drink, and not think of drinking; you must see us eat, and not think of eating!

Dig. By the laws, your worship, that's perfectly unpossible. Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forwards, ecod, he's always for wishing for a mouthful himself!

Hard. Blockhead! is not a belly-full in the kitchen as good as a belly-full in the parlour? stay your stomach with that reflection!

Dig. Ecod, I thank your worship; I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry!

Hard. Diggory, you are too talkative. Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a laughing, as if you made part of the company.

Dig. Then, ecod, your worship must not tell the story of Ould Grouse in the gun-room: I can't help laughing at that—he, he, he!—for the soul of me! We have laughed at that these twenty years—ha, ha, ha!

Hard. Ha, ha, ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that—but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? A glass of wine, sir, if you please. [*To Diggory.*]—Eh, why don't you move?

Dig. Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I'm as bauld as a lion.

Hard. What! will no body move?

1*st Ser.* I'm not to leave this place.

2*d Ser.* I'm sure its no pleace of mine.

3*d Ser.* Nor mine, for sartain.

Dig. Wauns, and I'm sure it canna be mine.

Hard. You numskulls! and so, while, like your betters, you are quarrelling for places, the guests must be starved? O you dunces! I find I must begin all over again.——But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard? To your posts, you blockheads! I'll go, in the mean time, and give my old friend's son a hearty welcome at the gate.

[*Exit* HARDCASTLE.

Dig. By the elevens, my place is gone quite out of my head!

Roger. I know that my place is to be every where.

1*st Ser.* Where the devil is mine?

2*d Ser.* My pleace is to be no where at all; and so Ize go about my business.

[*Exeunt Servants, running about as if frighted, different ways.*

Enter Servant with candles, shewing in MARLOW *and* HASTINGS.

Ser. Welcome, gentlemen, very welcome! This way.

Hast. After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire. Upon my word, a very well looking house! antique, but creditable.

Mar. The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn.

Hast. As you say, we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good sideboard, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, enflame the reckoning confoundedly.

Mar. Travellers, George, must pay in all places. The only difference is, that in good inns, you pay dearly for luxuries; in bad inns, you are fleeced and starved.

Hast. You have lived pretty much among them. In truth, I have been often surprised, that you, who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense, and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance.

Mar. The Englishman's malady. But tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talk of? My life has been chiefly spent in a college, or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence. I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted with a single modest woman—

except my mother—But, among females of another class, you know—

Hast. Ay: among them you are impudent enough of all conscience.

Mar. They are of us, you know.

Hast. But, in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler; you look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room.

Mar. Why, man, that's because I do want to steal out of the room. Faith, I have often formed a resolution to break the ice, and rattle away at any rate. But, I don't know how, a single glance from a pair of fine eyes has totally overset my resolution. An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I'll be hanged if a modest man can ever counterfeit impudence.

Hast. If you could but say half the fine things to them that I have heard you lavish upon the bar-maid of an inn, or even a college bed-maker—

Mar. Why, George, I can't say fine things to them. They freeze, they petrify me. They may talk of a comet, or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle. But, to me, a modest woman, drest out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation!

Hast. Ha, ha, ha! At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry?

Mar. Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If, indeed, like an eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grand-mothers and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad staring-question, of, madam, will you marry me? No, no; that's a strain much above me, I assure you.

Hast. I pity you. But how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

Mar. As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low. Answer yes, or no, to all her demands—But, for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face, till I see my father's again.

Hast. I'm surprised, that one, who is so warm a friend, can be so cool a lover.

Mar. To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you; the family don't know you; as my friend, you are sure of a reception, and let honour do the rest,

Hast. My dear Marlow! But I'll suppress the emotion. Were I a wretch, meanly seeking to carry off a fortune, you should be the last man in the world I would apply to for assistance. But Miss Neville's person is all I ask, and that is mine, both from her deceased father's consent, and her own inclination.

Mar. Happy man! You have talents and art to captivate any woman. I'm doomed to adore the sex, and yet to converse with the only part of it I despise. This stammer in my address, and this awkward prepossessing visage of mine, can never permit me to soar above the reach of a milliner's 'prentice, or one of the dutchesses of Drury-lane. Pshaw! this fellow here to interrupt us.

Enter HARDCASTLE.

Hard. Gentlemen, once more you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr Marlow? Sir, you're heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire. I like to give them a hearty reception, in the old style, at my gate. I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

Mar. [*Aside.*] He has got our names from the servants already.—[*To him.*] We approve your caution and hospitality, sir.—[*To* HASTINGS.] I have been thinking, George, of changing our travelling dresses in the morning; I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.

Hard. I beg, Mr Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house.

Hast. I fancy, George, you're right: the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with the white and gold.

Hard. Mr Marlow—Mr Hastings—gentlemen—pray be under no restraint in this house. This is Liberty-hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please here.

Mar. Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat.

Hard. Your talking of a retreat, Mr Marlow, puts me in mind of the duke of Marlborough, when he went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison—

Mar. Don't you think the *ventre dor* waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

Hard. He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men——

Hast. I think not: Brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

Hard. I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men—

Mar. The girls like finery.

Hard. Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. Now, says the duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him——You must have heard of George Brooks?—I'll pawn my dukedom, says he, but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood. So——

Mar. What, my good friend, if you give us a glass of punch in the mean time? it would help us to carry on the siege with vigour.

Hard. Punch, sir! [*Aside.*] This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with!

Mar. Yes, sir, punch. A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable. This is Liberty-hall, you know.

Hard. Here's cup, sir.

Mar. [*Aside.*] So this fellow, in his Liberty-hall, will only let us have just what he pleases.

Hard. [*Taking the cup.*] I hope you'll find it to your mind. I have prepared it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir? Here, Mr Marlow, here is to our better acquaintance! [*Drinks.*

Mar. [*Aside.*] A very impudent fellow this! but he's a character, and I'll humour him a little. Sir, my service to you. [*Drinks.*

Hast. [*Aside.*] I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he's an innkeeper, before he has learned to be a gentleman.

Mar. From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country? Warm work, now and then, at elections, I suppose?

Hard. No, sir, I have long given that work over. Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there's no business for us that sell ale.

Hast. So, then, you have no turn for politics, I find?

Hard. Not in the least. There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself. Since that, I no more trouble my head about Heyder Alley, or Ally Cawn, than about Ally Croaker. Sir, my service to you. [*Drinks.*

Hast. So that, with eating above stairs, and drinking below, with receiving your friends within, and amusing them without, you lead a good pleasant bustling life of it.

Hard. I do stir about a good deal, that's certain. Half the differences of the parish are adjusted in this very parlour.

Mar. [*After drinking.*] And you have an argument in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in Westminster-hall.

Hard. Ay, young gentleman, that, and a little philosophy.

Mar. [*Aside.*] Well, this is the first time I ever heard of an innkeeper's philosophy.

Hast. So then, like an experienced general, you attack them on every quarter. If you find their reasons unanswerable, you attack it with your philosophy; if you find they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's your health, my philosopher! [*Drinks.*

Hard. Good, very good, thank you; ha, ha! Your generalship puts me in mind of Prince Eugene, when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade. You shall hear.

Mar. Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I think it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your philosophy got in the house for supper?

Hard. For supper, sir!—[*Aside.*] Was ever such a request to a man in his own house!

Mar. Yes, sir, supper, sir; I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make devilish work to-night in the larder, I promise you.

Hard. [*Aside.*] Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes beheld!—[*To him.*] Why, really, sir, as for supper, I can't well tell. My Dorothy and the cook-maid settle these things between them. I leave these kind of things entirely to them.

Mar. You do, do you?

Hard. Entirely. By the by, I believe they are in actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment in the kitchen.

Mar. Then I beg they'll admit me as one of their privy council. It's a way I have got. When I travel, I always chuse to regulate my own supper. Let the cook be called. No offence, I hope, sir?

Hard. O no, sir; none in the least; yet I don't know how, our Bridget, the cook-maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house.

Hast. Let's see the list of the larder, then. I ask it as a favour. I always match my appetite to my bill of fare.

Mar. [*To* HARDCASTLE, *who looks at them with surprise.*] Sir, he's very right, and it's my way, too.

Hard. Sir, you have a right to command here. Here, Roger, bring us the bill of fare for to-night's supper. I believe it's drawn out. Your manner, Mr Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, colonel Wallop. It was a saying of his, that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it.

Hast. [*Aside.*] All upon the high ropes! His uncle a colonel! we shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of peace. But let's hear the bill of fare.

Mar. [*Perusing.*] What's here? For the first course; for the second course; for the dessert. The devil, sir! do you think we have brought down the whole joiners' company, or the corporation of Bedford, to eat up such a supper? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do.

Hast. But, let's hear it.

Mar. [*Reading.*] For the first course at the top, a pig and prune sauce.

Hast. Damn your pig, I say!

Mar. And damn your prune sauce, say I!

Hard. And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig, with prune sauce, is very good eating.

Mar. At the bottom, a calve's tongue and brains.

Hast. Let your brains be knocked out, my good sir; I don't like them.

Mar. Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves. I do.

Hard. [*Aside.*] Their impudence confounds me!—[*To them.*] Gentlemen, you are my guests; make what alterations you please. Is there any thing else you wish to retrench or alter, gentlemen?

Mar. Item, a pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine, a shaking pudding, and a dish of tiff—taff—taffety cream!

Hast. Confound your made dishes! I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at the French ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating.

Hard. I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like; but if there be any thing you have a particular fancy to——

Mar. Why, really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite, that any one part of it is full as good as another. Send us what you please. So much for supper. And now to see that our beds are aired, and properly taken care of.

Hard. I entreat you'll leave all that to me. You shall not stir a step.

Mar. Leave that to you! I protest, sir, you must excuse me; I always look to these things myself.

Hard. I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head.

Mar. You see I'm resolved on it.—[*Aside.*] A very troublesome fellow this, as ever I met with

Hard. Well, sir, I'm resolved, at least, to attend you.—[*Aside.*] This may be modern modesty, but I never saw any thing look so like old-fashioned impudence.

[*Exeunt* MARLOW *and* HARDCASTLE.

Hast. So I find this fellow's civilities begin to grow troublesome. But who can be angry at those assiduities which are meant to please him? Ha! what do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

Enter MISS NEVILLE.

Miss Nev. My dear Hastings! To what unexpected good fortune, to what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting?

Hast. Rather let me ask the same question, as I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn.

Miss Nev. An inn! sure you mistake! my aunt, my guardian, lives here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?

Hast. My friend, Mr Marlow, with whom I came down, and I, have been sent here, as to an inn, I assure you. A young fellow, whom we accidentally met at a house hard by, directed us hither.

Miss Nev. Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks, of whom you have heard me talk so often; ha, ha, ha, ha!

Hast. He whom your aunt intends for you? He, of whom I have such just apprehensions?

Miss Nev. You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you. You'd adore him, if you knew how heartily he despises me. My aunt knows it too, and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to think she has made a conquest.

Hast. Thou dear dissembler! You must know, my Constance, I have just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here, to get admittance into the family. The horses that carried us down are now fatigued with the journey, but they'll soon be refreshed; and then, if my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall soon be landed in France, where, even among slaves, the laws of marriage are respected.

Miss Nev. I have often told you, that, though ready to obey you, I yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance. The greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the India director, and chiefly consists in jewels. I have been for some time persuading my aunt to let me wear them. I fancy I'm very near succeeding. The instant they are put into my possession you shall find me ready to make them and myself yours.

Hast. Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire. In the mean time, my friend Marlow must not be let into his mistake. I know the strange reserve of his temper is such, that, if abruptly informed of it, he would instantly quit the house before our plan was ripe for execution.

Miss Nev. But how shall we keep him in the deception! Miss Hardcastle is just returned from walking; what if we still continue to deceive him?———This, this way———

[*They confer.*

Enter MARLOW.

Mar. The assiduities of these good people tease me beyond bearing! My host seems to think it ill manners to leave me alone, and so he claps not only himself, but his old-fashioned wife on my back. They talk of coming to sup with us, too; and then, I suppose, we are to run the gauntlet through all the rest of the family—What have we got here?

Hast. My dear Charles! Let me congratulate you—The most fortunate accident!—Who do you think is just alighted?

Mar. Cannot guess.

Hast. Our mistresses, boy; Miss Hardcastle, and Miss Neville! Give me leave to introduce Miss Constance Neville to your acquaintance. Happening to dine in the neighbourhood, they called, on their return, to take fresh horses here.—— Miss Hardcastle has just stepped into the next

room, and will be back in an instant. Wasn't it lucky? eh?

Mar. [*Aside.*] I have just been mortified enough of all conscience, and here comes something to complete my embarrassment.

Hast. Well! but was not it the most fortunate thing in the world?

Mar. Oh! yes. Very fortunate—a most joyful encounter!———But our dresses, George, you know, are in disorder———What if we should postpone the happiness till to-morrow?—To-morrow, at her own house——It will be every bit as convenient———And rather more respectful———To-morrow let it be. [*Offering to go.*

Miss Nev. By no means, sir! Your ceremony will displease her. The disorder of your dress will shew the ardour of your impatience.—Besides, she knows you are in the house, and will permit you to see her.

Mar. O! the devil! How shall I support it? Hem! hem! Hastings, you must not go. You are to assist me, you know. I shall be confoundedly ridiculous. Yet, hang it! I'll take courage. Hem!

Hast. Pshaw, man! it's but the first plunge, and all is over. She's but a woman, you know.

Mar. And of all women, she that I dread most to encounter!

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE *as returning from walking, a bonnet, &c.*

Hast. [*Introducing them.*] Miss Hardcastle, Mr Marlow. I am proud of bringing two persons of such merit together, that only want to know, to esteem each other.

Miss Hard. [*Aside.*] Now, for meeting my modest gentleman with a demure face, and quite in his own manner. [*After a pause, in which he appears very uneasy and disconcerted.*] I am glad of your safe arrival, sir———I am told you had some accidents by the way.

Mar. Only a few, madam. Yes, we had some. Yes, madam, a good many accidents, but should be sorry—madam—or rather glad of any accidents—that are so agreeably concluded.—Hem!

Hast. [*To him.*] You never spoke better in your whole life. Keep it up, and I'll insure you the victory.

Miss Hard. I'm afraid you flatter, sir. You, that have seen so much of the finest company, can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country.

Mar. [*Gathering courage.*] I have lived, indeed, in the world, madam; but I have kept very little company. I have been but an observer upon life, madam, while others were enjoying it.

Miss Nev. But that, I am told, is the way to enjoy it at last.

Hast. [*To him.*] Cicero never spoke better.—Once more, and you are confirmed in assurance for ever.

Mar. [*To him.*] Hem! Stand by me, then, and when I'm down, throw in a word or two to set me up again.

Miss Hard. An observer, like you, upon life, were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure, than to approve.

Mar. Pardon me, madam! I was always willing to be amused. The folly of most people is rather an object of mirth than uneasiness.

Hast. [*To him.*] Bravo, Bravo! Never spoke so well in your whole life. Well, Miss Hardcastle, I see that you and Mr Marlow are going to be very good company. I believe our being here will but embarrass the interview.

Mar. Not in the least, Mr Hastings. We like your company of all things. [*To him.*] Zounds! George, sure you won't go! How can you leave us?

Hast. Our presence will but spoil conversation; so we'll retire to the next room. [*To him.*] You don't consider, man, that we are to manage a little tete-a-tete of our own. [*Exeunt.*

Miss Hard. [*After a pause.*] But you have not been wholly an observer, I presume, sir? The ladies, I should hope, have employed some part of your addresses.

Mar. [*Relapsing into timidity.*] Pardon me, madam, I—I—I—as yet have studied—only—to—deserve them.

Miss Hard. And that, some say, is the very worst way to obtain them.

Mar. Perhaps so, madam. But I love to converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex——But I'm afraid I grow tiresome.

Miss Hard. Not at all, sir; there is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself; I could hear it for ever. Indeed, I have often been surprised how a man of sentiment could ever admire those light airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart.

Mar. It's——a disease———of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes, there must be some who, wanting a relish——for———um—a—um.

Miss Hard. I understand you, sir. There must be some who, wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting.

Mar. My meaning, madam; but infinitely better expressed. And I can't help observing——a———

Miss Hard. [*Aside.*] Who could ever suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions? [*To him.*] You were going to observe, sir———

Mar. I was observing, madam———I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe.

Miss Hard. [*Aside.*] I vow, and so do I. [*To*

him.] You were observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy—something about hypocrisy, sir.

Mar. Yes, madam. In this age of hypocrisy, there are few, who, upon strict enquiry, do not—a—a—a———

Miss Hard. I understand you perfectly, sir.

Mar. [*Aside.*] Egad! and that's more than I do myself.

Miss Hard. You mean, that in this hypocritical age, there are few that do not condemn in public what they use in private, and think they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it.

Mar. True, madam; those who have most virtue in their mouths, have least of it in their bosoms. But I'm sure I tire you, madam.

Miss Hard. Not in the least, sir; there is something so agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force—Pray, sir, go on.

Mar. Yes, madam. I was saying———that there are some occasions——when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the———and puts us——upon a———a———a———

Miss Hard. I agree with you entirely. A want of courage, upon some occasions, assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most wish to excel. I beg you'll proceed.

Mar. Yes, madam. Morally speaking, madam———But I see Miss Neville expecting us in the next room. I would not intrude for the world.

Miss Hard. I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably entertained in all my life. Pray, go on.

Mar. Yes, madam. I was—But she beckons us to join her. Madam, shall I do myself the honour to attend you?

Miss Hard. Well, then, I'll follow.

Mar. [*Aside.*] This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me. [*Exit.*

Miss Hard. Ha! ha! ha! Was there ever such a sober sentimental interview? I am certain he scarce looked in my face the whole time. Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is pretty well, too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears, that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service. But who is that somebody? that, faith, is a question I can scarce answer. [*Exit.*

Enter TONY *and* MISS NEVILLE, *followed by* MISS HARDCASTLE *and* HASTINGS.

Tony. What do you follow me for, cousin Con? I wonder you're not ashamed to be so very engaging.

Miss Nev. I hope, cousin, one may speak to one's own relations, and not be to blame.

Tony. Ay, but I know what sort of a relation you want to make me though; but it won't do. I tell you, cousin Con, it won't do; so I beg you'll keep your distance; I want no nearer relationship.

[*She follows, coquetting him to the back scene.*]

Mrs Hard. Well! I vow, Mr Hastings, you are very entertaining. There's nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London, and the fashions, though I was never there myself.

Hast. Never there! You amaze me! From your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranelagh, St James's, or Tower Wharf.

Mrs Hard. O, sir! you're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. I'm in love with the town, and that serves to raise me above some of our neighbouring rustics: but who can have a manner that has never seen the Pantheon, the Grotto Gardens, the Borough, and such places where the nobility chiefly resort? All I can do, is to enjoy London at second-hand. I take care to know every tete-a-tete from the Scandalous Magazine, and have all the fashions, as they come out, in a letter from the two Miss Rickets of Crooked-lane Pray, how do you like this head, Mr Hastings?

Hast. Extremely elegant and degagée, upon my word, madam! Your friseur is a Frenchman, I suppose?

Mrs Hard. I protest I dressed it myself from a print in the ladies' memorandum book for the last year.

Hast. Indeed! Such a head in a side box, at the play-house, would draw as many gazers as my lady Mayoress at a city-ball.

Mrs Hard. I vow, since inoculation began, there is no such thing to be seen as a plain woman; so one must dress a little particular, or one may escape in the crowd.

Hast. But that can never be your case, madam, in any dress. [*Bowing.*

Mrs Hard. Yet, what signifies my dressing, when I have such a piece of antiquity by my side as Mr Hardcastle? all I can say will not argue down a single button from his clothes. I have often wanted him to throw off his great flaxen wig, and where he was bauld, to plaster it over, like my lord Pately, with powder.

Hast. You are right, madam; for, as among the ladies, there are none ugly, so, among the men, there are none old.

Mrs Hard. But what do you think his answer was? Why, with his usual Gothic vivacity, he said I only wanted to throw off his wig to convert it into a tete for my own wearing.

Hast. Intolerable! At your age, you may wear what you please, and it must become you.

Mrs Hard. Pray, Mr Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town?

Hast. Some time ago, forty was all the mode; but I am told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.

Mrs Hard. Seriously? Then, I shall be too young for the fashion.

Hast. No lady begins now to put on jewels till she is past forty. For instance, Miss, there, in a polite circle, would be considered as a child, a mere maker of samplers.

Mrs Hard. And yet Mrs Niece thinks herself as much a woman, and is as fond of jewels, as the oldest of us all.

Hast. Your niece is she? And that young gentleman, a brother of yours, I should presume?

Mrs Hard. My son, sir! They are contracted to each other. Observe their little sports. They fall in and out ten times a day, as if they were man and wife already. [*To them.*] Well, Tony, child, what soft things are you saying to your cousin Constance this evening?

Tony. I have been saying no soft things; but that it's very hard to be followed about so.——Ecod! I've not a place in the house now, that is left to myself, but the stable.

Mrs Hard. Never mind him, Con, my dear.—He's in another story behind your back.

Miss Nev. There's something generous in my cousin's manner. He falls out before faces to be forgiven in private.

Tony. That's a damned confounded——— crack.

Mrs Hard. Ah, he's a sly one! Don't you think they're like each other about the mouth, Mr Hastings? The Blenkinsop mouth, to a T.—They are of a size, too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr Hastings may see you. Come, Tony.

Tony. You had as good not make me, I tell you. [*Measuring.*

Miss Nev. O, lud! he has almost cracked my head.

Mrs Hard. O, the monster! For shame, Tony! You a man, and behave so!

Tony. If I am a man, let me have my fortin. Ecod! I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

Mrs Hard. Is this, ungrateful boy, all that I am to get for the pains I have taken in your education? I, that have rocked you in your cradle, and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon! Did not I work that waistcoat to make you genteel? Did not I prescribe for you every day, and weep while the receipt was operating?

Tony. Ecod! you had reason to weep, for you have been dozing me ever since I was born. I have gone through every recipe in the Complete Huswife ten times over; and you have thoughts of coursing me through Quincy next spring.——But, ecod! I tell you, I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

Mrs Hard. Was not it all for your good, viper? Was not it all for your good?

Tony. I wish you would let me and my good alone, then. Snubbing this way when I am in spirits! If I am to have any good, let it come of itself; not to keep dinging it, dinging it into one so!

Mrs Hard. That's false; I never see you when you are in spirits. No, Tony, you then go to the ale-house or kennel. I am never to be delighted with your agreeable, wild notes, unfeeling monster!

Tony. Ecod! mamma, your own notes are the wildest of the two.

Miss Hard. Was ever the like? But I see he wants to break my heart; I see he does.

Hast. Dear madam, permit me to lecture the young gentleman a little. I am certain I can persuade him to his duty.

Mrs Hard. Well! I must retire.——Come, Constance, my love. You see, Mr Hastings, the wretchedness of my situation! Was ever poor woman so plagued with a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, undutiful boy.

[*Exeunt* MRS HARDCASTLE *and* MISS NEVILLE.

Tony. [*Singing.*]

There was a young man riding by,
And fain would have his will.
Rang do didlo dee.

Don't mind her. Let her cry. It's the comfort of her heart. I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an hour together; and they said they liked the book the better the more it made them cry.

Hast. Then, you're no friend to the ladies, I find, my pretty young gentleman?

Tony. That's as I find 'um.

Hast. Not to her of your mother's choosing, I dare answer? And yet she appears to me a pretty well-tempered girl.

Tony. That is because you don't know her as well as I. Ecod! I know every inch about her; and there's not a more bitter cantankerous toad in all Christendom.

Hast. [*Aside.*] Pretty encouragement this for a lover!

Tony. I have seen her since the height of that! She has as many tricks as a hare in a thicket, or a colt the first day's breaking.

Hast. To me she appears sensible and silent.

Tony. Ay, before company. But when she's with her play-mates, she's as loud as a hog in a gate.

Hast. But there is a meek modesty about her that charms me.

Tony. Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up, and you're flung in a ditch.

Hast. Well, but you must allow her a little beauty—Yes, you must allow her some beauty.

Tony. Bandbox! She's all a made up thing, mum. Ah! could you but see Bet Bouncer of these parts, you might then talk of beauty. Ecod, she has two eyes as black as sloes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion! She'd make two of she.

Hast. Well, what say you to a friend that would take this bitter bargain off your hands?

Tony. Anan?

Hast. Would you thank him that would take Miss Neville, and leave you to happiness and your dear Betsy?

Tony. Ay; but where is there such a friend, for who would take her?

Hast. I am he. If you but assist me, I'll engage to whip her off to France, and you shall never hear more of her.

Tony. Assist you! Ecod I will, to the last drop of my blood. I'll clap a pair of horses to your chaise that shall trundle you off in a twinkling, and may be get you a part of her fortin beside, in jewels, that you little dream of.

Hast. My dear 'squire, this looks like a lad of spirit.

Tony. Come along, then, and you shall see more of my spirit before you have done with me. [*Singing.*

We are the boys
That fears no noise,
Where the thundering cannons roar!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter HARDCASTLE.

Hard. WHAT could my old friend, sir Charles, mean, by recommending his son as the modestest young man in town? To me he appears the most impudent piece of brass, that ever spoke with a tongue. He has taken possession of the easy chair by the fire-side already. He took off his boots in the parlour, and desired me to see them taken care of. I'm desirous to know how his impudence affects my daughter—She will certainly be shocked at it.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE, *plainly dressed.*

Well, my Kate, I see you have changed your dress as I bid you; and yet, I believe, there was no great occasion.

Miss Hard. I find such a pleasure, sir, in obeying your commands, that I take care to observe them without ever debating their propriety.

Hard. And yet, Kate, I sometimes give you some cause, particularly when I recommended my modest gentleman to you as a lover to-day.

Miss Hard. You taught me to expect something extraordinary, and I find the original exceeds the description.

Hard. I was never so surprised in my life! He has quite confounded all my faculties!

Miss Hard. I never saw any thing like it:—And a man of the world, too!

Hard. Ay, he learned it all abroad—what a fool was I, to think a young man could learn modesty by travelling! He might as soon learn wit at a masquerade.

Miss Hard. It seems all natural to him.

Hard. A good deal assisted by bad company, and a French dancing-master.

Miss Hard. Sure you mistake, papa! a French dancing-master could never have taught him that timid look—that awkward address—that bashful manner——

Hard. Whose look? whose manner, child?

Miss Hard. Mr Marlow's: his mauvaise honte, his timidity struck me at the first sight.

Hard. Then your first sight deceived you; for I think him one of the most brazen first sights that ever astonished my senses.

Miss Hard. Sure, sir, you rally? I never saw any one so modest.

Hard. And can you be serious! I never saw such a bouncing, swaggering puppy since I was born. Bully Dawson was but a fool to him.

Miss Hard. Surprising! He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

Hard. He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze again!

Miss Hard. He treated me with diffidence and respect—censured the manners of the age—admired the prudence of girls that never laughed—tired me with apologies for being tiresome—then left the room with a bow, and, madam, I would not for the world detain you.

Hard. He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before. Asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer. Interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun, and when I was in my best story of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, he asked if I had not a good hand at making punch. Yes, Kate, he asked your father if he was a maker of punch!

Miss Hard. One of us must certainly be mistaken.

Hard. If he be what he has shewn himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent.

Miss Hard. And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine.

Hard. In one thing, then, we are agreed—to reject him.

Miss Hard. Yes. But upon conditions. For if you should find him less impudent, and I more presuming—if you find him more respectful, and I more importunate——I don't know——the fellow is well enough for a man—Certainly we don't meet many such at a horse race in the country.

Hard. If we should find him so——But that's impossible. The first appearance has done my business. I'm seldom deceived in that.

Miss Hard. And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance.

Hard. Ay, when a girl finds a fellow's outside to her taste, she then sets about guessing the rest of his furniture. With her, a smooth face stands for good sense, and a genteel figure for every virtue.

Miss Hard. I hope, sir, a conversation begun with a compliment to my good sense, won't end with a sneer at my understanding?

Hard. Pardon me, Kate! But if young Mr Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions, he may please us both, perhaps.

Miss Hard. And as one of us must be mistaken, what if we go to make further discoveries?

Hard. Agreed. But depend on't I'm in the right.

Miss Hard. And depend on't I'm not much in the wrong.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter TONY, *running in with a casket.*

Tony. Ecod! I have got them. Here they are. My cousin Con's necklaces, bobs and all. My mother shan't cheat the poor souls out of their fortune neither. O! my genius, is that you?

Enter HASTINGS.

Hast. My dear friend, how have you managed with your mother? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for your cousin, and that you are willing to be reconciled at last? Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off.

Tony. And here's something to bear your charges by the way, [*giving the casket.*] Your sweetheart's jewels. Keep them, and hang those, I say, that would rob you of one of them.

Hast. But how have you procured them from your mother?

Tony. Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no fibs. I procured them by the rule of thumb. If I had not a key to every drawer in mother's bureau, how could I go to the alehouse so often as I do? An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time.

Hast. Thousands do it every day. But, to be plain with you, Miss Neville is endeavouring to procure them from her aunt this very instant. If she succeeds, it will be the most delicate way at least of obtaining them.

Tony. Well, keep them, till you know how it will be. But I know how it will be well enough; she'd as soon part with the only sound tooth in her head.

Hast. But I dread the effects of her resentment, when she finds she has lost them.

Tony. Never you mind her resentment; leave me to manage that. I don't value her resentment the bounce of a cracker. Zounds! here they are! Morrice! Prance!

[*Exit* HASTINGS.

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE, *and* MISS NEVILLE.

Mrs Hard. Indeed, Constance, you amaze me. Such a girl as you want jewels! It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, twenty years hence, when your beauty begins to want repairs.

Miss Nev. But what will repair beauty at forty, will certainly improve it at twenty, madam.

Mrs Hard. Yours, my dear, can admit of none. That natural blush is beyond a thousand ornaments. Besides, child, jewels are quite out at present. Don't you see half the ladies of our acquaintance, my lady Kill-day-light, and Mrs Crump, and the rest of them, carry their jewels to town, and bring nothing but paste and marcasites back?

Miss Nev. But who knows, madam, but somebody, that shall be nameless, would like me best with all my little finery about me?

Mrs Hard. Consult your glass, my dear, and then see if, with such a pair of eyes, you want any better sparklers. What do you think, Tony, my dear? does your cousin Con want any jewels, in your eyes, to set off her beauty?

Tony. That's as hereafter may be.

Miss Nev. My dear aunt, if you knew how it would oblige me.

Mrs Hard. A parcel of old-fashioned rose and table-cut things. They would make you look like the court of king Solomon at a puppet-show. Besides, I believe I can't readily come at them. They may be missing for aught I know to the contrary.

Tony. [*Apart to* MRS HARD.] Then why don't you tell her so at once, as she's so longing for them? Tell her they're lost. Its the only way to quiet her. Say they're lost, and call me to bear witness.

Mrs Hard. [*Apart to* TONY.] You know, my dear, I'm only keeping them for you. So if I say they're gone, you'll bear me witness, will you? He! he! he!

Tony. Never fear me. Ecod! I'll say I saw them taken out with my own eyes.

Miss Nev. I desire them but for a day, madam. Just to be permitted to shew them as relics, and then they may be locked up again.

Mrs Hard. To be plain with you, my dear Constance, if I could find them, you should have them. They're missing, I assure you. Lost, for aught I know; but we must have patience wherever they are.

Miss Nev. I'll not believe it. This is but a shallow pretence to deny me. I know they're too valuable to be so slightly kept, and as you are to answer for the loss.

Mrs Hard. Don't be alarmed, Constance. If they be lost, I must restore an equivalent. But my son knows they are missing, and not to be found.

Tony. That I can bear witness to. They are missing, and not to be found, I'll take my oath on't.

Mrs Hard. You must learn resignation, my dear; for, though we lose our fortune, yet we should not lose our patience. See me, how calm I am.

Miss Nev. Ay, people are generally calm at the misfortunes of others.

Mrs Hard. Now, I wonder a girl of your good sense should waste a thought upon such trumpery. We shall soon find them; and, in the mean time, you shall make use of my garnets till your jewels be found.

Miss Nev. I detest garnets.

Mrs Hard. The most becoming things in the world to set off a clear complexion. You have often seen how well they look upon me. You shall have them. [*Exit.*

Miss Nev. I dislike them of all things. You shan't stir—Was ever any thing so provoking, to mislay my own jewels, and force me to wear trumpery?

Tony. Don't be a fool. If she gives you the garnets, take what you can get. The jewels are your own already. I have stolen them out of her bureau, and she does not know it. Fly to your spark; he'll tell you more of the matter. Leave me to manage her.

Miss Nev. My dear cousin!

Tony. Vanish! She's here, and has missed them already. Zounds! how she fidgets and spits about, like a Catharine wheel!

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE.

Mrs Hard. Confusion! thieves! robbers! We are cheated, plundered, broke open, undone!

Tony. What's the matter, what's the matter, mamma? I hope nothing has happened to any of the good family!

Mrs Hard. We are robbed! My bureau has been broke open, the jewels taken out, and I'm undone!

Tony. Oh! is that all? Ha, ha, ha! By the laws, I never saw it better acted in my life! Ecod, I thought you was ruined in earnest, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Hard. Why, boy, I am ruined in earnest. My bureau has been broke open, and all taken away.

Tony. Stick to that; ha, ha, ha! stick to that; I'll bear witness, you know; call me to bear witness.

Mrs Hard. I tell you, Tony, by all that's precious, the jewels are gone, and I shall be ruined for ever!

Tony. Sure I know they're gone, and I am to say so.

Mrs Hard. My dearest Tony, but hear me. They're gone, I say!

Tony. By the laws, mamma, you make me for to laugh, ha, ha! I know who took them well enough, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Hard. Was there ever such a blockhead, that can't tell the difference between jest and earnest! I tell you I'm not in jest, booby.

Tony. That's right, that's right: You must be in a bitter passion, and then nobody will suspect either of us. I'll bear witness that they are gone.

Mrs Hard. Was there ever such a cross-grained brute, that won't hear me! Can you bear witness that you're no better than a fool? Was ever poor woman so beset with fools on one hand, and thieves on the other!

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

Mrs Hard. Bear witness again, you blockhead you, and I'll turn you out of the room directly! My poor niece! what will become of her? Do you laugh, you unfeeling brute, as if you enjoyed my distress?

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

Mrs Hard. Do you insult me, monster? I'll teach you to vex your mother, I will.

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

[*He runs off, she follows him.*

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE, *and Maid.*

Miss Hard. What an unaccountable creature is that brother of mine, to send them to the house as an inn, ha, ha! I don't wonder at his impudence.

Maid. But what is more, madam, the young gentleman, as you passed by in your present dress, asked me if you were the bar-maid. He mistook you for the bar-maid, madam.

Miss Hard. Did he? Then, as I live, I'm resolved to keep up the delusion. Tell me, Pimple, how do you like my present dress? Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the Beaux Stratagem?

Maid. It's the dress, madam, that every lady wears in the country, but when she visits or receives company.

Miss Hard. And are you sure he does not remember my face or person?

Maid. Certain of it.

Miss Hard. I vow I thought so; for though we spoke for some time together, yet his fears were such, that he never once looked up during the interview. Indeed if he had, my bonnet would have kept him from seeing me.

Maid. But what do you hope from keeping him in his mistake?

Miss Hard. In the first place, I shall be seen; and that is no small advantage to a girl, who brings her face to a market. Then I shall perhaps make an acquaintance; and that's no small victory gained over one, who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex. But my chief aim is to take my gentleman off his guard, and, like an

invisible champion of romance, examine the giant's force, before I offer to combat.

Maid. But are you sure you can act your part, and disguise your voice, so that he may mistake that, as he has already mistaken your person?

Miss Hard. Never fear me. I think I have got the true bar-cant—Did your honour call?—Attend the Lion there—Pipes and tobacco for the Angel—The Lamb has been outrageous this half hour.

Maid. It will do, madam. But he's here.

[*Exit Maid.*

Enter MARLOW.

Mar. What a bawling in every part of the house; I have scarce a moment's repose. If I go to the best room, there I find my host and his story. If I fly to the gallery, there we have my hostess, with her curtesy down to the ground. I have, at last, got a moment to myself, and now for recollection. [*Walks, and muses.*

Miss Hard. Did you call, sir? did your honour call?

Mar. [*Musing.*] As for Miss Hardcastle, she's too grave and sentimental for me.

Miss Hard. Did your honour call?

[*She still places herself before him, he turning away.*]

Mar. No, child—[*Musing.*] Besides, from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints.

Miss Hard. I'm sure, sir, I heard the bell ring.

Mar. No, no.—[*Musing.*] I have pleased my father, however, by coming down, and I'll to-morrow please myself, by returning.

[*Taking out his tablets, and perusing.*

Miss Hard. Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir?

Mar. I tell you, no.

Miss Hard. I should be glad to know, sir. We have such a parcel of servants!

Mar. No, no, I tell you. [*Looks full in her face.*] Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted—I wanted——I vow, child, you are vastly handsome.

Miss Hard. O la, sir, you'll make one ashamed!

Mar. Never saw a more sprightly malicious eye! Yes, yes, my dear; I did call. Have you got any of your——a——what d'ye call it in the house?

Miss Hard. No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days.

Mar. One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose. Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of trial, of the nectar of your lips: perhaps I might be disappointed in that, too.

Miss Hard. Nectar! nectar! that's a liquor there's no call for in these parts. French, I suppose? We keep no French wines here, sir.

Mar. Of true English growth, I assure you.

Miss Hard. Then it's odd I should not know it. We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years.

Mar. Eighteen years! Why, one would think, child, you kept the bar before you were born. How old are you?

Miss Hard. O! sir, I must not tell my age. They say women and music should never be dated.

Mar. To guess, at this distance, you can't be much above forty. [*Approaching.*] Yet nearer I don't think so much. [*Approaching.*] By coming close to some women, they look younger still; but when we come very close indeed—[*Attempting to kiss her.*]

Miss Hard. Pray, sir, keep your distance. One would think you wanted to know one's age as they do horses, by mark of mouth.

Mar. I protest, child, you use me extremely ill. If you keep me at this distance, how is it possible you and I can be ever acquainted?

Miss Hard. And who wants to be acquainted with you? I want no such acquaintance, not I. I'm sure you did not treat Miss Hardcastle, that was here a while ago, in this obstropalous manner. I'll warrant me, before her, you looked dashed, and kept bowing to the ground, and talked, for all the world, as if you was before a justice of the peace.

Mar. [*Aside.*] Egad! she has hit, sure enough! [*To her.*] In awe of her, child? Ha, ha, ha! A mere, awkward, squinting thing! no, no. I find you don't know me. I laughed, and rallied her a little; but I was unwilling to be too severe. No, I could not be too severe, curse me!

Miss Hard. O! then, sir, you are a favourite, I find, among the ladies?

Mar. Yes, my dear, a great favourite. And yet, hang me, I don't see what they find in me to follow. At the Ladies club in town, I'm called their agreeable Rattle. Rattle, child, is not my real name, but one I'm known by. My name is Solomons. Mr Solomons, my dear, at your service! [*Offering to salute her.*

Miss Hard. Hold, sir! you were introducing me to your club, not to yourself. And you're so great a favourite there, you say?

Mar. Yes, my dear. There's Mrs Mantrap, lady Betty Blackleg, the countess of Sligo, Mrs Longhorns, old miss Biddy Buckskin, and your humble servant, keep up the spirit of the place.

Miss Hard. Then it's a very merry place, I suppose?

Mar. Yes, as merry as cards, suppers, wine, and old women, can make us.

Miss Hard. And their agreeable Rattle, ha, ha, ha!

Mar. [*Aside.*] Egad! I don't quite like this chit. She looks knowing, methinks. You laugh, child!

Miss Hard. I can't but laugh to think what

time they all have for minding their work, or their family.

Mar. [*Aside.*] All's well; she don't laugh at me.—[*To her.*] Do you ever work, child?

Miss Hard. Ay, sure. There's not a screen or a quilt in the whole house but what can bear witness to that.

Mar. Odso! Then you must shew me your embroidery. I embroider and draw patterns myself a little. If you want a judge of your work, you must apply to me. [*Seizing her hand.*

Miss Hard. Ay, but the colours don't look well by candle-light. You shall see all in the morning. [*Struggling.*

Mar. And why not now, my angel? Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance.—— Pshaw! the father here! My old luck! I never nicked seven that I did not throw ames ace three times following. [*Exit* MARLOW.

Enter HARDCASTLE, *who stands in surprise.*

Hard. So, madam! So I find this is your modest lover. This is your humble admirer, that kept his eyes fixed on the ground, and only adored at humble distance. Kate, Kate, art thou not ashamed to deceive your father so?

Miss Hard. Never trust me, dear papa, but he's still the modest man I first took him for; you'll be convinced of it as well as I.

Hard. By the hand of my body I believe his impudence is infectious! Didn't I see him seize your hand? Did'nt I see him hawl you about like a milkmaid? and now you talk of his respect and his modesty, forsooth!

Miss Hard. But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, I hope you'll forgive him.

Hard. The girl would actually make one run mad; I tell you I'll not be convinced. I am convinced. He has scarcely been three hours in the house, and he has already encroached on all my prerogatives. You may like his impudence, and call it modesty. But my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications.

Miss Hard. Sir, I ask but this night to convince you.

Hard. You shall not have half the time; for I have thoughts of turning him out this very hour.

Miss Hard. Give me that hour then, and I hope to satisfy you.

Hard. Well, an hour let it be then. But I'll have no trifling with your father. All fair and open, do you mind me?

Miss Hard. I hope, sir, you have ever found that I considered your commands as my pride; for your kindness is such, that my duty as yet has been inclination. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter HASTINGS *and* MISS NEVILLE.

Hast. You surprise me! Sir Charles Marlow expected here this night? Where have you had your information?

Miss Nev. You may depend upon it. I just saw his letter to Mr Hardcastle, in which he tells him he intends setting out a few hours after his son.

Hast. Then, my Constance, all must be completed before he arrives. He knows me; and should he find me here, would discover my name, and perhaps my designs, to the rest of the family.

Miss Nev. The jewels, I hope, are safe?

Hast. Yes, yes. I have sent them to Marlow, who keeps the keys of our baggage. In the mean time, I'll go to prepare matters for our elopement. I have had the 'Squire's promise of a fresh pair of horses; and, if I should not see him again, will write him further directions.

[*Exit.*

Miss Nev. Well! success attend you! In the mean time, I'll go amuse my aunt with the old pretence of a violent passion for my cousin.

[*Exit.*

Enter MARLOW, *followed by a Servant.*

Mar. I wonder what Hastings could mean, by sending me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for him, when he knows the only place I have is the seat of a post coach at an inn-door! Have you deposited the casket with the landlady, as I ordered you? Have you put it into her own hands?

Ser. Yes, your honour.

Mar. She said she'd keep it safe, did she?

Ser. Yes, she said she'd keep it safe enough; she asked me how I came by it? and she said she had a great mind to make me give an account of myself. [*Exit Servant.*

Mar. Ha, ha, ha! They're safe, however. What an unaccountable set of beings have we got amongst! This little bar-maid, though, runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the absurdities of all the rest of the family. She's mine; she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken.

Enter HASTINGS.

Hast. Bless me! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to prepare at the bottom of the garden. Marlow here, and in spirits, too!

Mar. Give me joy, George! Crown me, sha-

dow me with laurels! Well, George, after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women.

Hast. Some women, you mean. But what success has your honour's modesty been crowned with now, that it grows so insolent upon us?

Mar. Did not you see the tempting, brisk, lovely, little thing, that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to its girdle?

Hast. Well! and what then?

Mar. She's mine, you rogue you! Such fire, such motion, such eyes, such lips!——but, egad! she would not let me kiss them though.

Hast. But are you so sure, so very sure of her?

Mar. Why, man, she talked of shewing me her work above stairs, and I'm to improve the pattern.

Hast. But how can you, Charles, go about to rob a woman of her honour?

Mar. Pshaw! pshaw! We all know the honour of the bar-maid of an inn. I don't intend to rob her, take my word for it; there's nothing in this house I shan't honestly pay for.

Hast. I believe the girl has virtue.

Mar. And if she has, I should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it.

Hast. You have taken care, I hope, of the casket I sent you to lock up? It's in safety?

Mar. Yes, yes. It's safe enough. I have taken care of it. But how could you think the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door a place of safety? Ah, numbskull! I have taken better precautions for you, than you did for yourself.——I have——

Hast. What?

Mar. I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you.

Hast. To the landlady?

Mar. The landlady.

Hast. You did?

Mar. I did. She's to be answerable for its forthcoming, you know.

Hast. Yes; she'll bring it forth, with a witness!

Mar. Was not I right? I believe you'll allow that I acted prudently upon this occasion?

Hast. [*Aside.*] He must not see my uneasiness.

Mar. You seem a little disconcerted though, methinks. Sure nothing has happened?

Hast. No; nothing! Never was in better spirits in all my life! And so you left it with the landlady, who, no doubt, very readily undertook the charge?

Mar. Rather too readily. For she not only kept the casket, but, through her great precaution, was going to keep the messenger, too. Ha, ha, ha!

Hast. He, he, he! They're safe, however.

Mar. As a guinea in a miser's purse.

Hast. [*Aside.*] So now, all hopes of fortune are at an end, and we must set off without it. [*To him.*] Well, Charles, I'll leave you to your meditations on the pretty bar-maid, and, he, he, he! may you be as successful for yourself as you have been for me! [*Exit* HAST.

Mar. Thank ye, George! I ask no more, ha, ha, ha!

Enter HARDCASTLE.

Hard. I no longer know my own house. It is turned all topsy-turvy. His servants have got drunk already. I'll bear it no longer; and yet, from my respect for his father, I'll be calm. [*To him.*] Mr Marlow, your servant. I'm your very humble servant. [*Bowing low.*

Mar. Sir, your humble servant. [*Aside.*] What's to be the wonder now?

Hard. I believe, sir, you must be sensible, sir, that no man alive ought to be more welcome than your father's son, sir. I hope you think so?

Mar. I do from my soul, sir. I don't want much entreaty. I generally make my father's son welcome wherever he goes.

Hard. I believe you do, from my soul, sir. But, though I say nothing to your own conduct, that of your servants is insufferable. Their manner of drinking is setting a very bad example in this house, I assure you.

Mar. I protest, my very good sir, that's no fault of mine. If they don't drink as they ought, they are to blame. I ordered them not to spare the cellar. I did, I assure you. [*To the side scene.*] Here, let one of my servants come up. [*To him.*] My positive directions were, that as I did not drink myself, they should make up for my deficiencies below.

Hard. Then, they had your orders for what they do? I'm satisfied.

Mar. They had, I assure you. You shall hear from one of themselves.

Enter Servant drunk.

Mar. You, Jeremy! Come forward, sirrah! What were my orders? Were you not told to drink freely, and call for what you thought fit, for the good of the house?

Hard. [*Aside.*] I begin to lose my patience.

Jer. Please your honour, liberty and Fleet-street for ever! Though I'm but a servant, I'm as good as another man. I'll drink for no man before supper, sir, dammy! Good liquor will sit upon a good supper, but a good supper will not sit upon———hiccup———upon my conscience, sir! [*Staggers out.*

Mar. You see, my old friend, the fellow is as drunk as he can possibly be! I don't know what you'd have more, unless you'd have the poor devil soused in a beer-barrel.

Hard. Zounds! He'll drive me distracted, if I contain myself any longer! Mr Marlow. Sir; I have submitted to your insolence for more than four hours, and I see no likelihood of its coming to an end. I'm now resolved to be master here.

sir, and I desire that you and your drunken pack may leave my house directly!

Mar. Leave your house!——Sure you jest, my good friend? What, when I'm doing what I can to please you?

Hard. I tell you, sir, you don't please me; so I desire you'll leave my house!

Mar. Sure you cannot be serious? At this time o'night, and such a night! You only mean to banter me?

Hard. I tell you, sir, I'm serious! and, now that my passions are roused, I say this house is mine, sir; this house is mine, and I command you to leave it directly.

Mar. Ha, ha, ha! A puddle in a storm! I shan't stir a step, I assure you! [*In a serious tone.*] This your house, fellow! It's my house! This is my house! Mine, while I choose to stay! What right have you to bid me leave this house, sir? I never met with such impudence, curse me, never in my whole life before!

Hard. Nor I; confound me if ever I did! To come to my house, to call for what he likes, to turn me out of my own chair, to insult the family, to order his servants to get drunk, and then to tell me, This house is mine, sir! By all that's impudent, it makes me laugh! Ha, ha, ha! Pray, sir, [*Bantering.*] as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire-screen, and here's a pair of brazen-nosed bellows, perhaps you may take a fancy to them?

Mar. Bring me your bill, sir, bring me your bill, and let's make no more words about it.

Hard. There are a set of prints, too. What think you of the rake's progress for your own apartment?

Mar. Bring me your bill, I say: and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly!

Hard. Then, there's a mahogany table, that you may see your face in!

Mar. My bill, I say!

Hard. I had forgot the great chair, for your own particular slumbers, after a hearty meal!

Mar. Zounds! bring me my bill, I say, and let's hear no more on't!

Hard. Young man, young man, from your father's letter to me, I was taught to expect a well-bred, modest man, as a visitor here; but now, I find him no better than a coxcomb and a bully; but he will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it. [*Exit.*

Mar. How's this! Sure I have not mistaken the house! Every thing looks like an inn. The servants cry, Coming. The attendance is awkward; the bar-maid, too, to attend us. But she's here, and will further inform me. Whither so fast, child? A word with you.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE.

Miss Hard. Let it be short, then; I'm in a hurry. [*Aside.*] I believe he begins to find out his mistake, but it is too soon quite to undeceive him.

Mar. Pray, child, answer me one question. What are you, and what may your business in this house be?

Miss Hard. A relation of the family, sir.

Mar. What! A poor relation?

Miss Hard. Yes, sir! A poor relation, appointed to keep the keys, and to see that the guests want nothing in my power to give them.

Mar. That is, you act as the bar-maid of this inn?

Miss Hard. Inn! O law—What brought that in your head? One of the best families in the county keep an inn! Ha, ha, ha! Old Mr Hardcastle's house an inn!

Mar. Mr Hardcastle's house! Is this house Mr Hardcastle's house, child?

Miss Hard. Ay, sure. Whose else should it be!

Mar. So, then, all's out, and I have been damnably imposed on! O! confound my stupid head! I shall be laughed at over the whole town! I shall be stuck up in caricatura in all the print-shops! The Dullissimo Maccaroni. To mistake this house of all others for an inn; and my father's old friend for an inn-keeper! What a swaggering puppy must he take me for! What a silly puppy do I find myself! There, again, may I be hanged, my dear, but I mistook you for the bar-maid!

Miss Hard. Dear me! Dear me! I'm sure there's nothing in my behaviour to put me upon a level with one of that stamp.

Mar. Nothing, my dear, nothing. But I was in for a list of blunders, and could not help making you a subscriber. My stupidity saw every thing the wrong way. I mistook your assiduity for assurance, and your simplicity for allurement. But its over—This house I no more shew my face in!

Miss Hard. I hope, sir, I have done nothing to disoblige you! I'm sure I should be sorry to affront any gentleman who has been so polite, and said so many civil things to me. I'm sure I should be sorry [*Pretending to cry.*] if he left the family upon my account. I'm sure I should be sorry people said any thing amiss, since I have no fortune but my character.

Mar. [*Aside.*] By Heaven, she weeps! This is the first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman, and it touches me. [*To her.*] Excuse me, my lovely girl; you are the only part of the family I leave with reluctance! But, to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune, and education, make an honourable connexion impossible; and I can never harbour a thought of bringing ruin upon one, whose only fault was being too lovely.

Miss Hard. [*Aside.*] Generous man! I now begin to admire him! [*To him.*] But I'm sure my family is as good as Miss Hardcastle's, and, though

I'm poor, that's no great misfortune to a contented mind; and, until this moment, I never thought that it was bad to want fortune.

Mar. And why now, my pretty simplicity?

Miss Hard. Because it puts me at a distance from one, that if I had a thousand pound, I would give it all to.

Mar. [*Aside.*] This simplicity bewitches me; so that, if I stay, I'm undone. I must make one bold effort, and leave her. [*To her.*] Your partiality in my favour, my dear, touches me most sensibly, and were I to live for myself alone, I could easily fix my choice. But I owe too much to the opinion of the world, too much to the authority of a father, so that—I can scarcely speak it—it affects me. Farewell! [*Exit* MAR.

Miss Hard. I never knew half his merit till now. He shall not go, if I have power or art to detain him. I'll still preserve the character in which I stooped to conquer, but will undeceive my papa, who, perhaps, may laugh him out of his resolution. [*Exit* MISS HARDCASTLE.

Enter TONY, *and* MISS NEVILLE.

Tony. Ay, you may steal for yourselves the next time; I have done my duty. She has got the jewels again, that's a sure thing; but she believes it was all a mistake of the servants.

Miss Nev. But, my dear cousin, sure you won't forsake us in this distress. If she in the least suspects that I am going off, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my aunt Pedigree's, which is ten times worse.

Tony. To be sure, aunts of all kinds are damned bad things. But what can I do? I have got you a pair of horses that will fly like Whistlejacket, and I'm sure you can't say but I have courted you nicely before her face. Here she comes; we must court a bit or two more, for fear she should suspect us.

[*They retire, and seem to fondle.*

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE.

Mrs Hard. Well, I was greatly fluttered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was all a mistake of the servants. I shan't be easy, however, till they are fairly married; and then, let her keep her own fortune. But, what do I see? Fondling together, as I'm alive! I never saw Tony so sprightly before! Ah! have I caught you, my pretty doves! What, billing, exchanging stolen glances, and broken murmurs? Ah!

Tony. As for murmurs, mother, we grumble a little now and then, to be sure. But there's no love lost between us.

Mrs Hard. A mere sprinkling, Tony, upon the flame, only to make it burn brighter.

Miss Nev. Cousin Tony promises to give us more of his company at home. Indeed, he shan't leave us any more. It won't leave us, cousin Tony, will it?

Tony. O! it's a pretty creature. No, I'd sooner leave my horse in a pound, than leave you when you smile upon one so. Your laugh makes you so becoming.

Miss Nev. Agreeable cousin! who can help admiring that natural humour, that pleasant, broad, red, thoughtless, [*Patting his cheek.*] Ah! it's a bold face!

Mrs Hard. Pretty innocence!

Tony. I'm sure I always loved cousin Con's hazel eyes, and her pretty long fingers, that she twists this way and that, over the haspicholls, like a parcel of bobbins.

Mrs Hard. Ah, he would charm the bird from the tree! I was never so happy before! My boy takes after his father, poor Mr Lumpkin, exactly! The jewels, my dear Con, shall be yours incontinently. You shall have them. Is not he a sweet boy, my dear? You shall be married tomorrow, and we'll put off the rest of his education, like Dr Drowsey's sermons, to a fitter opportunity.

Enter DIGGORY.

Dig. Where's the 'Squire? I have got a letter for your worship.

Tony. Give it to my mamma. She reads all my letters first.

Dig. I had orders to deliver it into your own hands.

Tony. Who does it come from?

Dig. Your worship mun ask that o' the letter itself.

Tony. I could wish to know, though.

[*Turning the letter, and gazing on it.*

Miss Nev. [*Aside.*] Undone, undone. A letter to him from Hastings. I know the hand. If my aunt sees it, we are ruined for ever. I'll keep her employed a little if I can. [*To* MRS HARDCASTLE.] But I have not told you, madam, of my cousin's smart answer just now to Mr Marlow. We so laughed—You must know, madam—this way a little, for he must not hear us.

[*They confer.*

Tony. [*Still gazing.*] A damned cramped piece of penmanship, as ever I saw in my life! I can read your print-hand very well. But here there are such handles, and shanks, and dashes, that one can scarce tell the head from the tail. 'To 'Anthony Lumpkin, Esq.' It's very odd, I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough. But, when I come to open it, it's all—buzz. That's hard, very hard: for the inside of the letter is always the cream of the correspondence.

Mrs Hard. Ha, ha, ha! Very well, very well. And so my son was too hard for the philosopher?

Miss Nev. Yes, madam; but you must hear the rest, madam. A little more this way, or he may hear us. You'll hear how he puzzled him again.

Mrs Hard. He seems strangely puzzled now himself, methinks.

Tony. [*Still gazing.*] A damned up and down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor. [*Reading.*] 'Dear sir,' Ay, that's that. Then there's an M, and a T, and an S! but whether the next be an izzard or an R, confound me, I cannot tell!

Mrs Hard. What's that, my dear? Can I give you any assistance?

Miss Nev. Pray, aunt, let me read it. Nobody reads a cramp hand better than I. [*Twitching the letter from her.*] Do you know who it is from?

Tony. Can't tell, except from Dick Ginger, the feeder.

Miss Nev. Ay, so it is, [*Pretending to read.*] 'Dear Squire, hoping that you're in health, as I 'am at this present. The gentlemen of the 'Shake-bag club has cut the gentlemen of the 'Goose-green quite out of feather. The odds— '—um—odd battle——um—long fighting—um.' here, here; it's all about cocks, and fighting; it's of no consequence; here, put it up, put it up.

[*Thrusting the crumpled letter upon him.*

Tony. But I tell you, miss, it's of all the consequence in the world. I would not lose the rest of it for a guinea. Here, mother, do you make it out. Of no consequence?

[*Giving* MRS HARDCASTLE *the letter.*

Mrs Hard. How is this! [*Reads.*] 'Dear 'Squire, I am now waiting for Miss Neville, with 'a post chaise and pair, at the bottom of the 'garden; but I find my horses yet unable to per- 'form the journey. I expect you'll assist us 'with a pair of fresh horses, as you promised.— 'Dispatch is necessary, as the hag (ay the hag) 'your mother, will otherwise suspect us. Your's, 'Hastings.' Grant me patience! I shall run distracted! My rage chokes me!

Miss Nev. I hope, madam, you'll suspend your resentment for a few moments, and not impute to me any impertinence, or sinister design, that belongs to another.

Mrs Hard. [*Curtseying very low.*] Fine spoken madam! you are most miraculously polite and engaging, and quite the very pink of courtesy and circumspection. Madam! [*Changing her tone.*] And you, you great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep your mouth shut! Were you, too, joined against me? But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment. As for you, madam, since you have got a pair of fresh horses ready, it would be cruel to disappoint them. So, if you please, instead of running away with your spark, prepare, this very moment, to run off with me. Your old aunt Pedigree will keep you secure, I'll warrant me. You, too, sir, may mount your horse, and guard us upon the way. Here, Thomas, Roger, Diggory, I'll shew you, that I wish you better than you do yourselves. [*Exit.*

Miss Nev. So, now, I'm completely ruined!

Tony. Ay, that's a sure thing.

Miss Nev. What better could be expected from being conneted with such a stupid fool, and after all the nods and signs I made him!

Tony. By the laws, miss, it was your own cleverness, and not my stupidity, that did your business. You were so nice, and so busy with your Shake-bags and Goose-greens, that I thought you could never be making believe.

Enter HASTINGS.

Hast. So, sir, I find, by my servant, that you have shewn my letter, and betrayed us. Was this well done, young gentleman?

Tony. Here's another. Ask miss, there, who betrayed you. Ecod, it was her doing, not mine.

Enter MARLOW.

Mar. So I have been finely used here among you! Rendered contemptible, driven into ill-manners, despised, insulted, laughed at!

Tony. Here's another! We shall have old Bedlam broke loose presently.

Miss Nev. And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we all owe every obligation.

Mar. What can I say to him? a mere booby, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection.

Hast. A poor contemptible booby, that would but disgrace correction.

Miss Nev. Yet with cunning and malice enough to make himself merry with all our embarrassments.

Hast. An insensible cub.

Mar. Replete with tricks and mischief.

Tony. Baw! damme, but I'll fight you both, one after the other—with baskets.

Mar. As for him, he's below resentment.—— But your conduct, Mr Hastings, requires an explanation. You knew of my mistakes, yet would not undeceive me!

Hast. Tortured as I am with my own disappointments, is this a time for explanations? It is not friendly, Mr Marlow.

Mar. But, sir——

Miss Nev. Mr Marlow, we never kept on your mistake, till it was too late to undeceive you.— Be pacified.

Enter Servant.

Ser. My mistress desires you'll get ready immediately, madam. The horses are putting to. Your hat and things are in the next room. We are to go thirty miles before morning.

[*Exit Servant.*

Miss Nev. Well, well; I'll come presently.

Mar. [*To* HASTINGS.] Was it well done, sir, to assist in rendering me ridiculous? To hang me out for the scorn of all my acquaintance? Depend upon it, sir, I shall expect an explanation.

Hast. Was it well done, sir, if you are upon

that subject, to deliver, what I entrusted to yourself, to the care of another, sir?

Miss Nev. Mr Hastings! Mr Marlow!——— Why will you increase my distress by this groundless dispute? I implore, I entreat you———

Enter Servant.

Ser. Your cloak, madam. My mistress is impatient.

Miss Nev. I come. Pray, be pacified. If I leave you thus, I shall die with apprehension.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Your fan, muff, and gloves, madam. The horses are waiting.

Miss Nev. O, Mr Marlow! if you knew what a scene of constraint and ill-nature lies before me, I am sure it would convert your resentment into pity.

Mar. I am so distracted with a variety of passions, that I don't know what I do. Forgive me, madam. George, forgive me. You know my hasty temper, and should not exasperate it.

Hast. The torture of my situation is my only excuse.

Miss Nev. Well, my dear Hastings, if you have that esteem for me, that I think, that I am sure you have, your constancy for three years will but increase the happiness of our future connection. If——

Mrs Hard. [*Within.*] Miss Neville. Constance! why Constance, I say!

Miss Nev. I'm coming. Well, constancy.—Remember, constancy is the word. [*Exit.*

Hast. My heart, how can I support this? To be so near happiness, and such happiness!

Mar. [*To* TONY.] You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly. What might be amusement to you, is here disappointment, and even distress.

Tony. [*From a reverie.*] Egod, I have hit it! It's here. Your hands. Yours and yours, my poor Sulky. My boots there, ho! Meet me two hours hence, at the bottom of the garden; and if you don't find Tony Lumpkin a more good-natured fellow than you thought for, I'll give you leave to take my best horse, and Bet Bouncer into the bargain. Come along! My boots, ho! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Continues.*

Enter HASTINGS *and Servant.*

Hast. You saw the old lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say?

Ser. Yes, your honour. They went off in a post coach, and the young 'squire went on horseback. They're thirty miles off by this time.

Hast. Then, all my hopes are over!

Ser. Yes, sir. Old sir Charles is arrived.—He, and the old gentleman of the house, have been laughing at Mr Marlow's mistake this half hour. They are coming this way.

Hast. Then, I must not be seen. So, now to my fruitless appointment at the bottom of the garden. This is about the time. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR CHARLES MARLOW *and* HARDCASTLE.

Hard. Ha, ha, ha! The peremptory tone in which he sent forth his sublime commands!

Sir Cha. And the reserve, with which, I suppose, he treated all your advances!

Hard. And yet he might have seen something in me above a common inn-keeper, too.

Sir Cha. Yes, Dick! but he mistook you for an uncommon inn-keeper, ha, ha, ha!

Hard. Well, I am in too good spirits to think of any thing but joy. Yes, my dear friend, this union of our families will make our personal friendships hereditary; and though my daughter's fortune is but small——

Sir Cha. Why, Dick, will you talk of fortune to me? My son is possessed of more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share his happiness, and encrease it. If they like each other, as you say they do———

Hard. If, man? I tell you they do like each other. My daughter as good as told me so.

Sir Cha. But girls are apt to flatter themselves, you know.

Hard. I saw him grasp her hand in the warmest manner myself; and here he comes to put you out of your ifs, I warrant him.

Enter MARLOW.

Mar. I come, sir, once more, to ask pardon for my strange conduct. I can scarce reflect on my insolence without confusion?

Hard. Tut, boy! a trifle. You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again—She'll never like you the worse for it.

Mar. Sir, I shall be always proud of her approbation.

Hard. Approbation is but a cold word, Mr Marlow; if I am not deceived, you have something more than approbation thereabouts. You take me?

Mar. Really, sir, I have not that happiness.

Hard. Come, boy; I'm an old fellow, and know what's what, as well as you that are younger. I know what has past between you——but mum.

Mar. Sure, sir, nothing has past between us

but the most profound respect on my side, and the most distant reserve on hers. You don't think, sir, that my impudence has been passed upon all the rest of the family?

Hard. Impudence! No, I don't say that—Not quite impudence—Though girls like to be played with, and rumpled too, sometimes. But she has told no tales, I assure you.

Mar. I never gave her the slightest cause.

Hard. Well, well. I like modesty in its place well enough. But this is over acting, young gentleman. You may be open. Your father and I will like you the better for it.

Mar. May I die, sir, if I ever——

Hard. I tell you, she don't dislike you; and as I'm sure you like her——

Mar. Dear—I protest, sir——

Hard. I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you.

Mar. But hear me, sir——

Hard. Your father approves the match, I admire it, every moment's delay will be doing mischief, so——

Mar. But why won't you hear me? By all that's just and true, I never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of my attachment, or even the most distant hint to suspect me of affection. We had but one interview, and that was formal, modest, and uninteresting.

Hard. [*Aside.*] This fellow's formal, modest impudence, is beyond bearing.

Sir Cha. And you never grasped her hand, or made any protestations?

Mar. As Heaven is my witness, I came down in obedience to your commands! I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance. I hope you'll exact no further proofs of my duty, nor prevent me from leaving a house, in which I suffer so many mortifications. [*Exit.*

Sir Cha. I'm astonished at the air of sincerity with which he parted!

Hard. And I'm astonished at the deliberate intrepidity of his assurance.

Sir Cha. I dare pledge my life and honour upon his truth.

Hard. Here comes my daughter, and I would stake my happiness upon her veracity.

Enter Miss Hardcastle.

Kate, come hither, child. Answer us sincerely, and without reserve; has Mr Marlow made you any professions of love and affection?

Miss Hard. The question is very abrupt, sir! But since you require unreserved sincerity, I think he has.

Hard. [*To* Sir Charles.] You see!

Sir Cha. And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview?

Miss Hard. Yes, sir, several.

Hard. [*To* Sir Charles.] You see!

Sir Cha. But did he profess any attachment?

Miss Hard. A lasting one.

Sir Cha. Did he talk of love?

Miss Hard. Much, sir.

Sir Cha. Amazing! And all this formally?

Miss Hard. Formally.

Hard. Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied?

Sir Cha. And how did he behave, madam?

Miss Hard. As most profest admirers do. Said some civil things of my face, talked much of his want of merit, and the greatness of mine; mentioned his heart, gave a short tragedy-speech, and ended with pretended rapture.

Sir Cha. Now I'm perfectly convinced, indeed. I know his conversation among women to be modest and submissive. This forward, canting, ranting manner, by no means describes him, and I'm confident he never sat for the picture.

Miss Hard. Then what, sir, if I should convince you to your face of my sincerity? If you and my papa, in about half an hour, will place yourselves behind that screen, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person.

Sir Cha. Agreed. And if I find him what you describe, all my happiness in him must have an end. [*Exit.*

Miss Hard. And if you don't find him what I describe—I fear my happiness must never have a beginning. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The back of the garden.*

Enter Hastings.

Hast. What an idiot am I, to wait here for a fellow, who probably takes a delight in mortifying me. He never intended to be punctual, and I'll wait no longer. What do I see? It is he, and perhaps with news of my Constance.

Enter Tony, *booted and spattered.*

My honest 'squire! I now find you a man of your word. This looks like friendship.

Tony. Ay, I'm your friend, and the best friend you have in the world, if you knew but all. This riding by night, by the by, is cursedly tiresome. It has shook me worse than the basket of a stage coach.

Hast. But how? Where did you leave your fellow travellers? Are they in safety? Are they housed?

Tony. Five and twenty miles in two hours and a half, is no such bad driving. The poor beasts have smoked for it: Rabbit me, but I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox, than ten with such varment!

Hast. Well, but where have you left the ladies? I die with impatience.

Tony. Left them? Why, where should I leave them, but where I found them?

Hast. This is a riddle!

Tony. Riddle me this then. What's that goes round the house, and round the house, and never touches the house?

Hast. I'm still astray.

Tony. Why that's it, mun. I have led them astray. By jingo, there's not a pond or slough within five miles of the place but they can tell the taste of!

Hast. Ha, ha, ha! I understand; you took them in a round, while they supposed themselves going forward. And so you have at last brought them home again!

Tony. You shall hear. I first took them down Feather-bed-lane, where we stuck fast in the mud. I then rattled them crack over the stones of Up-and-down Hill—I then introduced them to the gibbet on Heavy-tree Heath—and from that, with a circumbendibus, I fairly lodged them in the horsepond at the bottom of the garden.

Hast. But no accident, I hope?

Tony. No, no. Only mother is confoundedly frightened. She thinks herself forty miles off. She's sick of the journey, and the cattle can scarce crawl. So, if your own horses be ready, you may whip off with cousin, and I'll be bound that no soul here can budge a foot to follow you.

Hast. My dear friend, how can I be grateful?

Tony. Ay, now its dear friend, noble 'squire. Just now, it was all idiot, cub, and run me through the guts. Damn your way of fighting, I say! After we take a knock in this part of the country, we kiss and be friends. But if you had run me through the guts, then I should be dead, and you might go kiss the hangman.

Hast. The rebuke is just. But I must hasten to relieve Miss Neville. If you keep the old lady employed, I promise to take care of the young one. [*Exit* HASTINGS.

Tony. Never fear me. Here she comes! Vanish! She's got from the pond, and draggled up to the waist like a mermaid.

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE.

Mrs Hard. Oh, Tony, I'm killed! Shook! Battered to death! I shall never survive it!—That last jolt, that laid us against the quickset hedge, has done my business.

Tony. Alack, mamma, it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way.

Mrs Hard. I wish we were at home again! I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drenched in the mud, overturned in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way! Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

Tony. By my guess, we should be upon Crackskull common, about forty miles from home.

Mrs Hard. O lud! O lud! the most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

Tony. Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid. Two of the five that kept here are hanged, and the other three may not find us. Don't be afraid. Is that a man that's galloping behind us? No; its only a tree. Don't be afraid.

Mrs Hard. The fright will certainly kill me!

Tony. Do you see any thing like a black hat moving behind the thicket?

Mrs Hard. O death!

Tony. No, its only a cow. Don't be afraid, mamma—don't be afraid.

Mrs Hard. As I'm alive, Tony, I see a man coming towards us! Ah! I'm sure on't. If he perceives us, we are undone.

Tony. [*Aside.*] Father in law, by all that's unlucky, come to take one of his night walks! [*To her.*] Ah, its a highwayman, with pistols as long as my arm. A damned ill looking fellow!

Mrs Hard. Good Heaven defend us! He approaches.

Tony. Do you hide yourself in that thicket, and leave me to manage him. If there be any danger I'll cough, and cry hem! When I cough, be sure to keep close.

[MRS HARDCASTLE *hides behind a tree in the back scene.*]

Enter HARDCASTLE.

Hard. I'm mistaken, or I heard voices of people in want of help. Oh, Tony, is that you? I did not expect you so soon back. Are your mother and her charge in safety?

Tony. Very safe, sir, at my aunt Pedigree's. Hem!

Mrs Hard. [*From behind.*] Ah death! I find there's danger!

Hard. Forty miles in three hours! sure, that's too much, my youngster.

Tony. Stout horses and willing minds make short journies, as they say. Hem!

Mrs Hard. [*From behind.*] Sure he'll do the dear boy no harm!

Hard. But I heard a voice here; I should be glad to know from whence it came?

Tony. It was I, sir, talking to myself, sir. I was saying that forty miles in three hours was very good going. Hem! As to be sure it was. Hem! I have got a sort of cold by being out in the air. We'll go in, if you please? Hem!

Hard. But if you talked to yourself, you did not answer yourself. I am certain I heard two voices, and am resolved [*Raising his voice.*] to find the other out.

Mrs Hard. [*From behind.*] Oh! he's coming to find me out! Oh!

Tony. What need you go, sir, if I tell you? Hem! I'll lay down my life for the truth—hem—I'll tell you all, sir. [*Detaining him.*

Hard. I tell you, I will not be detained. I insist on seeing. It's vain to expect I'll believe you.

Mrs Hard. [*Running forward from behind.*] O lud! he'll murder my poor boy, my darling! Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me. Take my money, my life, but spare that young

gentleman! spare my child, if you have any mercy!

Hard. My wife! as I am a Christian. From whence can she come, or what does she mean!

Mrs Hard. [*Kneeling.*] Take compassion on us, good Mr Highwayman. Take our money, our watches, all we have, but spare our lives. We will never bring you to justice, indeed we won't, good Mr Highwayman!

Hard. I believe the woman's out of her senses! What, Dorothy, don't you know me?

Mrs Hard. Mr Hardcastle, as I'm alive! My fears blinded me. But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this frightful place, so far from home? What has brought you to follow us?

Hard. Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits. So far from home, when you are within forty yards of your own door.—[*To him.*] This is one of your old tricks, you graceless rogue!—[*To her.*] Don't you know the gate, and the mulberry-tree? and don't you remember the horsepond, my dear?

Mrs Hard. Yes, I shall remember the horsepond as long as I live; I have caught my death in it.—[*To* TONY.] And is it to you, you graceless varlet, I owe all this? I'll teach you to abuse your mother, I will.

Tony. Ecod, mother, all the parish says you have spoiled me, and so you may take the fruits on't.

Mrs Hard. I'll spoil you, I will!

[*Follows him off the stage.*

Hard. There's morality, however, in his reply. [*Exit.*

Enter HASTINGS *and* MISS NEVILLE.

Hast. My dear Constance, why will you deliberate thus? If we delay a moment, all is lost for ever. Pluck up a little resolution, and we shall soon be out of the reach of her malignity.

Miss Nev. I find it impossible. My spirits are so sunk with the agitations I have suffered, that I am unable to face any new danger. Two or three years patience will, at last, crown us with happiness.

Hast. Such a tedious delay is worse than inconstancy. Let us fly, my charmer! Let us date our happiness from this very moment. Perish fortune! Love and content will increase what we possess beyond a monarch's revenue. Let me prevail.

Miss Nev. No, Mr Hastings; no. Prudence once more comes to my relief, and I will obey its dictates. In the moment of passion, fortune may be despised, but it ever produces a lasting repentance. I'm resolved to apply to Mr Hardcastle's compassion and justice for redress.

Hast. But though he had the will, he has not the power to relieve you.

Miss Nev. But he has influence; and upon that I am resolved to rely.

Hast. I have no hopes. But since you persist, I must reluctantly obey you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes.*

Enter SIR CHARLES MARLOW *and* MISS HARDCASTLE.

Sir Cha. What a situation am I in! If what you say appears, I shall then find a guilty son. If what he says be true, I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most wished for a daughter.

Miss Hard. I am proud of your approbation, and to shew I merit it, if you place yourselves as I directed, you shall hear his explicit declaration. But he comes.

Sir Cha. I'll to your father, and keep him to the appointment. [*Exit* SIR CHA.

Enter MARLOW.

Mar. Though prepared for setting out, I come once more to take leave; nor did I, till this moment, know the pain I feel in the separation.

Miss Hard. [*In her own natural manner.*] I believe these sufferings cannot be very great, sir, which you can so easily remove. A day or two longer, perhaps, might lessen your uneasiness, by shewing the little value of what you now think proper to regret.

Mar. [*Aside.*] This girl every moment improves upon me.—[*To her.*] It must not be, madam. I have already trifled too long with my heart. My very pride begins to submit to my passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals, begin to lose their weight; and nothing can restore me to myself, but this painful effort of resolution.

Miss Hard. Then go, sir. I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though my family be as good as hers you came down to visit, and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit; I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fixed on fortune.

Enter HARDCASTLE *and* SIR CAARLES MARLOW *from behind.*

Sir Cha. Here, behind this screen.

Hard. Ay, ay; make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last.

Mar. By heavens, madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration! Your beauty at first caught my eye; for, who could see that without emotion? But every moment that I converse with you, steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What at first seemed rustic plainness, now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance, now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence, and conscious virtue.

Sir Cha. What can it mean? He amazes me!

Hard. I told you how it would be. Hush!

Mar. I am now determined to stay, madam, and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.

Miss Hard. No, Mr Marlow, I will not, cannot detain you. Do you think I could suffer a connection, in which there is the smallest room for repentance? Do you think I would take the mean advantage of a transient passion, to load you with confusion? Do you think I could ever relish that happiness which was acquired by lessening yours?

Mar. By all that's good, I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me. Nor shall I ever feel repentance, but in not having seen your merits before. I will stay, even contrary to your wishes; and though you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct.

Miss Hard. Sir, I must entreat you'll desist. As our acquaintance began, so let it end, in indifference. I might have given an hour or two to levity; but seriously, Mr Marlow, do you think I could ever submit to a connexion, where I must appear mercenary, and you imprudent? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident addresses of a secure admirer?

Mar. [*Kneeling.*] Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence? No, madam, every moment that shews me your merit, only serves to increase my diffidence and confusion. Here let me continue——

Sir Cha. I can hold it no longer. Charles, Charles, how hast thou deceived me! Is this your indifference, your uninteresting conversation?

Hard. Your cold contempt; your formal interview? What have you to say now?

Mar. That I'm all amazement! What can it mean?

Hard. It means, that you can say and unsay things at pleasure. That you can address a lady in private, and deny it in public; that you have one story for us, and another for my daughter.

Mar. Daughter!—this lady your daughter?

Hard. Yes, sir, my only daughter; my Kate; whose else should she be?

Mar. Oh, the devil!

Miss Hard. Yes, sir, that very identical, tall, squinting lady, you were pleased to take me for [*Curtseying.*]. She that you addressed as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold, forward, agreeable rattle of the ladies' club; ha, ha, ha!

Mar. Zounds! there's no bearing this; it's worse than death!

Miss Hard. In which of your characters, sir, will you give us leave to address you? As the filtering gentleman, with locks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy; or the loud confident creature, that keeps it up with Mrs Mantrap, and old Mrs Biddy Buckskin, till three in the morning; ha, ha, ha!

Mar. O, curse on my noisy head! I never attempted to be impudent yet, that I was not taken down. I must be gone.

Hard. By the hand of my body, but you shall not! I see it was all a mistake, and I am rejoiced to find it. You shall not, sir, I tell you. I know she'll forgive you. Won't you forgive him, Kate? We'll all forgive you. Take courage, man.

[*They retire, she tormenting him to the back scene.*

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE, *and* TONY.

Mrs Hard. So, so, they're gone off! Let them go, I care not.

Hard. Who gone?

Mrs Hard. My dutiful niece and her gentleman, Mr Hastings, from town. He who came down with our modest visitor here.

Sir Cha. Who, my honest George Hastings? As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice.

Hard. Then, by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connexion!

Mrs Hard. Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune; that remains in this family, to console us for her loss.

Hard. Sure, Dorothy, you would not be so mercenary?

Mrs Hard. Ay, that's my affair, not yours. But, you know, if your son, when of age, refuses to marry his cousin, her whole fortune is then at her own disposal.

Hard. Ay, but he's not of age, and she has not thought proper to wait for his refusal.

Enter HASTINGS, *and* MISS NEVILLE.

Mrs Hard. [*Aside.*] What, returned so soon! I begin not to like it.

Hast. [*To* HARDCASTLE.] For my late attempt to fly off with your niece, let my present confusion be my punishment. We are now come back, to appeal from your justice to your humanity. By her father's consent, I first paid her my addresses, and our passions were first founded in duty.

Miss Nev. Since his death, I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity, I was ready even to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I am now recovered from the delusion, and hope, from your tenderness, what is denied me from a nearer connexion.

Mrs Hard. Pshaw, pshaw! this is all but the whining end of a modern novel.

Hard. Be it what it will, I'm glad they are come back to reclaim their due. Come hither, Tony, boy. Do you refuse this lady's hand, whom I now offer you?

Tony. What signifies my refusing? You know I can't refuse her till I'm of age, father.

Hard. While I thought concealing your age, boy, was likely to conduce to your improvement, I concurred with your mother's desire to keep it secret. But since I find she turns it to a wrong use, I must now declare, you have been of age these three months.

Tony. Of age! Am I of age, father?

Hard. Above three months.

Tony. Then you'll see the first use I'll make of my liberty. [*Taking* MISS NEVILLE'S *hand.*] Witness all men, by these presents, that I, Anthony Lumpkin, esquire, of Blank place, refuse you, Constantia Neville, spinster, of no place at all, for my true and lawful wife. So Constantia Neville may marry whom she pleases, and Tony Lumpkin is his own man again.

Sir Cha. O brave squire!

Hast. My worthy friend!

Mrs Hard. My undutiful offspring!

Mar. Joy, my dear George! I give you joy sincerely. And could I prevail upon my little tyrant here to be less arbitrary, I should be the happiest man alive, if you would return me the favour.

Hast. [*To* MISS HARDCASTLE.] Come, madam, you are now driven to the very last scene of all your contrivances. I know you like him. I'm sure he loves you; and you must and shall have him.

Hard. [*Joining their hands.*] And I say so too. Mr Marlow, if she makes as good a wife as she has a daughter, I don't believe you'll ever repent your bargain. So now, to supper. To-morrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the mistakes of the night shall be crowned with a merry morning; so, boy, take her: and, as you have been mistaken in the mistress, my wish is, that you may never be mistaken in the wife.

[*Exeunt.*

THE

SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

BY

KELLY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

GENERAL SAVAGE, *father to* CAPT. SAVAGE.
BELVILLE, *generous, but loose in his morals.*
TORRINGTON, *a lawyer.*
LEESON, *an attorney, nephew to* MRS TEMPEST.
CAPTAIN SAVAGE, *attached to* MISS WALSINGHAM.
CONNOLLY, *an Irishman,* LEESON'S *clerk.*
SPRUCE, *servant to* BELVILLE.
GHASTLY, LEECH, CROW, WOLF, *bailiffs.*

WOMEN.

MISS WALSINGHAM, *attached to* CAPT. SAVAGE.
MRS BELVILLE, *wife to* BELVILLE.
LADY RACHEL MILDEW, *passionately fond of the drama.*
MRS TEMPEST, *kept by* GENERAL SAVAGE.
MISS LEESON, *her niece.*
Maid.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An apartment at* BELVILLE'S.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE, *and* MISS WALSINGHAM.

Capt. Sav. HA, ha, ha! Well, Miss Walsingham, this fury is going; what a noble peal she has rung in Belville's ears!

Miss Wal. Did she see you, captain Savage?

Capt Sav. No, I took care of that; for though she is not married to my father, she has ten times the influence of a wife, and might injure me not a little with him, if I did not support her side of the question.

Miss Wal. It was a pleasant conceit of Mr Belville, to insinuate the poor woman was disordered in her senses!——

Capt Sav. And, did you observe how the termagant's violence of temper supported the probability of the charge?

Miss Wal. Yes; she became almost frantic, in reality, when she found herself treated like a mad-woman.

Capt. Sav. Belville's affected surprise, too, was admirable!

Miss Wal. Yes; the hypocritical composure of his countenance, and his counterfeit pity for the poor woman, were intolerable.

Capt. Sav. While that amiable creature, his wife, implicitly believed every syllable he said—

Miss Wal. And felt nothing but pity for the accuser, instead of paying the least regard to the accusation. But pray, is it really under a pretence of getting the girl upon the stage, that Belville has taken away Mrs Tempest's niece from the people she boarded with?

Capt. Sav. It is. Belville, ever on the look-out for fresh objects, met her in those primitive regions of purity, the Green-Boxes; where, discovering that she was passionately desirous of becoming an actress, he improved his acquaintance with her, in the fictitious character of an Irish manager, and she eloped last night, to be, as she imagines, the heroine of a Dublin theatre.

Miss Wal. So, then, as he has kept his real name artfully concealed, Mrs Tempest can, at most, but suspect him of Miss Leeson's seduction.

Capt. Sav. Of no more; and this, only, from the description of the people who saw him in company with her at the play. But I wish the affair may not have a serious conclusion; for she has a brother, a very spirited young fellow, who is a counsel in the Temple, and who will certainly call Belville to an account the moment he hears of it.

Miss Wal. And what will become of the poor creature after he has deserted her?

Capt. Sav. You know that Belville is generous to profusion, and has a thousand good qualities to counterbalance this single fault of gallantry, which contaminates his character.

Miss Wal. You men! you men!——You are such wretches, that there's no having a moment's satisfaction with you! and, what's still more provoking, there's no having a moment's satisfaction without you!

Capt. Sav. Nay, don't think us all alike.

Miss Wal. I'll endeavour to deceive myself; for, it is but a poor argument of your sincerity, to be the confidant of another's falsehood.

Capt. Sav. Nay, no more of this, my love; no people live happier than Belville and his wife; nor is there a man in England, notwithstanding all his levity, who considers his wife with a warmer degree of affection: if you have a friendship, therefore, for her, let her continue in an error, so necessary to her repose, and give no hint whatever of his gallantries to any body.

Miss Wal. If I had no pleasure in obliging you, I have too much regard for Mrs Belville, not to follow your advice; but you need not enjoin me so strongly on the subject, when you know I can keep a secret.

Capt Sav. You are all goodness: and the prudence, with which you have concealed our private engagements, has eternally obliged me. Had you trusted the secret even to Mrs Belville, it would not have been safe. She would have told her husband; and he is such a rattlescull, that, notwithstanding all his regard for me, he would have mentioned it in some moment of levity, and sent it in a course of circulation to my father.

Miss Wal. The peculiarity of your father's temper, joined to my want of fortune, made it necessary for me to keep our engagements inviolably secret. There is no merit, therefore, either in my prudence, or in my labouring assiduously to cultivate the good opinion of the general, since both were so necessary to my own happiness. Don't despise me for this acknowledgment now.

Capt. Sav. Bewitching softness! But your goodness, I flatter myself, will be speedily rewarded; you are now such a favourite with him, that he is eternally talking of you; and I really fancy he means to propose you to me himself; for, last night, in a few minutes after he had declared you would make the best wife in the world, he seriously asked me, if I had any aversion to matrimony!

Miss Wal. Why, that was a very great concession, indeed, as he seldom stoops to consult any body's inclinations.

Capt. Sav. So it was, I assure you; for, in the army, being used to nothing but command and obedience, he removes the discipline of the parade into his family, and no more expects his orders should be disputed, in matters of a domestic nature, than if they were delivered at the head of his regiment.

Miss Wal. And yet, Mrs Tempest, who, you say, is as much a storm in her nature as her name, is disputing them eternally.

Enter MR *and* MRS BELVILLE.

Bel. Well, Miss Walsingham, have not we had a pretty morning's visitor?

Miss Wal. Really, I think so; and I have been asking captain Savage how long the lady has been disordered in her senses?

Bel. Why will they let the poor woman abroad, without some body to take care of her?

Capt. Sav. O, she has her lucid intervals.

Miss Wal. I declare I shall be as angry with you as I am with Belville.

[*Aside to the captain.*

Mrs Bel. You can't think how sensibly she spoke at first.

Bel. I should have had no conception of her madness, if she had not brought so preposterous a charge against me.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Lady Rachel Mildew, madam, sends her compliments, and, if you are not particularly engaged, will do herself the pleasure of waiting upon you.

Mrs Bel. Our compliments, and we shall be glad to see her ladyship. [*Exit Servant.*

Bel. I wonder if lady Rachel knows that Torrington came to town last night from Bath!

Mrs Bel. I hope he has found benefit by the waters; for he is one of the best creatures ex-

isting; he's a downright parson Adams, in good-nature and simplicity.

Miss Wal. Lady Rachel will be quite happy at his return; and, it would be a laughable affair, if a match could be brought about between the old maid and the old batchelor.

Capt. Sav. Mr Torrington is too much taken up at Westminster-Hall, to think of paying his devoirs to the ladies, and too plain a speaker, I fancy, to be agreeable to lady Rachel.

Bel. You mistake the matter widely; she is deeply smitten with him; but honest Torrington is utterly unconscious of his conquest, and modestly thinks, that he has not a single attraction for any woman in the universe.

Mrs Bel. Yet, my poor aunt speaks sufficiently plain, in all conscience, to give him a different opinion of himself.

Miss Wal. Yes; and puts her charms into such repair, whenever she expects to meet him, that her cheeks look, for all the world, like a rasberry ice upon a ground of custard.

Capt. Sav. I thought Apollo was the only god of lady Rachel's idolatry; and that, in her passion for poetry, she had taken leave of all the less elevated affections.

Bel. O, you mistake again! the poets are eternally in love, and can by no means be calculated to describe the imaginary passions, without being very susceptible of the real ones.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. The man, madam, from Tavistock-street, has brought home the dresses for the masquerade, and desires to know, if there are any commands for him.

Mrs Bel. O! bid him stay till we see the dresses! [*Exit Servant.*

Miss Wal. They are only dominos.

Bel. I am glad of that; for characters are as difficult to be supported at the masquerade, as they are in real life. The last time I was at the Pantheon, a vestal virgin invited me to sup with her, and swore that her pocket had been picked by a justice of peace.

Miss Wal. Nay, that was not so bad as the Hamlet's ghost, that boxed with Henry the Eighth, and afterwards danced a hornpipe to the tune of Nancy Dawson! Ha, ha, ha!—We follow you, Mrs Belville. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* LEESON'S *chambers, in the temple.*

Enter LEESON.

Lee. Where is this clerk of mine? Connolly!

Con. [*Behind.*] Here, sir!

Lee. Have you copied the marriage-settlement, as I corrected it?

Enter CONNOLLY, *with pistols.*

Con. Ay, honey, an hour ago.

Lee. What! you have been trying those pistols?

Con. By my soul, I have been firing them this half hour, without once being able to make them go off.

Lee. They are plaguy dirty.

Con. In troth, so they are; I strove to brighten them up a little, but some misfortune attends every thing I do, for the more I clane them, the dirtier they are, honey.

Lee. You have had some of your usual daily visitors for money, I suppose?

Con. You may say that! and three or four of them are now hanging about the door, that I wish handsomely hanged any where else for bodering us.

Lee. No joking, Connolly! my present situation is a very disagreeable one.

Con. Faith, and so it is; but who makes it disagreeable? your aunt Tempest would let you have as much money as you please, but you won't condescend to be acquainted with her, though people in this country can be very intimate friends without seeing one another's faces for seven years.

Lee. Do you think me base enough to receive a favour from a woman, who has disgraced her family, and stoops to be a kept mistress? you see, my sister is already ruined by a connexion with her.

Con. Ah, sir, a good guinea is not the worse for coming through a bad hand! if it was, what would become of us lawyers? and, by my soul, many a high head in London would, at this minute, be very low, if they had not received favours even from much worse people than kept mistresses.

Lee. Others, Connolly, may prostitute their honour, as they please; mine is my chief possession, and I must take particular care of it.

Con. Honour, to be sure, is a very fine thing, sir; but I don't see how it is to be taken care of without a little money; your honour, to my knowledge, has not been in your own possession these two years; and the devil a crumb can you honestly swear by, till you get it out of the hands of your creditors.

Lee. I have given you a licence to talk, Connolly, because I know you are faithful: but I have not given you a liberty to sport with my misfortunes.

Con. You know I'd die to serve you, sir! but, of what use is your giving me leave to spake, if you oblige me to hould my tongue? 'tis out of pure love and affection that I put you in mind of your misfortunes.

Lee. Well, Connolly, a few days will, in all probability, enable me to redeem my honour, and to reward your fidelity; the lovely Emily, you know, has half consented to embrace the first opportunity of flying with me to Scotland, and the paltry trifles I owe, will not be missed in her fortune.

Con. But, dear sir, consider you are going to fight a duel this very evening, and if you should be kilt, I fancy you will find it a little difficult to run away afterwards with the lovely Emily!

Lee. If I fall, there will be an end to my misfortunes.

Con. But, surely, it will not be quite genteel, to go out of the world without paying your debts.

Lee. But how shall I stay in the world, Connolly, without punishing Belville for ruining my sister?

Con. O, the devil fly away with this honour! an ounce of common sense is worth a whole shipload of it, if we must prefer a bullet or a halter to a fine young lady and a great fortune!

Lee. We'll talk no more on the subject at present. Take this letter to Mr Belville; deliver it into his own hand, be sure; and bring me an answer: make haste, for I shall not stir out till you come back.

Con. By my soul, I wish you may be able to stir out then!—O, but that's true!

Lee. What's the matter?

Con. Why, sir, the gentleman I last lived clerk with, died lately, and left me a legacy of twenty guineas———

Lee. What! Is Mr Stanley dead?

Con. Faith, his friends have behaved very unkindly if he is not, for they have buried him these six weeks!

Lee. And what then?

Con. Why, sir, I received my little legacy this morning, and if you would be so good as to keep it for me, I would be much obliged to you.

Lee. Connolly, I understand you, but I am already shamefully in your debt; you have had no money from me this age——

Con. O, sir, that does not signify; if you are not kilt in this damned duel, you'll be able enough to pay me: if you are, I shan't want it.

Lee. Why so, my poor fellow?

Con. Because, though I am but your clerk, and though I think fighting the most foolish thing upon earth, I'm as much a gentleman as yourself, and have as much right to commit a murder in the way of duelling.

Lee. And what then? You have no quarrel with Mr Belville?

Con. I shall have a damned quarrel with him though, if you are kilt: your death shall be revenged, depend upon it; so, let that content you.

Lee. My dear Connolly, I hope I shan't want such a proof of your affection. How he distresses me!

Con. You will want a second, I suppose, in this affair? I stood second to my own brother in the Fifteen Acres; and, though that has made me detest the very thought of duelling ever since, yet, if you want a friend, I'll attend you to the field of death with a great deal of satisfaction.

Lee. I thank you, Connolly; but I think it extremely wrong in any man, who has a quarrel, to expose his friend to difficulties; we should not seek for redress, if we are not equal to the task of fighting our own battles; and I choose you particularly to carry my letter, because you may be supposed ignorant of the contents, and thought to be acting only in the ordinary course of your business.

Con. Say no more about it, honey; I will be back with you presently. [*Going, returns.*] I put the twenty guineas in your pocket, before you were up, sir; and I don't believe you would look for such a thing there, if I was not to tell you of it. [*Exit.*

Lee. This faithful, noble hearted creature!—but let me fly from thought; the business I have to execute will not bear the test of reflection. [*Exit.*

Re-enter CONNOLLY.

Con. As this is a challenge, I should not go without a sword; come down, little tickle-pitcher. [*Takes a sword.*] Some people may think me very conceited now; but as the dirtiest blacklegs in town can wear one without being stared at, I don't think it can suffer any disgrace by the side of an honest man. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to an apartment at* BELVILLE'S.

Enter MRS BELVILLE.

Mrs Bel. How strangely this affair of Mrs Tempest hangs upon my spirits, though I have every reason, from the tenderness, the politeness, and the generosity of Mrs Belville, as well as from the woman's behaviour, to believe the whole charge the result of a disturbed imagination. Yet, suppose it should be actually true:—Heigho! well, suppose it should; I would endeavour—I think I would endeavour to keep my temper: a frowning face never recovered a heart, that was not to be fixed with a smiling one: but women, in general, forget this grand article of the matrimonial creed entirely; the dignity of insulted virtue obliges them to play the fool, whenever their Corydons play the libertine; and poh! they must pull down the house about the traitor's ears, though they are themselves to be crushed in pieces by the ruins.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Lady Rachel Mildew, madam. [*Exit Servant.*

Enter LADY RACHAEL MILDEW.

Lady Rach. My dear, how have you done since the little eternity of my last seeing you?—Mr Torrington is come to town, I hear.

Mrs Bel. He is, and must be greatly flattered to find, that your ladyship has made him the hero of your new comedy.

Lady Rach. Yes, I have drawn him, as he is, an honest practitioner of the law; which is, I fancy, no very common character.

Mrs Bel. And it must be a vast acquisition to the theatre?

Lady Rach. Yet the managers of both houses have refused my play; have refused it peremptorily, though I offered to make them a present of it!

Mrs Bel. That's very surprising, when you offered to make them a present of it.

Lady Rach. They alledge, that the audiences are tired of crying at comedies; and insist that my despairing shepherdess is absolutely too dismal for representation.

Mrs Bel. What! though you have introduced a lawyer in a new light?

Lady Rach. Yes, and have a boarding-school romp, that slaps her mother's face, and throws a bason of scalding water at her governess.

Mrs Bel. Why surely these are capital jokes!

Lady Rach. But the managers can't find them out. However, I am determined to bring it out somewhere; and I have discovered such a treasure for my boarding-school romp, as exceeds the most sanguine expectation of criticism.

Mrs Bel. How fortunate!

Lady Rach. Going to Mrs Le Blond, my milliner's, this morning, to see some contraband silks (for you know there's a foreign minister just arrived), I heard a loud voice rehearsing Juliet from the dining-room; and, upon inquiry, found, that it was a country girl just eloped from her friends in town, to go upon the stage with an Irish manager.

Mrs Bel. Ten to one the strange woman's niece, who has been here this morning.

[*Aside.*

Lady Rach. Mrs Le Blond has some doubts about the manager, it seems, though she has not seen him yet, because the apartments are very expensive, and were taken by a fine gentleman out of livery.

Mrs Bel. What am I to think of this? Pray, lady Rachel, as you have conversed with this young actress, I suppose you could procure me a sight of her?

Lady Rach. This moment, if you will. I am very intimate with her already; but pray keep the matter a secret from your husband, for he is so witty, you know, upon my passion for the drama, that I shall be teased to death by him.

Mrs Bel. O, you may be very sure, that your secret is safe, for I have a most particular reason to keep it from Mr Belville; but he is coming this way with Captain Savage: let us, at present, avoid him. [*Exeunt.*

Enter BELVILLE *and* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Capt. Sav. You are a very strange man, Belville; you are for ever tremblingly solicitous about the happiness of your wife, yet for ever endangering it by your passion for variety.

Bel. Why, there is certainly a contradiction between my principles and my practice; but, if ever you marry, you'll be able to reconcile it perfectly. Possession, Savage! O, possession, is a miserable whetter of the appetite in love! and I own myself so sad a fellow, that, though I would not exchange Mrs Belville's mind for any woman's upon earth, there is scarcely a woman's person upon earth, which is not to me a stronger object of attraction.

Capt. Sav. Then, perhaps, in a little time you'll be weary of Miss Leeson?

Bel. To be sure I shall; though, to own the truth, I have not yet carried my point conclusively with the little monkey.

Capt. Sav. Why, how the plague has she escaped a moment in your hands?

Bel. By a mere accident. She came to the lodgings, which my man Spruce prepared for her, rather unexpectedly last night, so that I happened to be engaged particularly in another quarter —you understand me?—and the damned aunt found me so much employment all the morning, that I could only send a message by Spruce, promising to call upon her the first moment I had to spare in the course of the day.

Capt. Sav. And so you are previously satisfied that you shall be tired of her?

Bel. Tired of her? Why, I am, at this moment, in pursuit of fresh game, against the hour of satiety: game, that you know to be exquisite: and I fancy I shall bring it down, though it is closely guarded by a deal of that pride, which passes for virtue with the generality of your mighty good people.

Capt. Sav. Indeed! and may a body know this wonder?

Bel. You are to be trusted with any thing, for you are the closest fellow I ever knew, and the the rack itself would hardly make you discover one of your own secrets to any body—What do you think of Miss Walsingham?

Capt. Sav. Miss Walsingham! Death and the devil! [*Aside.*

Bel. Miss Walsingham.

Capt. Sav. Why surely she has not received your addresses with any degree of approbation?

Bel. With every degree of approbation I could expect.

Capt. Sav. She has?

Bel. Ay: why this news surprises you?

Capt. Sav. It does, indeed!

Bel. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing to think what a happy dog Miss Walsingham's husband is likely to be!

Capt. Sav. A very happy dog, truly!

Bel. She's a delicious girl, isn't she, Savage? but she'll require a little more trouble; for a fine woman, like a fortified town, to speak in your father's language, demands a regular siege; and

we must even allow her the honours of war, to magnify the greatness of our own victory.

Capt Sav. Well, it amazes me how you gay fellows ever have the presumption to attack a woman of principle. Miss Walsingham has no apparent levity of any kind about her.

Bel. No; but she has continued in my house after I had whispered my passion in her ear, and gave me a second opportunity of addressing her improperly. What greater encouragement could I desire?

Enter SPRUCE.

Well, Spruce, what are your commands?

Spruce. My lady is just gone out with lady Rachel, sir.

Bel. I understand you.

Spruce. I believe you do. [*Aside.*] [*Exit.*

Capt. Sav. What is the English of these significant looks between Spruce and you?

Bel. Only that Miss Walsingham is left alone, and that I have now an opportunity of entertaining her. You must excuse me, Savage; you must, upon my soul; but not a word of this affair to any body; because, when I shake her off my hands, there may be fools enough to think of her upon terms of honourable matrimony.

[*Exit.*

Capt. Sav. So, here's a discovery! a precious discovery! and while I have been racking my imagination, and sacrificing my interest, to promote the happiness of this woman, she has been listening to the addresses of another! to the addresses of a married man! the husband of her friend, and the intimate friend of her intended husband! By Belville's own account, however, she has not yet proceeded to any criminal lengths —But why did she keep the affair a secret from me? or why did she continue in his house, after a repeated declaration of his unwarrantable attachment? What's to be done? If I open my engagement with her to Belville, I am sure he will instantly desist; but, then, her honour is left in a state extremely questionable——It shall be still concealed. While it remains unknown, Belville will himself tell me every thing; and doubt, upon an occasion of this nature, is infinitely more insupportable than the downright falsehood of the woman whom we love. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in* GENERAL SAVAGE'S *house.*

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE *and* TORRINGTON.

Gen. Sav. ZOUNDS! Torrington, give me quarter, when I surrender up my sword. I own that, for these twenty years, I have been suffering all the inconveniencies of marriage, without tasting any one of its comforts, and rejoicing in an imaginary freedom, while I was really grovelling in chains.

Tor. In the dirtiest chains upon earth;—yet you wou'dn't be convinced, but laughed at all your married acquaintance as slaves, when not one of them put up with half so much from the worst wife, as you were obliged to crouch under from a kept mistress.

Gen. Sav. 'Tis too true. But you know she sacrificed much for me;—you know that she was the widow of a colonel, and refused two very advantageous matches on my account.——

Tor. If she was the widow of a judge, and had refused a high chancellor, she was still a devil incarnate, and you were in course a madman to live with her.

Gen. Sav. You don't remember her care of me when I have been sick.

Tor. I recollect, however, her usage of you in health, and you may easily find a tenderer nurse, when you are bound over by the gout or the rheumatism.

Gen. Sav. Well, well, I agree with you that she is a devil incarnate; but I am this day determined to part with her for ever.

Tor. Not you indeed.

Gen. Sav. What, don't I know my own mind?

Tor. Not you indeed, when she is in the question: with every body else, your resolution is as unalterable as a determination in the house of peers; but Mrs Tempest is your fate, and she reverses your decrees with as little difficulty as a fraudulent debtor now-a-days procures his certificate under a commission of bankruptcy.

Gen. Sen. Well, if, like the Roman Fabius, I conquer by delay, in the end there will be no great reason to find fault with my generalship. The proposal of parting now comes from herself.

Tor. O, you daren't make it for the life of you!

Gen. Sav. You must know, that this morning we had a smart cannonading on Belville's account; and she threatens, as I told you before, to quit my house, if I don't challenge him for taking away her niece.

Tor. That fellow is the very devil among the women! and yet there isn't a man in England fonder of his wife.

Gen. Sav. Poh, if the young minx hadn't surrendered to him, she would have capitulated to somebody else; and I shall at this time be doubly obliged to him, if he is any ways instrumental in getting the aunt off my hands.

Tor. Why at this time?

Gen. Sav. Because, to shew you how fixed my resolution is to be a keeper no longer, I mean to marry immediately.

Tor. And can't you avoid being pressed to

death, like a felon, who refuses to plead, without incurring a sentence of perpetual imprisonment?

Gen. Sav. I fancy you would yourself have no objection to a perpetual imprisonment in the arms of Miss Walsingham?

Tor. But have you any reason to think, that, upon examination in a case of love, she would give a favourable reply to your interrogatories?

Gen. Sav. The greatest—do you think I'd hazard such an engagement, without being perfectly sure of my ground? Notwithstanding my present connection won't suffer me to see a modest woman at my own house—she always treats me with particular attention, whenever I visit at Belville's, or meet her any where else—If fifty young fellows are present, she directs all her assiduities to the old soldier, and my son has a thousand times told me, that she professes the highest opinion of my understanding.

Tor. And truly you give a notable proof of your understanding, in thinking of a woman almost young enough to be your grand daughter.

Gen. Sav. Nothing like an experienced chief to command in any garrison.

Tor. Recollect the state of your present citadel.

Gen. Sav. Well, if I am blown up by my own mine, I shall be the only sufferer—There's another thing I want to talk of; I am going to marry my son to Miss Moreland.

Tor. Miss Moreland!—

Gen. Sav. Belville's sister.

Tor. O, ay, I remember, that Moreland had got a good estate to assume the name of Belville.

Gen. Sav. I haven't yet mentioned the matter to my son; but I settled the affair with the girl's mother yesterday, and she only waits to communicate it to Belville, who is her oracle, you know.

Tor. And are you sure the captain will like her?

Gen. Sav. I am not so unreasonable as to insist upon his liking her; I shall only insist upon his marrying her.

Tor. What, whether he likes her or not?

Gen. Sav. When I issue my orders, I expect them to be obeyed; and don't look for an examination into their propriety.

Tor. What a delightful thing it must be to live under a military government, where a man is not to be troubled with the exercise of his understanding!

Gen. Sav. Miss Moreland has thirty thousand pounds——That's a large sum of ammunition-money.

Tor. Ay, but a marriage merely on the score of fortune, is only gilding the death-warrant sent down for the execution of a prisoner. However, as I know your obstinate attachment to what you once resolve, I sha'n't pretend to argue with you. Where are the papers which you want me to consider?

Gen. Sav. They are in my library—File off with me to the next room, and they shall be laid before you—But first I'll order the chariot; for the moment I have your opinion, I purpose to sit down regularly before Miss Walsingham—Who waits there?

Enter a Servant.

Gen. Sav. Is Mrs Tempest at home?

Ser. Yes, sir, just come in, and just going out again.

Gen. Sav. Very well; order the chariot to be got ready.

Ser. Sir, one of the pannels was broke last night at the opera-house.

Gen. Sav. Sir, I didn't call you to have the pleasure of your conversation, but to have obedience paid to my orders.

Tor. Go, order the chariot, you blockhead!

Ser. With the broken pannel, sir?

Gen. Sav. Yes, you rascal! if both pannels were broke, and the back shattered to pieces.

Ser. The coachman thinks that one of the wheels is damaged, sir.

Gen. Sav. Don't attempt to reason, you dog, but execute your orders.——Bring the chariot without the wheels, if you cann't bring it with them.

Tor. Ay, bring it, if you reduce it to a sledge, and let your master look like a malefactor for high treason, on his journey to Tyburn.

Enter MRS TEMPEST.

Mrs Tem. General Savage, is the house to be for ever a scene of noise with your domineering?—The chariot shan't be brought—it won't be fit for use 'till it is repaired—and John shall drive it this very minute to the coach maker's.

Gen. Sav. Nay, my dear, if it isn't fit for use, that's another thing.

Tor. Here's the experienced chief, that's fit to command in any garrison! [*Aside.*

Gen. Sav. Go, order me the coach then. [*To the Servant.*

Mrs Temp. You can't have the coach.

Gen. Sav. And why so, my love?

Mrs Tem. Because I want it for myself.——Robert, get a hack for your master—though, indeed, I don't see what business he has out of the house. [*Exeunt* MRS TEMPEST *and Servant.*

Tor. When you issue orders, you expect them to be obeyed, and don't look for an examination into their propriety.

Gen. Sav. The fury——this has steeled me against her for ever, and nothing on earth can now prevent me from drumming her out immediately.

Mrs Tem. [*Behind.*] An unreasonable old

fool—But I'll make him know who governs this house!

Gen. Sav. Zounds! here she comes again! she has been lying in ambuscade, I suppose, and has overheard us.

Tor. What if she has? you are steeled against her for ever.

Gen. Sav. No, she's not coming—she's going down stairs—and now, dear Torrington, you must be as silent as a centinel on an out-post about this affair. If that virago was to hear a syllable of it, she might perhaps attack Miss Walsingham in her very camp, and defeat my whole plan of operations.

Tor. I thought you were determined to drum her out immediately! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* BELVILLE'S.

Enter MISS WALSINGHAM, *followed by* BELVILLE.

Miss Wal. I beg, sir, that you will insult me no longer with your solicitations of this nature—Give me proofs of your sincerity indeed! What proofs of your sincerity can your situation admit of, if I could be even weak enough to think of you with partiality at all?

Bel. If our affections, madam, were under the government of our reason, circumstanced as I am, this unhappy bosom wouldn't be torn by passion for Miss Walsingham——Had I been blessed with your acquaintance before I saw Mrs Belville, my hand, as well as my heart, would have been humbly offered to your acceptance—fate, however, has ordered it otherwise, and it is cruel to reproach me with that situation as a crime, which ought to be pitied as my greatest misfortune.

Miss Wal. He's actually forcing tears into his eyes—However, I'll mortify him severely. [*Aside.*

Bel. But such proofs of sincerity as my situation can admit of, you shall yourself command, as my only business in existence is to adore you.

Miss Wal. His only business in existence to adore me! [*Aside.*

Bel. Prostrate at your feet, my dearest Miss Walsingham [*Kneeling.*], behold a heart eternally devoted to your service—You have too much good sense, madam, to be the slave of custom, and too much humanity not to pity the wretchedness you have caused—Only, therefore, say that you commiserate my sufferings—I'll ask no more—and surely that may be said, without any injury to your purity, to snatch even an enemy from distraction—where's my handkerchief? [*Aside.*

Miss Wal. Now, to answer in his own way, and to make him ridiculous to himself. [*Aside.*] If I thought, if I could think [*Affecting to weep.*] that these protestations were real!

Bel. How can you, madam, be so unjust to your own merit? how can you be so cruelly doubtful of my solemn asseverations?—Here I again kneel, and swear eternal love!

Miss Wal. I don't know what to say—but there is one proof—[*Affecting to weep.*]

Bel. Name it, my angel, this moment, and make me the happiest of mankind!

Miss Wal. Swear to be mine for ever.

Bel. I have sworn it a thousand times, my charmer! and I will swear it to the last moment of my life.

Miss Wal. Why then—but don't look at me, I beseech you—I don't know how to speak it—

Bel. The delicious emotion!—do not check the generous tide of tenderness, that fills me with such ecstacy.

Miss Wal. You'll despise me for this weakness.

Bel. This weakness—this generosity, which will demand my everlasting gratitude.

Miss Wal. I am a fool—but there is a kind of fatality in this affair—and I do consent to go off with you.

Bel. Eternal blessings on your condescension!

Miss Wal. You are irresistible, and I am ready to fly with you to any part of the world.

Bel. Fly to any part of the world indeed—you shall fly by yourself then! [*Aside.*] You are the most lovely, the most tender creature in the world, and thus again let me thank you:—O, Miss Walsingham! I cannot express how happy you've made me!—But where's the necessity of our leaving England?

Miss Wal. I thought he wou'dn't like to go abroad. [*Aside.*] That I may possess the pleasure of your company unrivalled.

Bel. I must cure her of this taste for travelling— [*Aside.*

Miss Wal. You don't answer me, Mr Belville?

Bel. Why I was turning the consequence of your proposal in my thoughts, as going off—going off—you know——

Miss Wal. Why, going off, you know, is going off—And what objection can you have to going off?

Bel. Why, going off will subject you at a certainty to the slander of the world; whereas, by staying at home, we may not only have numberless opportunities of meeting, but, at the same time, prevent suspicion itself from ever breathing on your reputation.

Miss Wal. I didn't dream of your starting any difficulties, sir—Just now I was dearer to you than all the world.

Bel. And so you are, by Heaven!

Miss Wal. Why won't you sacrifice the world then at once to obtain me?

Bel. Surely, my dearest life, you must know the necessity, which every man of honour is under, of keeping up his character?

Miss Wal. So, here's this fellow swearing to

ten thousand lies, and yet talking very gravely about his honour, and his character! [*Aside.*] Why, to be sure, in these days, Mr Belville, the instances of conjugal infidelity are so very scarce, and men of fashion are so remarkable for a tender attachment to their wives, that I don't wonder at your circumspection—But do you think I can stoop to accept you by halves, or admit of any partnership in your heart?

Bel. O, you must do more than that, if you have any thing to say to me. [*Aside.*] Surely, madam, when you know my whole soul unalterably your own, you will permit me to preserve those appearances with the world, which are indispensibly requisite—Mrs Belville is a most excellent woman: however, it may be my fortune to be devoted to another—Her happiness, besides, constitutes a principal part of my felicity; and if I was publicly to forsake her, I should be hunted as a monster from society.

Miss Wal. Then, I suppose, it is by way of promoting Mrs Belville's repose, sir, that you make love to other women; and by way of shewing the nicety of your honour, that you attempt the the purity of such as your own roof peculiarly entitles to protection. For the honour intended to me—thus low to the ground let me thank you, Mr Belville.

Bel. Laughed at, by all the stings of mortification!

Miss Wal. Good bye—Don't let this accident mortify your vanity too much—but take care, the next time you vow eternal love, that the object is neither tender enough to sob—sob—at your distress; nor provoking enough to make a proposal of leaving England—How greatly a little common sense can lower these fellows of extraordinary impudence!

[*Exit* MISS WALSINGHAM.

Bel. So, then, I am fairly taken in, and she has been only diverting herself with me all this time—however, lady fair, I may chance to have the laugh in a little time on my side; for if you can sport in this manner about the flame, I think it must, in the run, lay hold of your wings—what shall I do in this affair?—she sees the matter in its true light, and there's no good to be expected from thumping of bosoms, or squeezing white handkerchiefs—No, these won't do with women of sense; and, in a short time, they'll be ridiculous to the very babies of a boarding school.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Capt. Sav. Well, Belville, what news? You have had a fresh opportunity with Miss Walsingham.

Bel. Why, faith, Savage, I've had a most extraordinary scene with her, and yet have but little reason to brag of my good fortune, though she offered, in express terms, to run away with me.

Capt. Sav. Prithee explain yourself, man; she cou'dn't surely be so shameless!

Bel. O, her offering to run away with me was by no means the worst part of the affair.

Capt. Sav. No! then it must be damned bad indeed! but prithee hurry to an explanation.

Bel. Why, then, the worst part of the affair is, that she was laughing at me the whole time; and made this proposal of an elopement, with no other view, than to shew me in strong colours to myself, as a very dirty fellow to the best wife in England.

Capt. Sav. I am very easy. [*Aside.*

Enter SPRUCE.

Spruce. Sir, there is an Irish gentleman below with a letter for you, who will deliver it to nobody but yourself.

Bel. Shew him up, then.

Spruce. Yes, sir.

Capt. Sav. It may be on business, Belville; I'll take my leave of you.

Bel. O, by no means; I can have no business which I desire to keep from you, though you are the arrantest miser of your confidence upon earth, and would rather trust your life in any body's hands, than even a paltry amour with the apprentice of a milliner.

Enter CONNOLLY.

Con. Gintlemin, your most obedient! pray, which of you is Mr Belville?

Bel. My name is Belville, at your service, sir.

Con. I have a little bit of a letter for you, sir.

Bel. [*Reads.*]

'SIR,

'The people where Miss Leeson lately lodged, 'asserting positively that you have taken her 'away in a fictitious character, the brother of 'that unhappy girl thinks himself obliged to de-'mand satisfaction for the injury you have done 'his family. Though a stranger to your person, 'he is sufficiently acquainted with your reputation 'for spirit, and shall, therefore, make no doubt 'of seeing you with a case of pistols, near the 'ring in Hyde Park, at eight o'clock this evening, 'to answer the claims of GEORGE LEESON.

'*To* CRAGGS BELVILLE, *Esq.*

Capt. Sav. Eight o'clock in the evening! 'tis a strange time!

Con. Why so, honey? A fine evening is as good a time for a bad action as a fine morning; and, if a man of sense can be such a fool as to fight a duel, he should never sleep upon the matter; for, the more he thinks of it, the more he must feel himself ashamed of his resolution.

Bel. A pretty letter!

Con. O yes; an invitation to a brace of bullets is a very pretty thing!

Bel. For a challenge, however, 'tis very civilly written.

Con. Faith, if it was written to me, I should not be very fond of such civility! I wonder he does not sign himself, your most obedient servant!

Capt. Sav. I told you Leeson's character, and what would become of this damned business! but your affairs—are they settled, Belville?

Bel. O, they are always settled!—for, as this is a country where people occasionally die, I take constant care to be prepared for contingencies.

Con. Occasionally die!—I'll be very much obliged to you, sir, if you will tell me the country where people do not die? for I'll immediately go and end my days there!

Bel. Ha, ha, ha!

Con. Faith, you may laugh, gintlemin! but, though I am a foolish Irishman, and come about a foolish piece of business, I'd prefer a snug birth in this world, bad as it is, to the finest coffin in all Christendom!

Bel. I am surprised, sir, that, thinking, in this manner, you would be the bearer of a challenge!

Con. And well you may, sir!—But we must often take a pleasure in serving our friends, by doing things that are very disagreeable to us.

Capt. Sav. Then, you think Mr Leeson much to blame, perhaps, for hazarding his life where he can by no means repair the honour of his sister.

Con. Indeed, and I do—But, I shall think this gintlemin, begging his pardon, much more to blame for meeting him!

Bel. And, why so, sir?—You would not have me disappoint your friend?

Con. Faith, and that I would!—He, poor lad, may have some reason at present to be tired of the world; but, you have a fine estate, a fine wife, a fine parcel of children!—In short, honey, you have every thing to make you fond of living; and, the devil burn me, was I in your case, if I'd stake my own happiness against the misery of any man.

Bel. I am very much obliged to your advice, sir; though, on the present occasion, I cannot adopt it: be so good as to present my compliments to your friend, and tell him, I will certainly do myself the honour of attending his appointment.

Con. Why, then, upon my soul, I am very sorry for it.

Capt. Sav. 'Tis not very customary, sir, with gentlemen of Ireland to oppose an affair of honour.

Con. They are like the gintlemin of England, sir; they are brave to a fault; yet, I hope to see the day that it will be infamous to draw the swords of either against any body but the enemies of their country. [*Exit* CON.

Bel. I am quite charmed with this honest Hibernian; and would almost fight a duel for the pleasure of his acquaintance.

Capt. Sav. Come, step with me a little, and let us consider, whether there may not be some method of accommodating this cursed business.

Bel. Poh! don't be uneasy upon my account; my character, with regard to affairs of this nature, is unhappily too well established; and you may be sure that I shan't fight with Leeson.

Capt. Sav. No!——You have injured him greatly.

Bel. The very reason, of all others, why I should not cut his throat. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SPRUCE.

Spruce. What! the devil, this master of mine has got a duel upon his hands! Zounds! I am sorry for that; he is a prince of a fellow! and a good subject must always love his prince, though he may now and then be a little out of humour with his actions.

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE.

Gen. Sav. Your hall-door standing open, Spruce, and none of your sentinels being on guard, I have surprised your camp thus far, without resistance. Where is your master?

Spruce. Just gone out with captain Savage, sir.

Gen. Sav. Is your lady at home?

Spruce. No, sir, but Miss Walsingham is at home; shall I inform her of your visit?

Gen. Sav. There is no occasion to inform her of it, for here she is, Spruce. [*Exit* SPRUCE.

Enter MISS WALSINGHAM.

Miss Wal. General Savage, your most humble servant!

Gen. Sav. My dear Miss Walsingham, it is rather cruel, that you should be left at home by yourself, and yet; I am greatly rejoiced to find you at present without company.

Miss Wal. I can't but think myself in the best company, when I have the honour of your conversation, general.

Gen. Sav. You flatter me too much, madam: yet, I am come to talk with you on a serious affair, Miss Walsingham; an affair of importance to me, and to yourself:——Have you leisure to favour me with a short audience, if I beat a parley?

Miss Wal. Any thing of importance to you, sir, is always sufficient to command my leisure. ——'Tis as the captain suspected. [*Aside.*

Gen. Sav. You tremble, my lovely girl; but don't be alarmed; for, though my business is of an important nature, I hope it won't be of a disagreeable one.

Miss Wal. And yet I am greatly agitated! [*Aside.*

Gen. Sav. Soldiers, Miss Walsingham, are said to be generally favoured by the kind partiality of the ladies!

Miss Wal. The ladies are not without grati-

tude, sir, to those who devote their lives peculiarly to the service of their country!

Gen. Sav. Generously said, madam! Then, give me leave, without any masked battery, to ask, if the heart of an honest soldier is a prize at all worth your acceptance?

Miss Wal. Upon my word, sir, there's no masked battery in this question.

Gen. Sav. I am as fond of a coup-de-main, madam, in love, as in war; and hate the tedious method of sapping a town, when there is a possibility of entering sword in hand!

Miss Wal. Why, really, sir, a woman may as well know her own mind, when she is summoned by the trumpet of a lover, as when she undergoes all the tiresome formality of a siege. You see I have caught your own mode of conversing, general.

Gen. Sav. And a very great compliment I consider it, madam: But, now that you have candidly confessed an acquaintance with your own mind, answer me with that frankness for which every body admires you so much, Have you any objection to change the name of Walsingham?

Miss Wal. Why, then, frankly, general Savage, I say, no.

Gen. Sav. Ten thousand thanks to you for this kind declaration.

Miss Wal. I hope you won't think it a forward one?

Gen. Sav. I'd sooner see my son run away in the day of battle—I'd sooner think lord Russel was bribed by Lewis the XIVth, and sooner vilify the memory of Algernon Sydney.

Miss Wal. How unjust it was ever to suppose the general a tyrannical father! [*Aside.*

Gen. Sav. You have told me condescendingly, Miss Walsingham, that you have no objection to change your name; I have but one question more to ask.

Miss Wal. Pray, propose it.

Gen. Sav. Would the name of Savage be disagreeable to you?—Speak frankly again, my dear girl!

Miss Wal. Why, then, again I frankly say, no.

Gen. Sav. You make me too happy! and though I shall readily own, that a proposal of this nature would come with more propriety from my son———

Miss Wal. I am much better pleased that you make the proposal yourself, sir.

Gen. Sav. You are too good to me.—Torrington thought that I should meet with a repulse. [*Aside.*

Miss Wal. Have you communicated this business to the captain, sir?

Gen. Sav. No, my dear madam, I did not think that at all necessary. I have always been attentive to the captain's happiness, and I propose, that he shall be married in a few days.

Miss Wal. What, whether I will or no?

Gen. Sav. O, you can have no objection.

Miss Wal. I must be consulted, however, about the day, general: but nothing in my power shall be wanting to make him happy.

Gen Sav. Obliging loveliness!

Miss Wal You may imagine, that, if I was not previously impress in favour of your proposal, it would not have met my concurrence so readily.

Gen. Sav. Then you own, that I had a previous friend in the garrison?

Miss Wal. I don't blush to acknowledge it, when I consider the accomplishments of the object, sir.

Gen. Sav. O, this is too much, madam! the principal merit of the object is his passion for Miss Walsingham.

Miss Wal. Don't say that, general, I beg of you; for I don't think there are many women in the kingdom, who could behold him with indifference.

Gen. Sav. Ah, you flattering, flattering angel! —and yet, by the memory of Marlborough, my lovely girl, it was the idea of a prepossession on your part, which encouraged me to hope for a favourable reception.

Miss Wal. Then I must have been very indiscreet, for I laboured to conceal that prepossession as much as possible.

Gen. Sav. You couldn't conceal it from me! you couldn't conceal it from me!—The female heart is a field which I am thoroughly acquainted with, and which has, more than once, been a witness to my victories, madam.

Miss Wal. I don't at all doubt your success with the ladies, general; but, as we now understand one another so perfectly, you will give me leave to retire.

Gen. Sav. One word, my dear creature, and no more; I shall wait upon you some time today, with Mr Torrington, about the necessary settlements.

Miss Wal. You must do as you please, general; you are invincible in every thing.

Gen. Sav. And, if you please, we'll keep every thing a profound secret, till the articles are all settled, and the definite treaty ready for execution.

Miss Wal. You may be sure, that delicacy will not suffer me to be communicative on the subject, sir.

Gen. Sav. Then leave every thing to my management.

Miss Wal. I can't trust a more noble negociator. [*Exit.*

Gen. Sav. The day's my own. [*Sings.*

Britons, strike home! strike home! Revenge, &c.
[*Exit singing*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—MISS LEESON'S *lodgings*.

Enter LADY RACHEL MILDEW, MRS BELVILLE, *and* MISS LEESON.

Lady Rach. WELL, Mrs Belville, I am extremely glad you agree with me in opinion of this young lady's qualifications for the stage. Don't you think she'd play Miss Headstrong admirably in my comedy?

Mrs Bel. Yes, indeed, I think she possesses a natural fund of spirit, very much adapted to the character.—'Tis impossible, surely, that this hoyden can have a moment's attraction for Mr Belville! [*Aside.*

Miss Lee. You are very obliging, ladies; but I have no turn for comedy; my forte is tragedy intirely.

'Alphonso! O Alphonso! to thee I call,' &c.

Lady Rach. But, my dear, is there none of our comedies to your taste?

Miss Lee. O, yes; some of the sentimental ones are very pretty, there's such little difference between them and tragedies.

Lady Rach. And pray, my dear, how long have you been engaged to Mr Frankly?

Miss Lee. I only came away last night, and hav'n't seen Mr Frankly since, though I expect him every moment.

Mrs Bel. Last night! just as Mrs Tempest mentioned. [*Aside.*

Lady Rach. You had the concurrence of your friends?

Miss Lee. Not I, madam; Mr Frankly said, I had too much genius to mind my friends, and as I should want nothing from them, there was no occasion to consult them in the affair.

Lady Rach. Then Osbaldiston is not your real name, perhaps?

Miss Lee. O no; nor do I tell my real name: I chose Osbaldiston, because it was a long one, and would make a striking appearance in the bills.

Mrs Bel. I wish we could see Mr Frankly.

Miss Lee. Perhaps you may, madam, for he designs to give me a lesson every day, 'till we are ready to set off for Ireland.

Lady Rach. Suppose then, my dear, you would oblige us with a scene in Juliet, by way of shewing your proficiency to Mrs Belville.

Miss Lee. Will you stand up for Romeo?

Lady Rach. With all my heart, and I'll give you some instructions.

Miss Lee. I beg pardon, madam; I'll learn to act under nobody but Mr Frankly. This room is without a carpet; if you will step into the next, ladies, I'll endeavour to oblige you.

'Shall I not be environed, distraught'——

This way, ladies.

Lady Rach. Pray, madam, shew us the way.

[*Exeunt* MISS LEESON *and* LADY RACHEL.

Mrs Bel. I'll prolong this mummery as much as possible, in hopes the manager may come. Lie still, poor fluttering heart! it cannot be the lord of all your wishes! it cannot, surely, be your adored Belville! [*Exit.*

Re-enter MISS LEESON.

Miss Lee. Hav'n't I left my Romeo and Juliet here? O yes, there it is.

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. ——'O, were those eyes in heaven,
'They'd through the starry region shine so bright,
'That birds would sing, and think it was the morn!'

Miss Lee. Ah, my dear Mr Frankly! I'm so glad you are come! I was dying to see you.

Bel. Kiss me, my dear—why did'nt you send me word of your intention to come away last night?

Miss Lee. I hadn't time: but as I knew where the lodgings were, I thought I should be able to find you by a note to the coffee-house I always directed to.

Bel. Kiss me again, my little sparkler!

Miss Lee. Nay, I won't be kissed in this manner! for, though I am going on the stage, I intend to have some regard for my character. But, ha, ha, ha! I am glad you are come now: I have company above stairs.

Bel. Company! that's unlucky at this time, for I wanted to make you entirely easy about your character. [*Aside.*]——And pray, my dear, who is your company? You know we must be very cautious, for fear of your relations.

Miss Lee. O, they are only ladies. But one of them is the most beautiful creature in the world!

Bel. The devil she is!

Miss Lee. 'An earth-treading star, and makes dim heaven's light.'

Bel. Zounds! I'll take a peep at the star; who knows but I may have an opportunity of making another actress? [*Aside.*

Miss Lee. Come, charmer! charmer!

Bel. ——'Wert thou as far,
'As that vast shore, washed by the farthest sea,
'I would adventure for such merchandise.'
Now let's see what fortune has sent us above stairs. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to a dining-room at* MISS LEESON'S.

MRS BELVILLE *and* LADY RACHEL *discovered.*

Mrs Bel. This is a most ignorant young creature, Lady Rachel.

Lady Rach. Why, I think she is——did you observe how she slighted my offer of instructing her?

Enter MISS LEESON.

Miss Lee. Ladies! ladies! here he is! here is Mr Frankly!

Enter BELVILLE *bowing very low, and not seeing the ladies.*

Bel. Ladies, your most obedient.

Mrs Bel. Let me, if possible, recollect myself—Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

Bel. Zounds! let me out of the house!

Lady Rach. What do I see?

Miss Lee. You seem, ladies, to know this gentleman?

Mrs Bel. [*Taking hold of him.*] You shan't go, renegade——You laughed at my credulity this morning, and I must now laugh at your embarrassment.

Bel. What a kind thing it would be in any body to blow out my stupid brains!

Lady Rach. I'll mark this down for an incident in my comedy.

Miss Lee. What do you hang your head for, Mr Frankly?

Bel. Be so good as to ask that lady, my dear. The devil has been long in my debt, and now he pays me home with a witness.

Mrs Bel. What a cruel thing it is to let Mrs Tempest out, my love, without somebody to take care of her!

Miss Lee. What, do you know Mrs Tempest, madam?

Mrs Bel. Yes, my dear——and I am pretty well acquainted with this gentleman.

Miss Lee. What, isn't this gentleman the manager of a play-house in Ireland?

Bel. The curtain is almost dropt, my dear; the farce is nearly over, and you'll be speedily acquainted with the catastrophe.

Enter MRS TEMPEST.

Mrs Tem. Yes, sir, the curtain is almost dropt: I have had spies to watch your haunts, and the catastrophe ends in your detection———Come, you abandoned slut———

Miss Lee. And have I eloped after all, without being brought upon the stage?

Mrs Tem. I don't know, that you would be brought upon the stage; but I am sure you were near being brought upon the town. I hope, madam, for the future, you'll set me down a mad woman. [*To* MRS BEL.

Mrs Bel. Mr Belville, you'll make my apologies to this lady, and acknowledge that I think her perfectly in her senses.

Bel. I wish that I had intirely lost mine.

Lady Rach. [*Writing.*] 'I wish that I had 'intirely lost mine.' A very natural wish in such a situation.

Miss Tem. Come, you audacious minx, come away. You shall be sent into Yorkshire this very evening; and see what your poor mother will say to you, hussy.

Miss Lee. I will go on the stage, if I die for't; and 'tis some comfort there's a play-house at York.

[*Exeunt* MRS TEMPEST, *and* MISS LEESON.

Bel. Nancy, I am so ashamed, so humbled, and so penitent, that if you knew what passes here, I am sure you would forgive me.

Mrs Bel. My love, though I cannot say I rejoice in your infidelity, yet, believe me, I pity your distress; let us, therefore, think no more of this.

Lady Rach. [*Writing.*] 'And think no more 'of this.' This conduct is new in a wife, and very dramatic.

Bel. Where, my angel, have you acquired so many requisites to charm with?

Mrs Bel. In your society, my dear; and, believe me——that a wife may be as true a friend as any bottle-companion upon earth, though she can neither get merry with you over night, nor blow your brains out about some foolish quarrel in the morning.

Bel. If wives knew the omnipotence of virtue, where she wears a smile upon her face, they'd all follow your bewitching example, and make a faithless husband quite an incredible character.

Lady Rach. 'Quite an incredible character!' Let me set down that. [*Writing.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* GENERAL SAVAGE'S.

Enter GENERAL *and* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Gen. Sav. Yes, Horace, I have been just visiting at Belville's.

Capt. Sav. You found nobody at home, but Miss Walsingham?

Gen. Sav. No, but I had a long conversation with her, and upon a very interesting subject.

Capt. Sav. 'Tis as I guessed. [*Aside.*

Gen. Sav. She is a most amiable creature, Horace.

Capt. Sav. So she is, sir; and will make any man happy that marries her.

Gen. Sav. I am glad you think so.

Capt. Sav. He's glad I think so! 'tis plain; but I must leave every thing to himself, and seem wholly passive in the affair. [*Aside.*

Gen. Sav. A married life after all, Horace, I am now convinced is the most happy, as well as the most reputable.

Capt. Sav. It is, indeed, sir.

Gen. Sav. Then, perhaps, you would have no

objection to be married, if I offered you as agreeable a young woman as Miss Walsingham?

Capt. Sav. 'Twould be my first pride on every occasion, sir, to pay an implicit obedience to your commands.

Gen. Sav. That's sensibly said, Horace, and obligingly said; prepare yourself, therefore, for an introduction to the lady in the morning.

Capt. Sav. Is the lady prepared to receive me, sir?

Gen. Sav. O yes; and you can't think how highly delighted Miss Walsingham appeared, when I acquainted her with my resolution on the subject.

Capt. Sav. She's all goodness!

Gen. Sav. The more I know her, the more I am charmed with her. I must not be explicit with him yet, for fear my secret should get wind and reach the ears of the enemy.—[*Aside.*]—I propose, Horace, that you should be married immediately.

Capt Sav. The sooner the better, sir; I have no will but yours.

Gen. Sav. [*Shaking hands with him.*] By the memory of Marlbro' you are a most excellent boy! But what do you think? Miss Walsingham insists upon naming the day.

Capt. Sav. And welcome, sir; I am sure she won't make it a distant one.

Gen. Sav. O, she said, that nothing in her power should be wanting to make you happy.

Capt. Sav. I am sure of that, sir.

Gen. Sav. [*A loud knocking.*] Zounds, Horace! here's the disgrace and punishment of my life: let us avoid her as we would a fever in the camp.

Capt. Sav. Come to the library, and I'll tell you how whimsically she was treated this morning at Belville's.

Gen. Sav. Death and the devil! make haste. O, I must laugh at marriage and be curst to me! But I am providing, Horace, against your falling into my error.

Capt. Sav. I am eternally indebted to you, sir. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter MRS BELVILLE, *and* LADY RACHEL.

Lady Rach. Nay, Mrs Belville, I have no patience; you act quite unnaturally.

Mrs Bel. What! because I am unwilling to be miserable?

Lady Rach. This new instance of Mr Belville's infidelity——This attempt to seduce Miss Walsingham, which your woman overheard, is unpardonable.

Mrs Bel. I don't say but that I am strongly wounded by his irregularities. Yet, if Mr Belville is unhappily a rover, I would much rather that he should have twenty mistresses, than one.

Lady Rach. You astonish me!

Mrs Bel. Why, don't you know, my dear madam, that while he is divided amongst a variety of objects, 'tis impossible for him to have a serious attachment?

Lady Rach. Lord, Mrs Belville! how can you speak with so much composure? a virtuous woman should be always outrageous upon such an occasion as this.

Mrs Bel. What, and weary the innocent sun and moon from the firmament, like a despairing princess in a tragedy—No—no—Lady Rachel! 'tis bad enough to be indifferent to the man I love, without studying to excite his aversion.

Lady Rach. How glad I am, that Miss Walsingham made him so heartily ashamed of himself! Lord, these young men are so full of levity! Give me a husband of Mr Torrington's age, say I!

Mrs Bel. And give me a husband of Mr Belville's, say I, with all his follies! However, lady Rachel, I am pretty well satisfied that my conduct at Miss Leeson's will have a proper effect upon Mr Belville's generosity, and put an entire end to his gallantries for the future.

Lady Rach. Don't deceive yourself, my dear. The gods in the shilling gallery would sooner give up Roast Beef, or go without an epilogue on the first night of a new piece,

Mrs Bel. Why should you think so of such a man as Mr Belville?

Lady Rach. Because Mr Belville is a man: However, if you dare run the risque—we will try the sincerity of his reformation.

Mrs Bel. If I dare run the risque! I would stake my soul upon his honour!

Lady Rach Then, your poor soul would be in a very terrible situation.

Mrs Bel. By what test can we prove his sincerity?

Lady Rach. By a very simple one. You know I write so like Miss Walsingham, that our hands are scarcely known asunder.

Mrs Bel. Well———

Lady Rach. Why, then, let me write to him as from her.

Mrs Bel. If I did not think it would look like a doubt of his honour——

Lady Rach. Poh! dare you proceed upon my plan?

Mrs Bel. Most confidently: Come to my dressing-room, where you'll find every thing ready for writing, and then you may explain your scheme more particularly.

Lady Rach. I'll attend you; but I am really sorry, my dear, for the love of propriety, to see you so calm under the perfidy of your husband; you should be quite wretched———indeed, you should. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*The Temple.*

Enter LEESON.

Lee. The hell-hounds are after me; and if I am arrested at this time, my honour will not only be blown upon by Belville, but I shall, perhaps, lose Emily into the bargain.

Enter LEECH, CROW, *and* WOLF, *dressed in fur habits.*

Leech. Yonder, my lads, he darts through the Cloisters! who the devil could think, that he would smoke us in this disguise? Crow, do you take the Fleet-street side of the Temple, as fast as you can, to prevent his doubling us that way; and, Wolf, do you run round the Garden Court, that he may not escape us by the Thames.—— I'll follow the strait line myself, and the devil's in the dice, if he is not snapped by one of us.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*Changes to another part of the Temple.*

Enter LEESON *on one side, and* CONNOLLY *on the other.*

Lee. Fly! open the chambers this moment—the bailiffs are after me.

Con. Faith, and that I will———but it will be of no use to fly a step neither, if I have not the key.

Lee. Zounds! did'nt you lock the door?

Con. Yes; but I believe I left the key on the inside———however, your own key will do the business as well.

Lee. True; and I forgot it in my confusion. Do you stay here, and throw every impediment in the way of these rascals. [*Exit.*

Con. Faith, and that I will!

Enter CROW *and* WOLF.

Crow. Pray, sir, did you see a gentleman run this way, drest in green and gold.

Con. In troth I did.

Wolf. And which way did he run?

Con. That I can tell you too.

Wolf. We shall be much obliged to you.

Con. Indeed, and you will not, Mr Catchpole, for the devil an information shall you get from Connolly. I see plainly enough what you are, you black-guards, though there's no guessing at you in these fur-coats.

Crow. Keep your information to yourself and be damned! Here the cull comes, a prisoner in the custody of Master Leech.

Enter LEESON *and* LEECH.

Lee. Well, but treat me like a gentleman—— Don't expose me unnecessarily.

Leech. Expose you, master! we never expose any body, 'till gentlemen thus expose themselves, venever they compels their creditors to arrest them.

Con. And where's your authority for arresting the gentleman? let us see it this minute, for may be you have not it about you.

Leech. O here's our authority; ve know as ve had to do vid a lawyer, and so ve came properly prepar'd, my master.

Lee. What shall I do?

Con. Why hark'e, sir—Don't you think that you and I could beat these three thieves, to their heart's content?—I have nothing but my carcase to venture for you, honey; but that you are as welcome to as the flowers in May.

Lee. O, by no means, Connolly; we must not fly in the face of the laws.

Con. That's the reason that you are going to fight a duel!

Lee. Hark'e, officer—I have some very material business to execute in the course of this evening. Here are five guineas for a little indulgence; and I assure you, upon the honour of a gentleman, that if I have life, I'll attend your own appointment to-morrow morning.

Leech. I can't do it, master—Five guineas to be sure is a genteel thing—but I have ten for the taking of you, do you see—and so, if you please to step to my house in Southampton-Buildings, you may send for some friend to bail you, or settle the affair as well as you can with the plaintiff.

Con. I'll go bail for him this minute, if you don't want some body to be bail for myself.

Lee. Let me reflect a moment.

Crow. [*To* CON.] Can you swear yourself worth one hundred and seventy pounds, when your debts are paid?

Con. In troth, I cannot, nor one hundred and seventy pence—unless I have a mind to perjure myself.—But one man's body is as good as another's; and, since he has no bail to give you but his flesh, the fattest of us two is the best security.

Wolf. No, if we can't get better bail than you, we shall lock up his body in prison according to law.

Con. Faith, and a very wise law it must be, which cuts off every method of getting money, by way of making us pay our debts.

Leech. Well, Master Leeson, what do you determine upon?

Lee. A moment's patience—Yonder I see Mr Torrington—a thought occurs—yet it carries the appearance of fraud—however, as it will be really innocent, nay laughable in the end, and as my ruin or salvation depends upon my present decision, it must be hazarded.

Crow. Come, master, fix upon something, and don't keep us waiting for you.

Con. By my soul, honey, he don't want you to wait for him: he'll be very much obliged to you if you go away, and leave him to follow his own business.

Lee. Well, gentlemen—here comes Mr Torrington: you know him, I suppose, and will be satisfied with his security.

Leech. O we'll take his bail for ten thousand pounds, my master—every body knows him to be a man of fortune.

Lee. Give me leave to speak to him then, and I shall not be ungrateful for the civility.

Leech. Well, we will—But hark'e, lads, look to the passes, that no tricks may be played upon travellers.

Enter TORRINGTON.

Lee. Mr Torrington, your most obedient.

Tor. Your humble servant.

Lee. I have many apoligies to make, Mr Torrington, for presuming to stop a gentleman to whom I have not the honour of being known; yet, when I explain the nature of my business, sir, I shall by no means despair of an excuse.

Tor. To the business, I beg, sir.

Lee. You must know, sir, that the three gentlemen behind me, are three traders from Dantzick, men of considerable property, who, in the present distracted state of Poland, wish to settle with their families in this country.

Tor. Dantzick traders.——Ay, I see they are foreigners by their dress.

Leech. Ay, now he is opening the affair.

Lee. They want therefore to be naturalized—and have been recommended to me for legal advice.

Tor. You are at the bar, sir?

Lee. I have eat my way to professional honour some time, sir.

Tor. Ay, the cooks of the four societies take care that the students shall perform every thing which depends upon teeth, young gentleman. ——The eating exercises are the only ones never dispensed with.

Lee. I am, however, a very young barrister, Mr Torrington; and as the affair is of great importance to them, I am desirous, that some gentleman of eminence in the law should revise my poor opinion, before they make it a ground of any serious determination.

Tor. You are too modest, young gentleman, to entertain any doubts upon this occasion, as nothing is clearer than the laws respecting the naturalization of foreigners.

Con. Faith, the old gentleman smiles very good naturedly.

Leech. I fancy he'll stand it, Crow, and advance the crop for the younker.

Lee. To be sure, the laws are very clear to gentlemen of your superior abilities.—But I have candidly acknowledged the weakness of my own judgment to my clients, and advised them so warmly to solicit your opinion, that they will not be satisfied unless you kindly consent to oblige them.

Tor. O, if nothing but my opinion will satisfy them, let them follow me to my chambers, and I'll satisfy them directly.

Lee. You are extremely kind, sir, and they shall attend you.—Gentlemen, will you be so good as to follow Mr Torrington to his chambers, and he'll satisfy you intirely.

Wolf. Mind that.

Con. Musha! the blessing of St Patrick upon that ould head of yours!

Tor. What they speak English, do they?

Lee. Very tolerably, sir.—Bred up general traders, they have a knowledge of several languages; and it would be highly for the good of the kingdom, if we could get more of them to settle among us.

Tor. Right, young gentleman! the number of the people forms the true riches of a state; however, now-a-days, London itself is not only gone out of town, but England itself, by an unaccountable fatality, seems inclined to take up her residence in America.

Lee. True, sir! and to cultivate the barbarous borders of the Ohio, we are hourly deserting the beautiful banks of the Thames.

Tor. [*Shaking him by the hand.*] You must come and see me at my chambers, young gentleman; we must be better known to one another.

Con. Do you mind that, you thieves?—

Lee. 'Twill be equally my pride and my happiness to merit that honour, sir.

Tor. Let your friends follow me, sir!—and pray, do you call upon me soon; you shall see a little plan, which I have drawn up to keep this poor country, if possible, from undergoing a general sentence of transportation.—Be pleased to come along with me, gentlemen—I'll satisfy you.

[*Exit.*

Leech. Well, master! I wish you joy.——You can't say but we behaved to you like gemmen!

[*Exeunt bailiffs.*

Lee. And if you were all three in the cart, I don't know which of you I would wish to have respited from execution. I have played Mr Torrington a little trick, Connolly; but the moment I come back I shall recover my reputation, if I even put myself voluntarily into the hands of those worthy gentlemen.—— [*Exit.*

Con. Musha! long life to you, old Shillaley! I don't wonder at your being afraid of a prison; for 'tis to be sure a blessed place to live in!—And now, let my thick skull consider, if there's any way of preventing this infernal duel.——Suppose I have him bound over to the peace!—No, that will never do: it would be a shameful thing for a gentleman to keep the peace! besides, I must appear in the business, and people may then think, from my connection with him, that he has'n't honour enough to throw away his life!—Suppose I go another way to work, and send an anonymous letter about the affair to Mrs Belville; they say, though she is a woman of quality, that no creature upon earth can be fonder of her hus-

band!—Surely the good genius of Ireland put this scheme in my head.—I'll about it this minute, and if there's but one of them kept from the field, I don't think that the other can be much hurt, when there will be no body to fight with him. [*Exit.*

SCENE VII.—*Changes to Captain* SAVAGE'S *lodgings.*

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE *and* BELVILLE.

Capt. Sav. Why, faith, Belville, your detection, and so speedily too, after all the pretended sanctity of the morning, must have thrown you into a most humiliating situation.

Bel. Into the most distressing you can imagine. Had my wife raved at my falsehood, in the customary manner, I could have brazened it out pretty tolerably; but the angel-like sweetness, with which she bore the mortifying discovery, planted daggers in my bosom, and made me, at that time, wish her the veriest vixen in the whole creation.

Capt. Sav. Yet, the suffering forbearance of a wife, is a quality, for which she is seldom allowed her merit. We think it her duty to put up with our falsehood, and imagine ourselves exceedingly generous in the main, if we practise no other method of breaking her heart.

Bel. Monstrous! monstrous! from this moment, I bid an everlasting adieu to my vices: the generosity of my dear girl—

Enter a Servant to BELVILLE.

Ser. Here's a letter, sir, which Mr Spruce has brought you.

Bel. Give me leave, Savage—Zounds! what an industrious devil the father of darkness is, when the moment a man determines upon a good action, he sends such a thing as this, to stagger his resolution!

Capt. Sav. What have you got there?

Bel. You shall know presently. Will you let Spruce come in?

Capt. Sav. Where have you acquired all this ceremony?

Bel. Bid Spruce come in.

Ser. Yes, sir.

Capt. Sav. Is that another challenge?

Bel. 'Tis, upon my soul! but it came from a beautiful enemy, and dares me to give a meeting to Miss Walsingham.

Capt. Sav. How!

Enter SPRUCE.

Bel. Pray, Spruce, who gave you this letter?

Spruce. Miss Walsingham's woman, sir: she said it was about very particular business, and therefore I wou'dn't trust it by any of the footmen.

Capt. Sav. O, damn your diligence! [*Aside.*

Bel. You may go home, Spruce.

Spruce. [*Looking significantly at his master.*] Is there no answer necessary, sir?

Bel. I shall call at home myself, and give the necessary answer,

Spruce. [*Aside.*] What can be the matter with him all on a sudden, that he is so cold upon the scent of wickedness? [*Exit.*

Capt. Sav. And what answer do you propose making to it, Belville?

Bel. Read the letter, and then tell me what I should do—You know Miss Walsingham's hand?

Capt. Sav. O perfectly!—This is not—yes, it is her hand!—I have too many curst occasions to know it. [*Aside.*

Bel. What are you muttering about?—Read the letter.

Capt. Sav. [*Reads.*] 'If you are not intirely 'discouraged by our last conversation, from re-'newing the subject which then gave offence—'

Bel. Which then gave offence—You see, Savage, that it is not offensive any longer.

Capt. Sav. 'Sdeath! you put me out.——'You 'may, at the masquerade, this evening—'

Bel. You remember how earnest she was for the masquerade party?

Capt. Sav. Yes, yes, I remember it well: and I remember, also, how hurt she was this morning, about the affair of Miss Leeson. [*Aside.*] 'Have an opportunity of entertaining me'——O, the strumpet! [*Aside.*

Bel. But mind the cunning with which she signs the note, for fear it should, by any accident, fall into improper hands.

Capt. Sav. Ay, and you put it into very proper hands. [*Aside.*] 'I shall be in the blue domino.' —The signature is— 'YOU KNOW WHO.'

Bel. Yes, you know who.

Capt. Sav. May be, however, she has only written this to try you.

Bel. To try me! for what purpose? but if you read a certain postscript there, I fancy you'll be of a different opinion.

Capt. Sav. 'If Mr Belville has any house of 'character to retire to, it would be most agreea-'ble, as there could be no fear of interruption.'

Bel. What do you say now?—Can you recommend me to any house of character, where we shall be free from interruption?

Capt. Sav. O, curse her house of character! [*Aside.*] But surely, Belville, after your late determined resolution to reform———

Bel. Zounds! I forgot that.

Capt. Sav. After the unexampled sweetness of your wife's behaviour———

Bel. Don't go on, Savage: there is something here [*Putting his hand in his bosom.*] which feels already not a little aukwardly.

Capt. Sav. And can you still persist?

Bel. I am afraid to answer your question.

Capt. Sav. Where the plague are you flying?

Bel. From the justice of your censure, Horace; my own is sufficiently severe; yet I see

that I shall be a rascal again, in spite of my teeth; and good advice is only thrown away upon so incorrigible a libertine. [*Exit.*

Capt. Sav. So, then, this diamond of mine proves a counterfeit after all, and I am really the veriest wretch existing, at the moment in which I conceived myself the peculiar favourite of fortune. O the cursed, cursed sex! I'll see her once more to upbraid her with her falsehood, then acquaint my father with her perfidy, to justify my breaking off the marriage, and tear her from my thoughts for ever.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Sir, sir, sir!—

Capt. Sav. Sir, sir, sir!—What the devil's the matter with the booby!

Ser. Miss Walsingham, sir!

Capt. Sav. Ah! what of her?

Ser. Was this moment overturned at Mr Belville's door; and, John tells me, carried in a fit into the house.

Capt. Sav. Ha! let me fly to her assistance! [*Exit.*

Ser. Ha, let me fly to her assistance—O, are you thereabouts? [*Exit.*

SCENE VIII.—*Changes to* MR BELVILLE'S.

Enter MRS BELVILLE, MISS WALSINGHAM, *and* LADY RACHEL MILDEW.

Mrs Bel. But are you indeed recovered, my dear?

Miss Wal. Perfectly, my dear——I wasn't in the least hurt, though greatly terrified, when the two fools of coachmen contended for the honour of being first, and drove the carriages together with a violence incredible.

Lady Rach. I sincerely rejoice at your escape; and now, Mrs Belville, as you promised to choose a dress for me, if I went in your party to the masquerade this evening, can you spare a quarter of an hour to Tavistock-street?

Mrs Bel. I am loth to leave Miss Walsingham alone, lady Rachel, so soon after her fright.

Miss Wal. Nay, I insist that you don't stay at home upon my account; and lady Rachel's company to the masquerade is a pleasure I have such an interest in, that I beg you won't delay a moment to oblige her.

Mrs Bel. Well, then, I attend your ladyship.

Lady Rach. You are very good; and so is Miss Walsingham. [*Exit.*

Miss Wal. I wonder Captain Savage stays away so long! where can he be all this time?—I die with impatience to tell him of my happy interview with the General.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Captain Savage, madam.

Miss Wal. Shew him in. [*Exit Servant.*] How he must rejoice to find his conjectures so fortunately realized!

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Capt. Sav. So, madam, you have just escaped a sad accident?

Miss Wal. And by that agreeable tone and countenance, one would almost imagine you were very sorry for my escape.

Capt. Sav. People, madam, who doubt the kindness of others, are generally conscious of some defect in themselves.

Miss Wal. Don't madam me, with this accent of indifference. What has put you out of humour?

Capt. Sav. Nothing!

Miss Wal. Are you indisposed?

Capt. Sav. The crocodile! the crocodile! [*Aside.*

Miss Wal. Do you go to the masquerade to-night?

Capt. Sav. No; but you do.

Miss Wal. Why not? Come, don't be ill-natured; I'm not your wife yet!

Capt. Sav. Nor ever will be, I promise you!

Miss Wal. What is the meaning of this very whimsical behaviour?

Capt. Sav. The settled composure of her impudence is intolerable. [*Aside.*] Madam, madam! how have I deserved this usage?

Miss Wal. Nay, sir, sir! how have I deserved it, if you go to that?

Capt. Sav. The letter, madam!—the letter!

Miss Wal. What letter!

Capt. Sav. Your letter; inviting a gallant from the masquerade to a house of character, madam!——What! you appear surprised?

Miss Wal. Well I may, at so shameless an aspersion!

Capt. Sav. Madam, madam, I have seen your letter! Your new lover could not keep your secret a moment. But I have nothing to do with you—and only come to declare my reasons for renouncing you everlastingly!

Enter a Servant.

Ser. General Savage, madam.

Miss Wal. Shew him up. [*Exit Ser.*] I am glad he is come, sir! inform him of your resolution to break off the match, and let there be an end of every thing between us!

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE.

Gen. Sav. The news of your accident reached me but this moment, madam!—or I should have posted much sooner to reconnoitre your situation. My-aid-de-camp, however, has not been inattentive, I see! and, I dare say, his diligence will not be the least lessened, when he knows his obligations to you.

Capt. Sav. Oh, sir, I am perfectly sensible of

my obligations! and the consciousness of them, was one motive of my coming here!

Gen. Sav. Then, you have made your acknowledgments to Miss Walsingham, I hope?

Miss Wal. He has, indeed, general, said a great deal more than was necessary.

Gen. Sav. That opinion proceeds from the liberality of your temper; for, 'tis impossible he can ever say enough of your goodness.

Capt. Sav. So it is; if you knew but all, sir!

Gen. Sav. Why, who can know more of the matter than myself?

Miss Wal. This gentlemen, it seems, has something, general Savage, very necessary for your information.

Gen. Sav. How's this?

Capt. Sav. Nay, sir, I only say, that, for some particular reasons, which I shall communicate to you at a more proper time, I must beg leave to decline the lady whose hand you kindly intended for me this morning.

Gen. Sav. O, you must!——Why, then, I hope you decline, at the same time, all pretension to every shilling of my fortune? It is not in my power to make you fight, you poltroon, but I can punish you for cowardice.

Miss Wal. Nay, but, general, let me interpose here——If he can maintain any charge against the lady's reputation, 'twould be very hard that he should be disinherited for a necessary attention to his honour.

Capt. Sav. And if I don't make the charge good, I submit to be disinherited without murmuring.

Gen. Sav. 'Tis false as hell! the lady is infinitely too good for you in every respect; and I undervalued her worth, when I thought of her for your wife.

Miss Wal. I am sure the lady is much obliged to your favourable opinion, sir.

Gen. Sav. Not in the least, madam; I only do her common justice.

Capt. Sav. I cannot bear that you should be displeased a moment, sir; suffer me, therefore, to render the conversation less equivocal, and a few words will explain every thing.

Gen. Sav. Sirrah, I'll hear no explanation—ar'n't my orders, that you should mary?

Miss Wal. For my sake hear him, general Savage.

Capt. Sav. Madam, I disdain every favour that is to be procured by your interposition.

[*Exit* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Miss Wal. This matter must not be suffered to proceed farther though, provokingly, cruelly as the captain has behaved.

[*Aside.*

Gen. Sav. What's that you say, my bewitching girl?

Miss Wal. I say that you must make it up with the captain, and the best way will be to hear his charge patiently.

Gen. Sav. I am shocked at the brutality of the dog! he has no more principle than a suttler, and no more steadiness than a young recruit upon drill—But you shall have ample satisfaction:—this very day I'll cut him off from a possibility of succeeding to a shilling of my fortune. He shall be as miserable as———

Miss Wal. Dear general, do you think that this would give me any satisfaction?

Gen. Sav. How he became acquainted with my design, I know not; but I see plainly that his mutiny proceeds from his aversion to my marrying again.

Miss Wal. To your marrying again, sir! why should he object to that?

Gen. Sav. Why, for fear I should have other children, to be sure.

Miss Wal. Indeed, sir, it was not from that motive; and, if I can overlook his folly, you may be prevailed upon to forgive it.

Gen. Sav. After what you have seen, justice should make you a little more attentive to your own interest, my lovely girl!

Miss Wal. What! at the expence of his?

Gen. Sav. In the approaching change of your situation, there may be a family of your own.

Miss Wal. Suppose there should, sir; won't there be a family of his too?

Gen. Sav. I care not what becomes of his family.

Miss Wal. But, pray, let me think a little about it, general.

Gen. Sav. 'Tis hard, indeed, when I was so desirous of promoting his happiness, that he should throw any thing in the way of mine.

Miss Wal. Recollect, sir, his offence was wholly confined to me.

Gen. Sav. Well, my love, and isn't it throwing an obstacle in the way of my happiness, when he abuses you so grossly for your readiness to marry me?

Miss Wal. Sir!——

Gen. Sav. I see, with all your good nature, that this is a question you cannot rally against.

Miss Wal. It is indeed, sir——What will become of me!

[*Aside.*

Gen. Sav. You seem suddenly disordered, my love!

Miss Wal. Why, really, sir, this affair affects me strongly!

Gen. Sav. Well, it is possible, that, for your sake, I may not punish him with as much severity as I intended: in about an hour, I shall beg leave to beat up your quarters again with Mr Torrington; for 'tis necessary I should shew you some proof of my gratitude, since you have been so kindly pleased to honour me with a proof of your affection.

Miss Wal. [*Aside.*] So, now indeed, we're in a hopeful situation!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX.—*Changes to* TORRINGTON'S *chambers in the Temple.*

Enter TORRINGTON, LEECH, CROW, *and* WOLF.

Tor. Walk in, gentlemen——A good pretty young man, that we parted with just now—Pray, gentlemen, be seated——

Leech. He is indeed a very pretty young man.

Crow. And knows how to do a genteel thing—

Wolf. As handsome as any body.

Tor. There is a rectitude, besides, in his polemical principles.

Leech. In what, sir?

Tor. His polemical principles.

Crow. What are they, sir?

Tor. I beg pardon, gentlemen; you are not sufficiently intimate with the English language, to carry on a conversation in it.

Wolf. Yes, we are, sir.

Tor. Because, if it is more agreeable to you, we'll talk in Latin?

Leech. We don't understand Latin, sir.

Tor. I thought you generally conversed in that language abroad.

Crow. No, nor at home neither, sir: there is a language we sometimes talk in, called slang.

Tor. A species of the ancient Sclavonic, I suppose?

Leech. No, its a little rum tongue, that we understand among von another——

Tor. I never heard of it before—but to business, gentlemen—the constitution of your country is at present very deplorable, I hear?

Wolf. Why, indeed, sir, there never was a greater cry against people in our way.

Tor. But you have laws, I suppose, for the regulation of your trade?

Leech. To be sure we have, sir: nevertheless, ve find it very difficult to carry it on.

Crow. We are harassed by so many oppressions—

Tor. What, by the Prussian troops?

Crow. The Prussian troops, sir!—Lord bless you, no! by the courts of law; if ve make never so small a mistake in our duties.

Tor. Then your duties are very high, or very numerous——

Leech. I am afraid we don't understand one another, sir———

Tor. I am afraid so, too—Pray, where are your papers, gentlemen?

Leech. Here's all the papers we have, sir——You'll find every thing right——

Tor. I dare say I shall. [*Reads.*] 'Middlesex to wit'—Why, this is a warrant from the Sheriff's office to arrest some body!

Crow. To be sure it is, sir——

Tor. And what do you give it to me for?

Wolf. To shew that we have done nothing contrary to law, sir.

Tor. Who supposes that you have?

Leech. Only because you asked for our papers, sir.

Tor. Why, what has this to do with them?

Crow. Why, that's the warrant for arresting the young gentleman.

Tor. What young gentleman?

Wolf. Lord bless your heart, sir! that stopped you in the street, and that you bailed for the hundred and seventy pounds.

Tor. I bailed for an hundred and seventy pounds!

Leech. Sure, sir, you told me to follow you to your chambers, and you would satisfy us.

Tor. Pray hear me, sir—ar'n't you a trader of Dantzick?

Leech. I a trader! I am no trader, nor did I ever before hear of any such place.

Tor. Perhaps this gentleman is——

Crow. Lord help your head, I was born in Claremarket, and never was farther out of town in my life than Brentford, to attend the Sheriff at the Middlesex election!

Tor. And it may be that you don't want to be naturalized? [*To* WOLF.

Wolf. For what, my master? I am a liveryman of London already, and have a vote, besides, for the four counties.

Tor. Well, gentlemen, having been so good as to tell me what you are not, add a little to the obligation, and tell me what you are?

Leech. Why, sir, the warrant that we have shewed you, tells that ve are sheriff's officers.

Tor. Sheriff's officers are you?—O-ho!—Sheriff's officers!—then I suppose you must be three very honest gentlemen?

Crow. Sir!—we are as honest———

Tor. As sheriff's officers usually are——Yet could you think of nobody, but a man of the law, for the object of your conspiracy?

Leech. Sir, we don't understand what you mean?

Tor. But I understand what you mean, and therefore I'll deal with you properly.

Wolf. I hope, sir, you'll pay us the money, for we can't go till the affair is certainly settled in some manner.

Tor. O, you can't?—why, then, I will pay you—But it shall be in a coin you won't like, depend upon it—Here, Mr Molesworth——

Enter MOLESWORTH.

Make out mittimusses for the commitment of these three fellows; they are disguised to defraud people; but I am in the commission for Middlesex, and I'll have you all brought to justice—I'll teach you to go masquerading about the streets. So, take them along, Mr Molesworth.

Leech. Ve don't fear your mittimus.

Crow. We'll put in bail directly, and try it with you, though you are a great lawyer.

Wolf. He'll make a flat of himself in this Nantzick affair.

Tor. Mighty well!—And if I find the young barrister, he may, perhaps, take a trip to the barbarous borders of the Ohio, from the beautiful banks of the Thames. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An apartment at* BELVILLE'S.

Enter MRS BELVILLE, *and* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Mrs Bel. DON'T argue with me, captain Savage; but consider that I am a wife, and pity my distraction.

Capt. Sav. Dear madam, there is no occasion to be so much alarmed. Mr Belville has very properly determined not to fight; he told me so himself, and should have been effectually prevented, if I hadn't known his resolution.

Mrs Bel. There is no knowing to what extremities he may be provoked, if he meets Mr Leeson. I have sent for you, therefore, to beg, that you will save him from the possibility, either of exposing himself to any danger, or of doing an injury to his adversary.

Capt. Sav. What would you have me do, madam?

Mrs Bel. Fly to Hyde Park, and prevent, if yet possible, his meeting with Mr Leeson: do it, I conjure you, if you'd save me from desperation.

Capt. Sav. Though you have no reason whatever to be apprehensive for his safety, madam, yet, since you are so very much affected, I'll immediately execute your commands.

[*Exit* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Mrs Bel. Merciful Heaven! where is the generosity, where is the sense, where is the shame of men, to find a pleasure in pursuits, which they cannot remember without the deepest horror, which they cannot follow without the meanest fraud, and which they cannot effect, without consequences the most dreadful? The single word, Pleasure, in a masculine sense, comprehends every thing that is cruel! every thing that is base! and every thing that is desperate! Yet men, in other respects, the noblest of their species, make it the principal business of their lives, and do not hesitate to break in upon the peace of the happiest families, though their own must be necessarily exposed to destruction—O Belville! Belville!—my life! my love!—The greatest crime which a libertine can ever experience, is too despicable to be envied—'tis at best nothing but a victory over his own humanity; and, if he is a husband, he must be dead, indeed, if he is not doubly tortured upon the wheel of recollection.

Enter MISS WALSINGHAM *and* LADY RACHEL MIDDLEW.

Miss Wal. My dear Mrs Belville, I am extremely unhappy to see you so distressed!

Lady Rach. Now, I am extremely glad to see her so! for, if she was not greatly distressed, it would be monstrously unnatural!

Mrs Bel. O, Matilda!—my husband! my husband! my children! my children!

Miss Wal. Don't weep, my dear! don't weep! pray, be comforted; all may end happily! Lady Rachel, beg of her not to cry so.

Lady Rach. Why, you are crying yourself, Miss Walsingham; and, though I think it out of character to encourage her tears, I can't help keeping you company.

Mrs Bel. O, why is not some effectual method contrived to prevent this horrible practice of duelling!

Lady Rach. I'll expose it on the stage, since the law, now-a-days, kindly leaves the whole cognizance of it to the theatre.

Miss Wal. And yet, if the laws against it were as well enforced as the laws against destroying the game, perhaps, it would be equally for the benefit of the kingdom.

Mrs Bel. No law will ever be effectual till the custom is rendered infamous.—Wives must shriek!—mothers must agonize!—orphans must multiply! unless some blessed hand strips the fascinating glare from honourable murder, and bravely exposes the idol who is worshipped thus in blood! While it is disreputable to obey the laws, we cannot look for reformation:—But, if the duelist is once banished from the presence of his sovereign;—if he is for life excluded the confidence of his country;—if a mark of indelible disgrace is stamped upon him, the sword of public justice will be the sole chastiser of wrongs; trifles will not be punished with death; and offences, really meriting such a punishment, will be reserved for the only proper avenger, the common executioner.

Lady Rach. I could not have expressed myself better on the subject, my dear: but, till such a hand as you talk of is found, the best will fall into the error of the times.

Miss Wal. Yes; and butcher each other like madmen, for fear their courage should be suspected by fools.

Mrs Bel. No news yet from captain Savage?

Lady Rach. He can't have reached Hyde-park yet, my dear.

Miss Wal. Let us lead you to your chamber, my dear; you'll be better there.

Mrs Bel. Matilda, I must be wretched any where; but I'll attend you.

Lady Rach. Thank Heaven I have no husband to plunge me into such a situation!

Miss Wal. And, if I thought I could keep my resolution, I'd determine this moment on living

single all the days of my life. Pray, don't spare my arm, my dear. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Hyde-park.*

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. I fancy I am rather before the time of appointment; engagements of this kind are the only ones, in which, now-a-days, people pretend to any punctuality:—a man is allowed half an hour's law to dinner; but a thrust through the body must be given within a second of the clock.

Enter LEESON.

Lee. Your servant, sir.——Your name, I suppose, is Belville?

Bel. Your supposition is very right, sir; and, I fancy, I am not much in the wrong, when I suppose your name to be Leeson.

Lee. It is, sir: I am sorry I should keep you here a moment.

Bel. I am very sorry, sir, you should bring me here at all!

Lee. I regret the occasion, be assured, sir; but, 'tis not now a time for talking; we must proceed to action.

Bel. And yet, talking is all the action I shall proceed to, depend upon it.

Lee. What do you mean, sir? Where are your pistols?

Bel. Where I intend they shall remain, till my next journey into the country; very quietly over the chimney in my dressing-room.

Lee. You treat this matter with too much levity, Mr Belville; take your choice of mine, sir.

Bel. I'd rather take them both, if you please; for, then, no mischief shall be done with either of them.

Lee. Sir, this trifling is adding insult to injury; and shall be resented accordingly. Did not you come here to give me satisfaction?

Bel. Yes; every satisfaction in my power.

Lee. Take one of these pistols, then.

Bel. Come, Mr Leeson, your bravery will not at all be lessened by the exercise of a little understanding: If nothing less than my life can atone for the injury I have unconsciously done you, fire at me instantly, but don't be offended because I decline to do you an additional wrong.

Lee. 'Sdeath, sir, do you think I come here with an intention to murder?

Bel. You come to arm the guilty against the innocent, sir; and that, in my opinion, is the most atrocious intention of murder!

Lee. How's this!——

Bel. Look'e, Mr Leeson, there's your pistol—[*Throws it on the ground.*] I have already acted very wrongly with respect to your sister; but, sir, I have some character (though, perhaps, little enough) to maintain, and I will not do a still worse action, in raising my hand against your life.

Lee. This hypocritical cant of cowardice, sir, is too palpable to disarm my resentment; though I held you to be a man of profligate principles, I nevertheless considered you as a man of courage; but, if you hesitate a moment longer, by Heaven I'll chastise you on the spot! [*Draws.*]

Bel. I must defend my life; though, if it did not look like timidity, I would inform you—[*They fight;* LEESON *is disarmed.*]—Mr Leeson, there is your sword again.

Lee. Strike it through my bosom, sir!—I don't desire to out-live this instant!

Bel. I hope, my dear sir, that you will long live happy!—as your sister, though, to my shame, I can claim no merit on that account, is recovered, unpolluted, by her family: but, let me beg, that you will now see the folly of decisions by the sword, when success is not fortunately chained to the side of justice. Before I leave you, receive my sincerest apologies for the injuries I have done you; and, be assured, no occurrence will ever give me greater pleasure, than an opportunity of serving you, if, after what is past, you shall, at any time, condescend to use me as a friend.

[*Exit* BEL.

Lee. Very well—very well—very well.——

Enter CONNOLLY.

What! you have been within hearing, I suppose?

Con. You may say that.

Lee. And is not this very fine?

Con. Why, I can't say much as to the finery of it, sir; but it is very foolish.

Lee. And so this is my satisfaction, after all!

Con. Yes; and pretty satisfaction it is! When Mr Belville did you but one injury, he was the greatest villain in the world; but, now, that he has done you two, in drawing his sword upon you, I suppose he is a very worthy gentleman.

Lee. To be foiled, baffled, disappointed in my revenge!—What though my sister is by accident unstained, his intentions are as criminal as if her ruin was actually perpetrated; there is no possibility of enduring this reflection!—I wish not for the blood of my enemy, but I would, at least, have the credit of giving him life.

Con. Arrah, my dear, if you have any regard for the life of your enemy, you should not put him in the way of death.

Lee. No more of these reflections, my dear Connolly; my own feelings are painful enough. Will you be so good as to take these damned pistols, and go with me to the coach?

Con. Troth, and that I will! but don't make yourself uneasy; consider that you have done every thing which honour required at your hands.

Lee. I hope so.

Con. Why, you know so: you have broke the laws of Heaven and earth, as nobly as the first lord in the land; and you have convinced the world, that when any body has done your family one injury, you have courage enough to do it another yourself, by hazarding your life.

Lee. Those, Conolly, who would live reputa-

bly in any country, must regulate their conduct, in many cases, by its very prejudices.—Custom, with respect to duelling, is a tyrant, whose despotism no body ventures to attack, though every body detests its cruelty.

Con. I did not imagine that a tyrant of any kind would be tolerated in England. But where do you think of going now? For chambers, you know, will be most delightfully dangerous, till you have come to an explanation with Mr Torrington.

Lee. I shall go to Mrs Crayons.

Con. What! the gentlewoman that paints all manner of colours in red chalk?

Lee. Yes; where I first became acquainted with Emily.

Con. And where the sweet creature has met you two or three times, under pretence of sitting for her picture?

Lee. Mrs Crayons will, I dare say, oblige me, in this exigency, with an apartment for a few days. I shall write, from her house, a full explanation of my conduct to Mr Torrington, and let him know where I am; for the honest old man must not be the smallest sufferer, though a thousand prisons were to stare me in the face.—But come, Connolly, we have no time to lose:—Yet, if you had any prudence, you would abandon me in my present situation.

Con. Ah, sir, is this your opinion of my friendship? Do you think that any thing can ever give me half so much pleasure in serving you, as seeing you surrounded by misfortunes? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to an apartment at* BELVILLE'S.

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE, MR TORRINGTON, *and* SPRUCE.

Spruce. Miss Walsingham will wait on you immediately, gentlemen.

Gen. Sav. Very well.

Spruce. [*Aside.*] What can old Holofernes want so continually with Miss Walsingham? [*Exit* SPRUCE.

Gen. Sav. When I bring this sweet mild creature home, I shall be able to break her spirit to my own wishes—I'll inure her to proper discipline from the first moment, and make her tremble at the very thought of mutiny.

Tor. Ah, general, you are wonderfully brave, when you know the meekness of your adversary.

Gen. Sav. Envy, Torrington—stark, staring envy:——Few fellows, on the borders of fifty, have so much reason as myself, to boast of a blooming young woman's partiality.

Tor. On the borders of fifty, man!—beyond the confines of threescore.

Gen. Sav. The more reason I have to boast of my victory, then; but don't grumble at my triumph: you shall have a kiss of the bride: let that content you, Torrington.

Enter MISS WALSINGHAM.

Miss Wal. Gentlemen, your most obedient;—general, I intended writing to you about a trifling mistake; but, poor Mrs Belville has been so very ill, that I could not find an opportunity.

Gen. Sav. I am very sorry for Mrs Belville's illness; but I am happy, madam, to be personally in the way of receiving your commands; and I wait upon you with Mr Torrington, to talk about a marriage-settlement.

Miss Wal. Heavens, how shall I undeceive him! [*Aside.*

Tor. 'Tis rather an awkward business, Miss Walsingham, to trouble you upon; but as the general wishes that the affair may be as private as possible, he thought it better to speak to yourself, than to treat with any other person.

Gen. Sav. Yes, my lovely girl; and, to convince you that I intended to carry on an honourable war, not to pillage like a free-booter, Mr Torrington will be a trustee.

Miss Wal. I am infinitely obliged to your intention, but there's no necessity to talk about my settlement—for———

Gen. Sav. Pardon, me, madam!—pardon me, there is—besides, I have determined that there shall be one, and what I once determine, is absolute.—A tolerable hint for her own behaviour, when I have married her, Torrington. [*Aside to* TOR.

Miss Wal. I must not shock him before Mr Torrington. [*Aside.*] General Savage, will you give me leave to speak a few words in private to you?

Gen. Sav. There's no occasion for sounding a retreat, madam. Mr Torrington is acquainted with the whole business; and I am determined, for your sake, that nothing shall be done without him.

Tor. I can have no objection to your hearing the lady *ex parte*, general.

Miss Wal. What I have to say, sir, is of a very particular nature.

Tor. [*Rising.*] I'll leave the room, then.

Gen. Sav. [*Opposing him.*] You shan't leave the room, Torrington. Miss Walsingham shall have a specimen of my command, even before marriage; and you shall see, that every woman is not to bully me out of my determination. [*Aside to* TOR.

Miss Wal. Well, general, you must have your own way.

Gen Sav. [*To* TOR.] Don't you see that 'tis only fighting the battle stoutly at first, with one of these gentle creatures?

Tor. [*Significantly.*] Ah, general!

Gen. Sav. I own, madam, your situation is a distressing one; let us sit down—let us sit down—

Miss Wal. It is unspeakably distressing, indeed, sir.

Tor. Distressing, however, as it may be, we must proceed to issue, madam: the general pro-

poses your jointure to be one thousand pounds a-year.

Miss Wal. General Savage!

Gen. Sav. You think this too little, perhaps?

Miss Wal. I can't think of any jointure, sir.

Tor. Why, to be sure, a jointure is, at best, but a melancholy possession, for it must be purchased by the loss of the husband you love!

Miss Wal. Pray, don't name it, Mr Torrington!

Gen. Sav. [*Kissing her hand.*] A thousand thanks to you, my lovely girl!

Miss Wal. For Heaven's sake, let go my hand!

Gen. Sav. I shall be mad 'till it gives me legal possession of the town!

Miss Wal. Gentlemen—general—Mr Torrington, I—beg you'll hear me!

Gen. Sav. By all means, my adorable creature! I can never have too many proofs of your disinterested affection.

Miss Wal. There is a capital mistake in this whole affair——I am sinking under a load of distress!

Gen. Sav. Your confusion makes you look charmingly, though.

Miss Wal. There is no occasion to talk of jointure, or marriages to me; I am not going to be married.

Tor. What's this?

Miss Wal. Nor have I an idea in nature, however enviable I think the honour, of being your wife, sir.

Gen. Sav. Madam!

Tor. Why, here's a demur!

Miss Wal. I am afraid, sir, that, in our conversation this morning, my confusion, arising from the particularity of the subject, has led you into a material misconception.

Gen. Sav. I am thunder-struck, madam! I could not mistake my ground.

Tor. As clear a *nol. pros.* as ever was issued by an attorney-general.

Gen. Sav. Surely you can't forget, that, at the first word, you hung out a flag of truce; told me even, that I had a previous friend in the fort; and did not so much as hint a single article of capitulation?

Tor. Now for the rejoinder to this replication!

Miss Wal. All this is unquestionably true, general, and perhaps a good deal more; but in reality, my confusion before you on this subject to-day was such, that I scarcely knew what I said; I was dying with distress, and at this moment am very little better. Permit me to retire, general Savage, and only suffer me to add, that though I think myself highly flattered by your addresses, it is impossible for me ever to receive them. Lord! Lord! I am glad 'tis over in any manner. [*Exit.*

Tor. Why, we are a little out of this matter, general; the judge has decided against us, when we imagined ourselves sure of the cause.

Gen. Sav. The gates shut in my teeth, just as I expected the keys from the governor!

Tor. I am disappointed myself, man; I shan't have a kiss of the bride.

Gen. Sav. At my time of life, too!

Tor. I said, from the first, you were too old for her.

Gen. Sav. Zounds! to fancy myself sure of her, and to triumph upon a certainty of victory!

Tor. Ay, and to kiss her hand in a rapturous return for her tenderness to you:—let me advise you never to kiss before folks, as long as you live again.

Gen. Sav. Don't distract me, Torrington! a joke, where a friend has the misfortune to lose the battle, is a downright inhumanity.

Tor. You told me, that your son had accused her of something that you would not bear; suppose we call at his lodgings? he, perhaps, as an *amicus curiæ*, may be able to give us a little information.

Gen. Sav. Thank you for the thought—But keep your finger more than ever upon your lips, dear Torrington. You know how I dread the danger of ridicule; and it would be too much, not only to be thrashed out of the field, but to be laughed at into the bargain.

Tor. I thought, when you made a presentment of your sweet person to Miss Walsingham, that the bill would be returned ignoramus. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—BELVILLE'S.

MRS BELVILLE, *and* LADY RACHEL MILDEW, *discovered on a sopha.*

Lady Rach. You heard what captain Savage said?

Mrs Bel. I would flatter myself, but my heart will not suffer it; the Park might be too full for the horrid purpose, and perhaps they are gone to decide the quarrel in some other place.

Lady Rach. The captain inquired of numbers in the Park, without hearing a syllable of them, and is therefore positive, that they are parted without doing any mischief.

Mrs Bel. I am, nevertheless, torn by a thousand apprehensions; and my fancy, with a gloomy kind of fondness, fastens on the most deadly. This very morning, I exultingly numbered myself in the catalogue of the happiest wives. Perhaps I am a wife no longer—perhaps, my little innocents, your unhappy father is this moment breathing his last sigh, and wishing, O, how vainly! that he had not preferred a guilty pleasure to his own life, to my eternal peace of mind, and your felicity!

Enter SPRUCE.

Spruce. Madam! madam! my master! my master!

Mrs Be. Is he safe?

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. My love!

Mrs Bel. O, Mr Belville! [*Faints.*

Bel. Assistance, quick!

Lady Rach. There she revives.

Bel. The angel softens! how this rends my heart!

Mrs Bel. O, Mr Belville, if you could conceive the agonies I have endured, you would avoid the possibility of another quarrel as long as you lived, out of common humanity.

Bel. My dearest creature, spare these tender reproaches! you know not how sufficiently I am punished to see you thus miserable.

Lady Rach. That's pleasant indeed, when you have yourself deliberately loaded her with affliction.

Bel. Pray, pray, lady Rachel, have a little mercy! Your poor humble servant has been a very naughty boy—but if you only forgive him this single time, he will never more deserve the rod of correction.

Mrs Bel. Since you are returned safe, I am happy. Excuse these foolish tears; they gush in spite of me.

Bel. How contemptible do they render me, my love!

Lady Rach. Come, my dear, you must turn your mind from this gloomy subject. Suppose we step up stairs, and communicate our pleasure to Miss Walsingham?

Mrs Bel. With all my heart! Adieu, recreant! [*Exeunt* MRS BEL. *and* LADY RACH.

Bel. I don't deserve such a woman, I don't deserve her. Yet, I believe, I am the first husband that ever found fault with a wife for having too much goodness.

Enter SPRUCE.

What's the matter?

Spruce. Your sister——

Bel. What of my sister?

Spruce. Sir, is eloped.

Bel. My sister!

Spruce. There is a letter left, sir, in which she says, that her motive was dislike to a match with captain Savage, as she has placed her affections unalterably on another gentleman.

Bel. Death and damnation!

Spruce. Mrs Moreland, your mother, is in the greatest distress, sir, and begs you will immediately go with the servant that brought the message; for he, observing the young lady's maid carrying some bundles out, a little suspiciously, thought there must be some scheme going on, and dogged a hackney coach, in which Miss Moreland went off, to the very house where it set her down.

Bel. Bring me to the servant, instantly—but don't let a syllable of this matter reach my wife's ears: her spirits are already too much agitated. [*Exit.*

Spruce, Zounds! we shall be paid home for the tricks we have played in other families. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* CAPTAIN SAVAGE'S *lodgings.*

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

Capt. Sav. The vehemence of my resentment against this abandoned woman has certainly led me too far. I should not have acquainted her with my discovery of her baseness—no; if I had acted properly, I should have concealed all knowledge of the transaction till the very moment of her guilt, and then burst upon her when she was solacing with her paramour, in all the fulness of security. Now, if she should either alter her mind, with respect to going to the masquerade, or go in a different habit, to elude my observation, I not only lose the opportunity of exposing her, but give her time to plan some plausible excuse for her infamous letter to Belville.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. General Savage and Mr Torrington, sir.

Capt. Sav. You blockhead! why did you let them wait a moment?—What can be the meaning of this visit? [*Exit Servant.*

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE, *and* TORRINGTON.

Gen. Sav. I come, Horace, to talk to you about Miss Walsingham.

Capt. Sav. She's the most worthless woman existing, sir: I can convince you of it.

Gen. Sav. I have already changed my own opinion of her.

Capt. Sav. What, you have found her out yourself, sir?

Tor. Yes he has made a trifling discovery.

Gen. Sav. 'Sdeath! don't make me contemptible to my son. [*Aside to* TOR.

Capt. Sav. But, sir, what instance of her precious behaviour has come to your knowledge? For an hour has scarcely elapsed, since you thought her a miracle of goodness.

Tor. Ay, he has thought her a miracle of goodness within this quarter of an hour.

Gen. Sav. Why, she has a manner that would impose upon all the world.

Capt. Sav. Yes, but she has a manner also to undeceive the world thoroughly.

Tor. That we have found pretty recently. However, in this land of liberty, none are to be pronounced guilty, 'till they are positively convicted: I can't, therefore, find against Miss Walsingham, upon the bare strength of presumptive evidence.

Capt. Sav. Presumptive evidence!—hav'n't I promised you ocular demonstration?

Tor. Ay, but till we receive this demonstration, my good friend, we cannot give judgment.

Capt. Sav. Then I'll tell you at once, who is the object of her honourable affections.

Gen. Sav. Who—who?

Capt. Sav. What would you think if they were placed on Belville?

Gen. Sav. Upon Belville! has she deserted to him from the corps of virtue?

Capt. Sav. Yes, she wrote to him, desiring to be taken from the masquerade to some convenient scene of privacy; and, though I have seen the letter, she has the impudence to deny her own hand.

Gen. Sav. What a fiend is there then, disguised under the uniform of an angel!

Tor. The delicate creature, that was dying with confusion!

Capt. Sav. Only come with me to the masquerade, and you shall see Belville carry her off. 'Twas about the scandalous appointment with him I was speaking, when you conceived I treated her so rudely.

Gen. Sav. And you were only anxious to shew her in her real character to me, when I was so exceedingly offended with you?

Capt. Sav. Nothing else in the world, sir. I knew you would despise and detest her, the moment you were acquainted with her baseness.

Gen. Sav. How she brazened it out before my face, and what a regard she affected for your interest! I was a madman not to listen to your explanation.

Tor. Though you both talk this point well, I still see nothing but strong presumption against Miss Walsingham: Mistakes have already happened, mistakes may happen again; and I will not give up a lady's honour upon an evidence that would not cast a common pickpocket at the Old Bailey.

Capt. Sav. Come to the masquerade then, and be convinced.

Gen. Sav. Let us detach a party for dresses immediately. Yet remember, Torrington, that the punctuality of evidence, which is necessary in a court of law, is by no means requisite in a court of honour.

Tor. Perhaps it would be more to the honour of your honourable courts if it was. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Changes to an apartment at* MRS CRAYON'S.

BELVILLE *behind, speaking to a maid.*

Bel. My dear, you must excuse me.

Maid. Indeed, sir, you must not go up stairs.

Bel. Indeed, but I will; the man is positive to the house, and I'll search every room in it, from the cellar to the garret, if I don't find the lady. James, don't stir from the street-door.

Enter BELVILLE, *followed by the Maid.*

Maid. Sir, you are the strangest gentleman I ever met with in all my born days:—I wish my mistress was at home.

Bel. I am a strange fellow, my dear—But if your mistress was at home, I should take the liberty of peeping into the apartments.

Maid. Sir, there's company in that room; you can't go in there.

Bel. Now, that's the very reason I will go in.

Maid. This must be some great man, or he wou'dn't behave so obstropolous.

Bel. Good manners, by your leave a little. [*Forcing the door.*] Whoever my gentleman is, I'll call him to a severe reckoning:—I have just been call'd to one myself, for making free with another man's sister.

Enter LEESON, *followed by* CONNOLLY.

Lee. Who is it that dares commit an outrage upon this apartment?

Con. An Englishman's very lodging, ay, and an Irishman's too, I hope, is his castle;—an Irishman is an Englishman all the world over.

Bel. Mr Leeson!

Maid. O, we shall have murder! [*Running off.*

Con. Run into the room, my dear, and stay with the young lady. [*Exit Maid.*

Lee. And, Connolly, let nobody else into that room.

Con. Let me alone for that, honey, if this gentleman has fifty people.

Lee. Whence is it, Mr Belville, that you persecute me thus with injuries?

Bel. I am filled with astonishment!

Con. Faith, to speak the truth, you do look a little surprised.

Lee. Answer me, sir, what is the foundation of this new violence?

Bel. I am come, Mr Leeson, upon an affair, sir—

Con. The devil burn me, if he was half so much confounded a while ago, when there was a naked sword at his breast!

Bel. I am come, Mr Leeson, upon an affair, sir, that—How the devil shall I open to him, since the tables are so fairly turned upon me?

Lee. Dispatch, sir, for I have company in the next room.

Bel. A lady, I suppose?

Lee. Suppose it is, sir?

Bel. And the lady's name is Miss Moreland, isn't it, sir?

Lee. I can't see what business you have with her name, sir. You took away my sister, and I hope you have no designs upon the lady in the next room?

Bel. Indeed, but I have.

Lee. The devil you have!

Con. Well, this is the most unaccountable man I ever heard of: he'll have all the women in the town, I believe.

Lee. And pray, sir, what pretensions have you to the lady in the next room, even supposing her to be Miss Moreland?

Bel. No other pretensions than what a brother should have to the defence of his sister's honour: You thought yourself authorised to cut my throat a while ago, in a similar business.

Lee. And is Miss Moreland your sister?

Bel. Sir, there is insolence in the question; you know she is.

Lee. By heaven, I did not know it till this moment! but I rejoice at the discovery: This is blow for blow!

Con. Devil burn me but they have fairly made a swop of it!

Bel. And you really didn't know that Miss Moreland was my sister?

Lee. I don't conceive myself under much necessity of apologizing to you, sir; but I am incapable of a dishonourable design upon any woman; and though Miss Moreland, in our short acquaintance, repeatedly mentioned her brother, she never once told me, that his name was Belville.

Con. And he has had such few opportunities of being in her company, unless by letters, honey, that he knew nothing more of her connections, than her being a sweet pretty creature, and having thirty thousand pounds.

Bel. The fortune, I dare say, no way lessened the force of her attractions.

Lee. I am above dissimulation—It really did not.

Bel. Well, Mr Leeson, our families have shewn such a very strong inclination to come together, that it would really be a pity to disappoint them.

Con. Upon my soul and so it would! though the dread of being forced to have a husband, the young lady tells us, quickened her resolution to marry this gentleman.

Bel. O she had no violence of that kind to apprehend from her family; therefore, Mr Leeson, since you seem as necessary for the girl's happiness as she seems for yours, you shall marry her here in town, with the consent of all her friends, and save yourself the trouble of an expedition to Scotland.

Lee. Can I believe you serious?

Bel. Zounds, Leeson, that air of surprise is a sad reproach! I didn't surprise you, when I did a bad action, but I raise your astonishment, when I do a good one.

Con. And by my soul, Mr Belville, if you knew how a good action becomes a man, you'd never do a bad one as long as you lived.

Lee. You have given me life and happiness in one day, Mr Belville! however, it is now time you should see your sister. I know you will be gentle with her, though you have so much reason to condemn her choice, and generously remember, that her elopement proceeded from the great improbability there was of a beggar's ever meeting with the approbation of her family.

Bel. Don't apologize for your circumstances, Leeson: a princess could do no more than make you happy; and if you make her so, you meet her upon terms of the most perfect equality.

Lee. This is a new way of thinking, Mr Belville.

Bel. 'Tis only an honest way of thinking; and I consider my sister a gainer on the occasion; for a man of your merit is more difficult to be found, than a woman of her fortune.

[*Exeunt* LEESON *and* BELVILLE.

Con. What's the reason now, that I can't skip, and laugh, and rejoice, at this affair? Upon my soul, my heart's as full as if I had met with some great misfortune. Well, pleasure in the extreme is certainly a very painful thing; and I am really ashamed of these woman's drops, and yet I don't know but that I ought to blush for being ashamed of them; for I am sure nobody's eye looks ever half so well, as when it is disfigured by a tear of humanity. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A drawing-room.*

Enter BELVILLE.

Bel. WELL, happiness is once more mine, and the women are all going in tip-top spirits to the masquerade. Now, Mr Belville, let me have a few words with you. Miss Wassingham, the ripe, the luxurious Miss Walsingham, expects to find you there burning with impatience—But, my dear friend, after the occurrences of the day, can you be weak enough to plunge into fresh crimes? Can you be base enough to abuse the goodness of that angel your wife; and wicked enough, not only to destroy the innocence, which is sheltered beneath your own roof, but to expose your family, perhaps, again to the danger of losing a son, a brother, a father, and a husband? The possession of the three Graces is surely too poor a recompense for the folly you must commit, for the shame you must feel, and the consequence you must hazard. Upon my soul, if I struggle a little longer, I shall rise in my own opinion, and be less a rascal than I think myself:—Ah, but the object is bewitching—the matter will be an eternal secret—and if it is known that I sneak in this pitiful manner from a fine woman, when the whole elysium of her person solicits me!—well, and am I afraid the world should know that I have shrunk from an infamous action?—A thousand blessings on you, dear conscience, for that one argument—I shall be an honest man after all. Suppose, however, that I give her the meeting? that's dangerous—that's dangerous:—and I am so little accustomed to do what is right, that I shall certainly do what is wrong, the moment I am in the way of temptation. Come, Belville, your resolution is not so very slender a dependence; and you owe Miss Walsingham repara-

tion for the injury which you have done her principles. I'll give her the meeting—I'll take her to the house I intended—I'll—Zounds! what a fool I have been all this time, to look for precarious satisfaction in vice, when there is such exquisite pleasure to a certainty to be found in virtue! [*Exit* BEL.

Enter LADY RACHEL *and* MRS BELVILLE.

Lady Rach. For mirth's sake, don't let him see us: There has been a warm debate between his passion and his conscience.

Mrs Bel. And the latter is the conqueror, my life for it.

Lady Rach. Dear Mrs Belville, you are the best of women, and ought to have the best of husbands.

Mrs Bel. I have the best of husbands.

Lady Rach. I have not time to dispute the matter with you now; but I shall put you into my comedy, to teach wives, that the best receipt for matrimonial happiness, is to be deaf, dumb, and blind.

Mrs Bel. Poh, poh! you are are a satirist, lady Rachel!—But we are losing time; should not we put on our dresses, and prepare for the grand scene?

Lady Rach. Don't you tremble at the trial?

Mrs Bel. Not in the least; I am sure my heart has no occasion.

Lady Rach. Have you let Miss Walsingham into our little plot?

Mrs Bel. You know she could not be insensible of Mr Belville's design upon herself; and it it is no farther than that design, we have any thing to carry into execution.

Lady Rach. Well, she may serve to facilitate the matter; and, therefore, I am not sorry that you have trusted her.

Mrs Bel. We shall be too late; and, then, what signifies all your fine plotting?

Lady Rach. Is it not a little pang of jealousy that would fain quicken our motions?

Mrs Bel. No, lady Rachel, it is a certainty of my husband's love and generosity, that makes me wish to come to the trial. I would not exchange my confidence in his affection for all the mines of Peru; so, nothing you can say can make me miserable.

Lady Rach. You are a most unaccountable woman; so, away with you. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SPRUCE *and* GHASTLY.

Spruce. Why, Ghastly, the old general, your master, is a greater fool than I ever thought he was: He wants to marry Miss Walsingham.

Ghast. Mrs Tempest suspected that there was something going forward, by all his hugger-mugger consulting with Mr Torrington: and so set me on to listen.

Spruce. She's a good friend of yours; and that thing she made the general give you the other day in the hospital, is, I suppose, a snug hundred a-year.

Ghast. Better than two; I wash for near four thousand people: there was a major of horse who put in for it, and pleaded a large family—

Spruce. With long service, I suppose?

Ghast. Yes; but Mrs Tempest insisted upon my long services; so the major was set aside—However, to keep the thing from the damned news-papers, I fancy he will succeed the barber, who died last night, poor woman, of a lying-in-fever, after being brought to bed of three children.—Places in public institutions—

Spruce. Are often sweetly disposed of: I think of asking Belville for something, one of these days.

Ghast. He has great interest.

Spruce. I might be a justice of peace, if I pleased, and in a shabby neighbourhood, where the mere swearing would bring in something tolerable: but there are so many strange people let into the commission now a-days, that I shou'dn't like to have my name in the list.

Ghast. You are right.

Spruce. No, no; I leave that to paltry tradesmen, and shall think of some little sinecure, or a small pension on the Irish establishment.

Ghast. Well, success attend you! I must hobble home as fast as I can, to know if Mrs Tempest has any orders. O, there's a rare storm brewing for our old goat of a general!

Spruce. When shall we crack a bottle together?

Ghast. O, I shan't touch a glass of claret these three weeks; for last night I gave nature a little filip with a drunken bout, according to the doctor's directions. I have entirely left off bread, and I am in great hopes that I shall get rid of the gout by these means, especially if I can learn to eat my meat quite raw, like a cannibal.

Spruce. Ha, ha, ha!

Ghast. Look at me, Spruce; I was once as likely a young fellow as any under ground in the whole parish of St James's:—but waiting on the general so many years—

Spruce. Ay, and following his example, Ghastly?

Ghast. 'Tis too true—has reduced me to what you see. These miserable spindles would do very well for a lord or a duke, Spruce; but they are a sad disgrace to a poor valet de chambre. [*Exit.*

Spruce. Well, I don't believe there's a gentleman's gentleman, within the weekly bills, who joins a prudent solicitude for the main chance, to a strict care of his constitution, better than myself. I have a little girl, who stands me in about three guineas a week. I never bet more than a pound upon a rubber of whist; I always sleep with my head very warm; and swallow a new-laid egg every morning with my chocolate. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the street. Two chairs cross the stage, knock at a door, and set down* BELVILLE *and a lady.*

Bel. This way, my dear creature! [*Exeunt.*

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE, CAPTAIN SAVAGE, *and* TORRINGTON.

Capt. Sav. There! there they go in! You see the place is quite convenient, not twenty yards from the masquerade.

Gen. Sav. How closely the fellow sticks to her!

Tor. Like the great seal to the peerage patent of a chancellor. But, gentlemen, we have still no more than proof presumptive:—where is the ocular demonstration which we were to have?

Capt. Sav. I'll swear to the blue domino; 'tis a very remarkable one, and so is Belville's.

Tor. You would have rare custom among the Newgate solicitors, if you'd venture an oath upon the identity of the party under it.

Gen. Sav. 'Tis the very size and shape of Miss Walsingham.

Tor. And yet, I have a strange notion that there is a trifling *alibi* in this case.

Gen. Sav. It would be a damned affair if we should be countermined.

Capt. Sav. O, follow me! here's the door left luckily open, and I'll soon clear up the matter beyond a question. [*Enters the house.*

Tor. Why your son is mad, general. This must produce a deadly breach with Belville. For Heaven's sake, let us go in, and prevent any excesses of his rashness.

Gen. Sav. By all means, or the poor fellow's generous anxiety on my account may be productive of very fatal consequences. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to an apartment.*

BELVILLE *unmasked, and a lady in a blue domino, masked.*

Bel. My dear Miss Walsingham, we are now perfectly safe; yet I will by no means entreat you to unmask, because I am convinced, from the propriety with which you repulsed my addresses this morning, that you intend the present interview should make me still more deeply sensible of my presumption.——I never lied so awkwardly in all my life. If it was to make her complv, I should be at no loss for language. [*Aside.*] The situation in which I must appear before you, madam, is certainly a very humiliating one; but I am persuaded that your generosity will be gratified to hear, that I have bid an everlasting adieu to my profligacies, and am now only alive to the virtues of Mrs Belville—She won't speak—I don't wonder at it; for, brazen as I am myself, if I met so mortifying a rejection, I should be cursedly out of countenance. [*Aside.*

Capt. Sav. [*Behind.*] I will go in.

Gen. Sav. [*Behind.*] I command you to desist.

Tor. [*Behind.*] This will be an affair for the Old Bailey.

[*The noise grows more violent, and continues.*

Bel. Why, what the devil is all this?—Don't be alarmed, Miss Walsingham; be assured I'll protect you, at the hazard of my life;—step into this closet——you sha'n't be discovered, depend upon it—[*She goes in.*]—And now to find out the cause of this confusion. [*Unlocks the door.*

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE, CAPTAIN SAVAGE, *and* TORRINGTON.

Savage! what is the meaning of this strange behaviour?

Capt. Sav. Where is Miss Walsingham?

Bel. So, then, sir, this is a premeditated scheme, for which I am obliged to your friendship.

Capt. Sav. Where's Miss Walsingham, sir?

Gen. Sav. Dear Belville, he is out of his senses!——this storm was intirely against my orders.

Tor. If he proceeds much longer in these vagaries, we must amuse him with a commission of lunacy.

Bel. This is neither a time nor place for argument, Mr Torrington; but as you and the general seem to be in the possession of your senses, I shall be glad if you'll take this very friendly gentleman away; and depend upon it, I sha'n't die in his debt for the present obligation.

Capt. Sav. And depend upon it, sir, pay the obligation when you will, I sha'n't stir till I see Miss Walsingham.——Look'e, Belville, there are secret reasons for my behaving in this manner; reasons which you yourself will approve, when you know them:—my father here———

Gen. Sav. Disavows your conduct in every particular, and would rejoice to see you at the halberds.

Tor. And, for my part, I told him previously 'twas a downright burglary.

Bel. Well, gentlemen, let your different motives for breaking in upon me in this disagreeable manner be what they may, I don't see that I am less annoyed by my friends than my enemy. I must therefore again request, that you will all walk down stairs.

Capt. Sav. I'll first walk into this room.

Bel. Really, I think you will not.

Gen. Sav. What frenzy possesses the fellow to urge this matter farther?

Capt. Sav. While there's a single doubt, she triumphs over justice.—[*Drawing.*]—I will go into that room.

Bel. Then you must make your way through me.

Enter the LADY *masked.*

Mask. Ah!

Capt. Sav. There! I knew she was in the room:—there's the blue domino.

Gen. Sav. Put up your sword, if you don't desire to be cashiered from my favour for ever.

Bel. Why would you come out, madam? But you have nothing to apprehend.

Capt. Sav. Pray, madam, will you have the goodness to unmask?

Bel. She sha'n't unmask.

Capt. Sav. I say, she shall.

Bel. I say, she shall not.

Mask. Pray, let me oblige the gentleman?

Capt. Sav. Death and destruction, here's a discovery!

Gen. Sav. and Tor. Mrs Belville!

Mrs Bel. Yes, Mrs Belville, gentlemen: Is conjugal fidelity so very terrible a thing now-a-days, that a man is to suffer death for being found in company with his own wife!

Bel. My love, this is a surprise indeed—but it is a most agreeable one; since you find me really ashamed of my former follies, and cannot now doubt the sincerity of my reformation.

Mrs Bel. I am too happy! This single moment would overpay a whole life of anxiety.

Bel. Where shall I attend you? Will you return to the masquerade?

Mrs Bel. O no!——Lady Rachel and Miss Walsingham are by this time at our house, with Mr Leeson and the Irish gentleman, whom you pressed into our party, impatiently expecting the result of this adventure.

Bel. Give me leave to conduct you home, then, from this scene of confusion. To-morrow, captain Savage, I shall beg the favour of your explanation. [*Aside to him as he goes out.*] Kind gentlemen, your most humble servant.

Mrs Bel. And when you next disturb a tete-a-tete, for pity to a poor wife, don't let it be so very uncustomary a party as a matrimonial one.

[*Exeunt* BELVILLE *and* MRS BELVILLE.

Gen. Sav. [*To* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.] So, sir, you have led us upon a blessed expedition here!

Tor. Now, don't you think that if your courts of honour, like our courts of law, searched a little minutely into evidence, it would be equally to the credit of their understandings?

Capt. Sav. Though I am covered with confusion at my mistake (for you see Belville was mistaken as well as myself) I am overjoyed at this discovery of Miss Walsingham's innocence.

Gen. Sav. I should exult in it too, with a feu de joie, if it don't now shew the impossibility of her ever being Mrs Savage.

Capt. Sav. Dear sir, why should you think that an impossibility? Though some mistakes have occured, in consequence, I suppose, of Mrs Belville's little plot upon her husband, I dare say Miss Walsingham may yet be prevailed upon to come into our family.

Tor. Take care of a new error in your proceedings, young gentleman.

Gen. Sav. Ay, another defeat would make us completely despicable.

Capt. Sav. Sir, I'll forfeit my life, if she does not consent to the marriage this very night.

Gen. Sav. Only bring this matter to bear, and I'll forgive you every thing.

Tor. The captain should be informed, I think, general, that she declined it peremptorily this evening.

Gen. Sav. Ay, do you hear that, Horace?

Capt. Sav. I am not at all surprised at it, considering the general misconception we laboured under. But I'll immediately to Belville's, explain the whole mystery, and conclude every thing to your satisfaction. [*Exit.*

Gen. Sav. So, Torrington, we shall be able to take the field again, you see.

Tor. But how, in the name of wonder, has your son found out your intention of marrying Miss Walsingham? I looked upon myself as the only person acquainted with the secret.

Gen. Sav. That thought has marched itself two or three times to my own recollection. For though I gave him some distant hints of the affair, I took particular care to keep behind the works of a proper circumspection.

Tor. O, if you gave him any hints at all, I am not surprised at his discovering every thing.

Gen. Sav. I shall be all impatience till I hear of his interview with Miss Walsingham. Suppose, my dear friend, we went to Belville's? 'tis but in the next street, and we shall be there in the lighting of a match.

Tor. Really, this is a pretty business for a man of my age and profession—trot here, trot there. But, as I have been weak enough to make myself a kind of party in the cause, I own that I have curiosity enough to be anxious about the determination.

Gen. Sav. Come along, my old boy; and remember the song. '*Servile spirits,*' &c.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to* BELVILLE'S.

Enter CAPTAIN SAVAGE *and* MISS WALSINGHAM.

Capt. Sav. Nay, but, my dearest Miss Walsingham, the extenuation of my own conduct to Belville made it absolutely necessary for me to discover my engagements with you; and, as happiness is now so fortunately in our reach, I flatter myself you will be prevailed upon to forgive an error, which proceeded only from an extravagancy of love.

Miss Wal. To think me capable of such an action, captain Savage! I am terrified at the idea of a union with you; and it is better for a woman, at any time, to sacrifice an insolent lover, than to accept of a suspicious husband.

Capt. Sav. In the happiest unions, my dearest creature, there must be always something to overlook on both sides.

Miss Wal. Very civil, truly!

Capt. Sav. Pardon me, my life, for this frankness! and recollect, that if the lover has, through misconception, been unhappily guilty, he brings a husband altogether reformed to your hands.

Miss Wal. Well, I see I must forgive you at last; so I may as well make merit of necessity, you provoking creature.

Capt. Sav. And may I hope, indeed, for the blessing of this hand?

Miss Wal. Why, you wretch, would you have me force it upon you? I think, after what I have said, a soldier might have ventured to take it, without further ceremony.

Capt. Sav. Angelic creature! thus I seize it, as my lawful prize.

Miss Wal. Well, but now you have obtained this inestimable prize, captain, give me again leave to ask, if you have had a certain explanation with the general?

Capt. Sav. How can you doubt it?

Miss Wal. And he is really impatient for our marriage?

Capt. Sav. 'Tis incredible how earnest he is.

Miss Wal. What, did he tell you of his interview with me this evening, when he brought Mr Torrington?

Capt. Sav. He did.

Miss Wal. O, then I can have no doubt.

Capt. Sav. If a shadow of doubt remains, here he comes to remove it. Joy! my dear sir! joy a thousand times!

Enter GENERAL SAVAGE *and* TORRINGTON.

Gen. Sav. What, my dear boy, have you carried the day?

Miss Wal. I have been weak enough to indulge him with a victory, indeed, general.

Gen. Sav. [*Singing.*]

None but the brave, none but the brave, &c.

Tor. I congratulate you heartily on this decree, general.

Gen. Sav. This had nearly proved a day of disappointment; but the stars have fortunately turned it in my favour, and now I reap the rich reward of my victory. [*Salutes her.*

Capt. Sav. And here I take her from you, as the greatest good which Heaven can send me.

Miss Wal. O, captain!

Gen. Sav. You take her as the greatest good which Heaven can send you, sirrah! I take her as the greatest good which Heaven can send me! And now, what have you to say to her?

Miss Wal. General Savage!

Tor. Here will be a fresh injunction to stop proceedings.

Miss Wal. Are you never to have done with mistakes?

Gen. Sav. What mistakes can have happened now, my sweetest? you delivered up your dear hand to me this moment?

Miss Wal. True, sir; but I thought you were going to bestow my dear hand upon this dear gentleman.

Gen. Sav. How! that dear gentleman!

Capt. Sav. I am thunderstruck!

Tor. General—[*Sings.*]

None but the brave, &c.

Gen. Sav. So! the covert way is cleared at last; and you have imagined that I was all along negociating for this fellow, when I was gravely soliciting for myself?

Miss Wal. No other idea, sir, ever once entered my imagination.

Tor. General. [*Sings.*]

Noble minds shall ne'er despair, &c.

Gen. Sav. Zounds! here's all the company pouring upon us in full gallop, and I shall be the laughing-stock of the whole town.

Enter BELVILLE, MRS BELVILLE, LADY RACHEL, LEESON, *and* CONOLLY.

Bel. Well, general, we have left you a long time together. Shall I give you joy?

Gen. Sav. No: wish me demolished in the fortifications of Dunkirk.

Mrs Bel. What's the matter?

Lady Rach. The general appears disconcerted.

Lee. The gentleman looks as if he had fought a hard battle.

Con. Ay, and gained nothing but a defeat, my dear.

Tor. I'll shew cause for his behaviour.

Gen. Sav. Death and damnation! not for the world! I am taken by surprise here; let me consider a moment how to cut my way through the enemy.

Miss Wal. How could you be deceived in this manner? [*To the* CAPT.

Lady Rach. O, Mr Torrington! we are much obliged to you; you have been in town ever since last night, and only see us now by accident.

Tor. I have been very busy, madam; but you look sadly, very sadly, indeed! your old disorder the jaundice, I suppose, has been very troublesome to you?

Lady Rach. Sir, you have a very extraordinary mode of complimenting your acquaintance.

Con. I don't believe, for all that, that there's a word of a lie in the truth he speaks. [*Aside.*

Lee. Mr Torrington, your most obedient—— You received my letter, I hope?

Tor. What, my young barrister! Have you any more traders from Dantzick to be naturalized?

Con. Let us only speak to you in private; and

we'll there clear up the affair before the whole company.

Tor. [*Speaking apart to* LEESON *and* CON.]—This gentleman's letter has already cleared it up to my entire satisfaction; and I don't know whether I am most pleased with his wit, or charmed with his probity. However, Mr Leeson, I used the bailiffs sadly. Bailiffs are generally sad fellows to be sure; but we must love justice for our own sakes.

Lee. Unquestionably, sir; and they shall be amply recompensed for the merit of their sufferings.

Con. And the merit of suffering, I fancy, is the only merit that is ever likely to fall to the share of a sheriff's officer.

Tor. One word—one word more, Mr Leeson. I have inquired your character, and like it——like it much. Forgive the forwardness of an old man. You must not want money——you must not, indeed———

Lee. Sir———

Tor. Pray don't be offended—I mean to give my friends but little trouble about my affairs when I am gone. I love to see the people happy that my fortune is to make so; and shall think it a treason against humanity to leave a shilling more than the bare expences of my funeral. Breakfast with me in the morning.

Lee. You overwhelm me with this generosity; but a happy revolution in my fortunes, which you will soon know, renders it wholly unnecessary for me to trouble you.

Con. [*Wiping his eyes.*] Upon my soul, this is a most worthy old crater—to be his own executor. If I was to live any long time among such people, they would soon be the death of me, with their very goodness.

Mrs Bel. Miss Walsingham, captain Savage has been telling Mr Belville and me of a very extraordinary mistake.

Miss Wal. 'Tis very strange, indeed; mistake on mistake.

Bel. 'Tis no way strange to find every body properly struck with the merit of Miss Walsingham.

Miss Wal. A compliment from you, now, Mr Belville, is really worth accepting.

Gen. Sav. If I thought the affair could be kept a secret, by making the town over to my son, since I am utterly shut out myself———

Capt. Sav. He seems exceedingly embarrassed.

Gen. Sav. If I thought that—why, mortified as I must be in giving it up, I think I could resolve upon the manœuvre, to save myself from universal ridicule: but it can't be; it can't be; and I only double my own disappointment in rewarding the disobedience of the rascal who has supplanted me. There! there! they are all talking of it, all laughing at me, and I shall run mad.

Mrs Tem. [*Behind.*] I say, you feather-headed puppy, he is in this house; my own servant saw him come in, and I will not stir till I find him.

Gen. Sav. She here! then, deliberation is over, and I am entirely blown up.

Lady Rach. I'll take notes of this affair.

Enter MRS TEMPLE.

Mrs Tem. Mighty well, sir! So you are in love, it seems? and you want to be married, it seems?

Lee. My blessed aunt! O, how proud I am of the relation!

Gen. Sav. Dear Bab, give me quarter before all this company.

Mrs Tem. You are in love, you old fool, are you? and you want to marry Miss Walsingham, indeed!

Con. I never heard a pleasanter spoken gentlewoman———O honey, if I had the taming of her, she should never be abusive, without keeping a civil tongue in her head.

Mrs Tem. Well, sir, and when is the happy day to be fixed?

Bel. What the devil, is this true, general?

Gen. True—Can you believe such an absurdity?

Mrs Tem. Why, will you deny, you miserable old mummy, that you made proposals of marriage to her?

Gen. Sav. Yes I do—no, I don't—proposals of marriage!

Miss Wal. In favour of your son—I'll help him out a little. [*Aside.*

Gen. Sav. Yes, in favour of my son——— what the devil shall I do?

Mrs Bel. Shall I take a lesson from this lady, Mr Belville? Perhaps, if the women of virtue were to pluck up a little spirit, they might be soon as well treated as kept mistresses.

Mrs Temp. Hark'e, general Savage, I believe you assert a falsehood; but if you speak the truth, give your son this moment to Miss Walsingham, and let me be fairly rid of my rival.

Gen. Sav. My son! Miss Walsingham! Miss Walsingham, my son!

Bel. It will do, Horace; it will do.

Mrs Tem. No prevarications, general Savage! Do what I bid you instantly, or, by all the wrongs of an enraged woman, I'll so expose you!——

Con. What a fine fellow this is to have the command of an army!

Gen. Sav. If Miss Walsingham can be prevailed upon——

Tor. O, she'll oblige you readily—but you must settle a good fortune upon your son.

Mrs Tem. That he shall do.

Mrs Bel. Miss Walsingham, my dear———

Miss Wal. I can refuse nothing either to your request, or to the request of the general.

Gen. Sav. Oblige me with your hand, then, ma-

dam: come here, you——come here, captain.—There, there is Miss Walsingham's hand for you.

Con. And as pretty a little fist it is, as any in the three kingdoms.

Gen. Sav. Torrington shall settle the fortune.

Lee. I give you joy, most heartily, madam.

Bel. We all give her joy.

Capt. Sav. Mine is beyond the power of expression.

Miss Wal. [*Aside to the company.*] And so is the general's, I believe.

Con. O, faith, that may be easily seen, by the sweetness of his countenance.

Tor. Well, the cause being now, at last, determined, I think we may all retire from the court.

Gen. Sav. And without any great credit, I fear, to the general.

Con. By my soul, you may say that!

Mrs Tem. Do you murmur, sir? Come this moment home with me.

Gen. Sav. I'll go any where to hide this miserable head of mine: what a damned campaign have I made of it!

[*Exeunt* GENERAL SAVAGE *and* MRS TEMPEST.

Con. Upon my soul, if I was in the general's place, I would divide the house with this devil; I would keep within doors myself, and make her take the outside.

Lady Rach. Here's more food for a comedy.

Lee. So there is, madam; and Mr Torrington, to whose goodness I am infinitely obliged, could tell you some diverting anecdotes, that would enrich a comedy considerably.

Con. Ay, faith, and a tragedy, too!

Tor. I can tell nothing but what will redound to the credit of your character, young man.

Bel. The day has been a busy one, thanks to the communicative disposition of the captain.

Mrs Bel. And the evening should be cheerful.

Bel. I shan't, therefore, part with one of you, till we have had a hearty laugh at our general adventures.

Miss Wal. They have been very whimsical, indeed; yet, if represented on the stage, I hope they would be found not only entertaining, but instructive.

Lady Rach. Instructive! why the modern critics say, that the only business of comedy is to make people laugh.

Bel. That is degrading the dignity of letters exceedingly, as well as lessening the utility of the stage. A good comedy is a capital effort of genius, and should, therefore, be directed to the noblest purposes.

Miss Wal. Very true; and unless we learn something while we chuckle, the carpenter, who nails a pantomime together, will be entitled to more applause, than the best comic poet in the kingdom. [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

RIVALS.

BY

SHERIDAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.
CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE, *his son, attached to* LYDIA LANGUISH.
FAULKLAND, *attached to* JULIA.
ACRES, *a country squire.*
SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER, *an Irishman.*
FAG, *servant to* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.
DAVID, *servant to* ACRES.
Coachman to SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

WOMEN.

MRS MALAPROP, *attached to* SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.
LYDIA LANGUISH, *niece to* MRS MALAPROP.
JULIA, *attached to* FAULKLAND.
LUCY, *maid to* MISS LANGUISH.

Maid, Boy, Servants, &c.

Scene—Bath.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A street in Bath.*

Coachman crosses the stage—Enter FAG, *looking after him.*

Fag. WHAT! Thomas! Sure 'tis he?—What! Thomas! Thomas!

Coach. Hey! Odds life! Mr Fag! give us your hand, my old fellow-servant.

Fag. Excuse my glove, Thomas!—I'm devilish glad to see you, my lad: why, my prince of charioteers, you look as hearty!—But who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath!

Coach. Sure, master, Madam Julia, Harry, Mrs Kate, and the postillion, be all come.

Fag. Indeed!

Coach. Av! Master thought another fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit; so he'd a mind to gi't the slip, and whip! we were all off at an hour's warning.

Fag. Ay, ay! hasty in every thing, or it would not be sir Anthony Absolute.

Coach. But tell us, Mr Fag, how does young master? Odd! sir Anthony will stare to see the captain here!

Fag. I do not serve captain Absolute now.

Coach. Why, sure!

Fag. At present I am employed by ensign Beverley.

Coach. I doubt, Mr Fag, you ha'n't changed for the better.

Fag. I have not changed, Thomas.

Coach. No! why, didn't you say you had left young master!

Fag. No. Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle

you no farther—briefly then—Captain Absolute and ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

Coach. The devil they are!

Fag. So it is indeed, Thomas; and the ensign-half of my master being on guard at present—the captain has nothing to do with me.

Coach. So, so! what, this is some freak, I warrant! Do tell us, Mr Fag, the meaning o't—you know I ha' trusted you.

Fag. You'll be secret, Thomas?

Coach. As a coach-horse.

Fag. Why, then, the cause of all this is—love—love, Thomas, who (as you may get read to you) has been a masquerader ever since the days of Jupiter.

Coach. Ay, ay; I guessed there was a lady in the case: but pray, why does your master pass only for ensign? now, if he had shammed general indeed———

Fag. Ah! Thomas, there lies the mystery of the matter. Hark'e, Thomas; my master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste: a lady, who likes him better as a half-pay ensign, than if she knew he was son and heir to sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a-year.

Coach. That is an odd taste indeed!—but has she got the stuff, Mr Fag? is she rich, hey?

Fag. Rich! why, I believe she owns half the stocks! Zounds! Thomas, she could pay the national debt as easily as I could my washerwoman! She has a lap-dog that eats out of gold; she feeds her parrot with small pearls; and all her thread papers are made of bank-notes!

Coach. Bravo! faith! Odd! I warrant she has a set of thousands at least: but does she draw kindly with the captain?

Fag. As fond as pigeons.

Coach. May one hear her name?

Fag. Miss Lydia Languish. But there is an old tough aunt in the way; though, by the by, she has never seen my master; for he got acquainted with miss while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

Coach. Well, I wish they were once harnessed together in matrimony. But pray, Mr Fag, what kind of a place is this Bath? I ha' heard a deal of it; here's a mort o' merry making—hey?

Fag. Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well; 'tis a good lounge: In the morning we go to the pump-room (though neither my master nor I drink the waters); after breakfast, we saunter on the parades, or play a game at billiards; at night we dance: but damn the place, I'm tired of it; their regular hours stupify me! not a fiddle nor a card after eleven! however, Mr Faulkland's gentleman and I keep it up a little in private parties. I'll introduce you there, Thomas; you'll like him much.

Coach. Sure I know Mr Du-Peigu; you know his master is to marry madam Julia.

Fag. I had forgot. But, Thomas, you must polish a little; indeed you must——Here, now, this wig! what the devil do you do with a wig, Thomas? none of the London whips of any degree of ton wear wigs now.

Coach. More's the pity! more's the pity, I say! Odd's life! when I heard how the lawyers and doctors had took to their own hair, I thought how 'twould go next: Odd rabbit it! when the fashion had got foot on the bar, I guessed 'twould mount to the box! but 'tis all out of character, believe me, Mr Fag: and look'ee, I'll never gi' up mine; the lawyers and doctors may do as they will.

Fag. Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

Coach. Why, bless you, the gentlemen of they professions ben't all of a mind; for, in our village now, thof Jack Gauge, the exciseman, has ta'en to his carrots, there's little Dick, the farrier, swears he'll never forsake bis bob, though all the college should appear with their own heads!

Fag. Indeed! well said, Dick! but hold—mark! mark! Thomas.

Coach. Zooks! 'tis the captain! Is that the lady with him?

Fag. No, no! that is madam Lucy, my master's mistress's maid. They lodge at that house. But I must after him, to tell him the news.

Coach. Odd! he's giving her money! well, Mr Fag——

Fag. Good by, Thomas! I have an appointment in Gyde's Porch this evening at eight; meet me there, and we'll make a little party.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*A dressing-room in* MRS MALAPROP'S *lodgings.*

LYDIA *sitting on a sopha, with a book in her hand.*

Enter LUCY, *as just returned from a message.*

Lucy. Indeed, ma'am, I traversed half the town in search of it: I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath I ha'n't been at.

Lydia. And could not you get 'The Reward of Constancy?'

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor 'The Fatal Connection?'

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor 'The Mistakes of the Heart?'

Lucy. Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, Mr Bull said Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetched it away.

Lydia. Heigh-ho!—Did you inquire for 'The Delicate Distress?'

Lucy. ——— Or, 'The Memoirs of Lady Woodford?' Yes indeed, ma'am. I asked every where for it; and I might have brought it from Mr Frederick's; but lady Slattern Lounger, who

had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's-eared it, it wa'n't fit for a christian to read.

Lydia. Heigh-ho!—Yes, I always know when Lady Slattern has been before me. She has a most observing thumb; and, I believe, cherishes her nails for the convenience of making marginal notes. Well, child, what have you brought me?

Lucy. Oh! here, ma'am.

[*Taking books from under her cloak, and from her pockets.*

This is 'The Gordian Knot,' and this 'Peregrine Pickle.' Here are 'The Tears of Sensibility,' and 'Humphrey Clinker.' This is 'The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, written by herself,' and here the second volume of 'The Sentimental Journey.'

Lydia. Heigh-ho! What are those books by the glass?

Lucy. The great one is only 'The Whole Duty of Man,' where I press a few blonds, ma'am.

Lydia. Very well. Give me the sal volatile.

Lucy. Is it in a blue cover, ma'am?

Lydia. My smelling bottle, you simpleton!

Lucy. O, the drops! here, ma'am.

Lydia. Hold! here's some one coming—quick, see who it is—— [*Exit* LUCY.

Surely I heard my cousin Julia's voice!

Re-enter LUCY.

Lucy. Lud! ma'am, here is Miss Melville!

Lydia. Is it possible?——

Enter JULIA.

My dearest Julia, how delighted am I! [*Embrace.*] How unexpected was this happiness!

Julia. True, Lydia; and our pleasure is the greater; but what has been the matter? You were denied to me at first!

Lydia. Ah, Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you! but first inform me what has conjured you to Bath? Is sir Anthony here?

Julia. He is; we are arrived within this hour; and, I suppose, he will be here to wait on Mrs Malaprop as soon as he is dressed.

Lydia. Then, before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress! I know your gentle nature will sympathize with me, though your prudence may condemn me: My letters have informed you of my whole connection with Beverley—but I have lost him, Julia! My aunt has discovered our intercourse, by a note she intercepted, and has confined me ever since. Yet, would you believe it? she has fallen absolutely in love with a tall Irish baronet she met one night since we have been here, at lady Macshuffle's rout.

Julia. You jest, Lydia?

Lydia. No, upon my word! She really carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a feigned name though, till she chooses to be known to him—But it is a Delia or a Celia, I assure you!

Julia. Then, surely, she is now more indulgent to her nicce?

Lydia. Quite the contrary. Since she has discovered her own frailty, she is become more suspicious of mine. Then I must inform you of another plague! That odious Acres is to be in Bath to-day; so that I protest I shall be teased out of all spirits!

Julia. Come, come, Lydia, hope for the best. Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs Malaprop.

Lydia. But you have not heard the worst: Unfortunately I had quarrelled with my poor Beverley, just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since, to make it up.

Julia. What was his offence?

Lydia. Nothing at all! But, I don't know how it was, as often as we had been together, we had never had a quarrel: And, somehow, I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity. So, last Thursday, I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself that Beverley was at that time paying his addresses to another woman. I signed it 'Your Friend Unknown,' shewed it to Beverley, charged him with his falsehood, put myself in a violent passion, and vowed I'd never see him more.

Julia. And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since?

Lydia. 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out. I intended only to have teased him three days and a half, and now I've lost him for ever.

Julia. If he is as deserving and sincere as you have represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia; you tell me he is but an ensign, and you have thirty thousand pounds!

Lydia. But you know I lose most of my fortune if I marry without my aunt's consent, till of age; and that is what I have determined to do, ever since I knew the penalty. Nor could I love the man, who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

Julia. Nay, this is caprice!

Lydia. What, does Julia tax me with caprice? I thought her lover Faulkland had inured her to it.

Julia. I do not love even his faults.

Lydia. But apropos! you have sent to him, I suppose?

Julia. Not yet, upon my word! nor has he the least idea of my being in Bath. Sir Anthony's resolution was so sudden, I could not inform him of it.

Lydia. Well, Julia, you are your own mistress, (though under the protection of sir Anthony) yet have you, for this long year, been a slave to the caprice, the whim, the jealousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the

rights of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious as a lover.

Julia. Nay, you are wrong entirely. We were contracted before my father's death. That, and some consequent embarrassments, have delayed what I know to be my Faulkland's most ardent wish. He is too generous to trifle on such a point. And, for his character, you wrong him there, too. No, Lydia, he is too proud, too noble to be jealous; if he is captious, 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, without rudeness. Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover—but being unhackneyed in the passion, his affection is ardent and sincere; and, as it engrosses his whole soul, he expects every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his. Yet, though his pride calls for this full return, his humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him, which would entitle him to it; and, not feeling why he should be loved to the degree he wishes, he still suspects that he is not loved enough. This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours; but I have learned to think myself his debtor, for those imperfections which arise from the ardour of his attachment.

Lydia. Well, I cannot blame you for defending him. But, tell me candidly, Julia, had he never saved your life, do you think you should have been attached to him as you are? Believe me, the rude blast, that overset your boat, was a prosperous gale of love to him.

Julia. Gratitude may have strengthened my attachment to Mr Faulkland, but I loved him before he had preserved me; yet, surely, that alone were an obligation sufficient——

Lydia. Obligation! Why, a water-spaniel would have done as much! Well, I should never think of giving my heart to a man, because he could swim!

Julia. Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

Lydia. Nay, I do but jest. What's here?

Enter LUCY, *in a hurry.*

Lucy. O, madam, here is sir Anthony Absolute just come home with your aunt!

Lydia. They'll not come here. Lucy, do you watch. [*Exit* LUCY.

Julia. Yet I must go. Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to shew me the town. I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long as she chooses, with her select words so ingeniously misapplied, without being mispronounced.

Re-enter LUCY.

Lucy. O lud! Ma'am, they are both coming up stairs!

Lydia. Well, I'll not detain you, coz. Adieu, my dear Julia; I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland. There—through my room you'll find another stair-case.

Julia. Adieu!—[*Embrace.*]

[*Exit* JULIA.

Lydia. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books. Quick, quick! Fling Peregrine Pickle under the toilet—throw Roderick Random into the closet—put the Innocent Adultery into the Whole Duty of Man—thrust Lord Aimworth under the sopha—cram Ovid behind the bolster—there—put the Man of Feeling into your pocket—so, so; now, lay Mrs Chapone in sight, and leave Fordyce's Sermons open on the table.

Lucy. O burn it! Madam, the hair-dresser has torn away as far as Proper Pride.

Lydia. Never mind—open at Sobriety. Fling me Lord Chesterfield's Letters. Now for them.

Enter MRS MALAPROP, *and* SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

Mrs Mal. There, sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton, who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Lydia. Madam, I thought you once——

Mrs Mal. You thought, miss! I don't know any business you have to think at all. Thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow——to illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory.

Lydia Ah, madam! our memories are independent of our wills. It is not easy to forget.

Mrs Mal. But I say it is, miss; there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle, as if he had never existed—and I thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

Sir Anth. Why, sure she won't pretend to remember what she's ordered not! Ay, this comes of her reading!

Lydia. What crime, madam, have I committed to be treated thus?

Mrs Mal. Now, don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter; you know I have proof controvertible of it. But tell me, will you promise to do as you are bid? Will you take a husband of your friends' choosing?

Lydia. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Mrs Mal. What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that, as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion. I'm sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a black-a-moor—and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made! and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown

what tears I shed! But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

Lydia. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs Mal. Take yourself to your room. You are fit company for nothing but your own ill humours.

Lydia. Willingly, madam---I cannot change for the worse.

[*Exit* LYDIA.

Mrs Mal. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wondered at, madam; all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven, I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

Mrs Mal. Nay, nay; sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy.

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library; she had a book in each hand; they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers; from that moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress.

Mrs Mal. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town, is as an ever-green tree of diabolical knowledge; it blossoms through the year: and, depend on it, Mrs Malaprop, that they, who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs Mal. Fie, fie; sir Anthony, you surely speak laconically.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs Malaprop, in moderation, now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs Mal. Observe me, sir Anthony. I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance---I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning; neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments: but, sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts; and, as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries; but above all, sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mis-spell, and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know; and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though, I must confess, that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question. But, Mrs Malaprop, to the more important point in debate---you say you have no objection to my proposal?

Mrs Mal. None, I assure you. I am under no positive engagement with Mr Acres; and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

Sir Anth. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly. He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs Mal. We have never seen your son, sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side?

Sir Anth. Objection! Let him object if he dare! No, no, Mrs Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a phrenzy directly. My process was always very simple; in their younger days, 'twas 'Jack do this;' if he demurred, I knocked him down; and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs Mal. Ay; and the properest way, o' my conscience! Nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity. Well, sir Anthony, I shall give Mr Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations; and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently. Well, I must leave you; and let me beg you, Mrs Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl; take my advice, keep a tight hand; if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about.

[*Exit* SIR ANTH.

Mrs Mal. Well; at any rate I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition. She has somehow discovered my partiality for sir Lucius O'-Trigger---sure, Lucy can't have betrayed me! No; the girl is such a simpleton, I should have made her confess it. Lucy! Lucy!—[*Calls.*]—Had she been one of your artificial ones, I should never have trusted her.

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Did you call, madam?

Mrs Mal. Yes, girl. Did you see sir Lucius while you was out?

Lucy. No, indeed, madam, not a glimpse of him.

Mrs Mal. You are sure, Lucy, that you never mentioned———

Lucy. O gemini! I'd sooner cut my tongue out.

Mrs Mal. Well; don't let your simplicity be imposed on.

Lucy. No, madam.

Mrs Mal. So, come to me presently, and I'll give you another letter to sir Lucius: but mind Lucy, if ever you betray what you are intrusted with (unless it be other people's secrets to me) you forfeit my malevolence for ever; and your being a simpleton shall be no excuse for your locuacity. [*Exit* MRS MAL.

Lucy. Ha, ha, ha! So, my dear simplicity, let me give you a little respite—[*Altering her manner.*]—let girls in my station be as fond as they please of appearing expert, and knowing in their trusts; commend me to a mask of silliness, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it! Let me see! to what account have I turned my simplicity lately—[*Looks at a paper.*]—For abetting Miss Lydia Languish in a design of running away with an ensign! In money, sundry times, twelve pound twelve—gowns, five—hats, ruffles, caps, &c.—numberless! From the said ensign, within this last month, six guineas and a half—About a quarter's pay! *Item.* From Mrs Malaprop, for betraying the young people to her—when I found matters were likely to be discovered—two guineas, and a black padusoy. *Item.* From Mr Acres, for carrying divers letters—which I never delivered—two guineas, and a pair of buckles. *Item,* From sir Lucius O'Trigger, three crowns, two gold pocket-pieces, and a silver snuff-box! Well done, simplicity! Yet I was forced to make my Hibernian believe, that he was corresponding, not with the aunt, but with the niece: for, though not over-rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortune. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE'S *Lodgings.*

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *and* FAG.

Fag. SIR, while I was there, sir Anthony came in: I told him, you had sent me to inquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

Abs. And what did he say, on hearing I was at Bath?

Fag. Sir, in my life I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished; he started back two or three paces, rapt out a dozen interjectural oaths, and asked, what the devil had brought you here?

Abs. Well, sir, and what did you say?

Fag. O, I lied, sir; I forget the precise lie: but you may depend on't, he got no truth from me. Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I should be glad to fix what has brought us to Bath: in order that we may lie a little consistently. Sir Anthony's servants were curious, sir; very curious indeed.

Abs. You have said nothing to them?——

Fag. O, not a word, sir; not a word. Mr Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips)——

Abs. 'Sdeath! You rascal! You have not trusted him?

Fag. O, no, sir; no, no; not a syllable, upon my veracity! He was, indeed, a little inquisitive; but I was sly, sir, devilish sly!—My master (said I), honest Thomas, (you know, sir, one says honest to one's inferiors) is come to Bath to recruit—Yes, sir, I said, to recruit; and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, sir, is nothing to him, nor any one else.

Abs. Well, recruit will do; let it be so—

Fag. O, sir, recruit will do surprisingly—indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas, that your honour had already inlisted five disbanded chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard markers.

Abs. You blockhead, never say more than is necessary!

Fag. I beg pardon, sir, I beg pardon; but, with submission, a lie is nothing unless one supports it. Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge indorsements as well as the bill.

Abs. Well, take care you don't hurt your credit, by offering too much security.—Is Mr Faulkland returned?

Fag. He is above, sir, changing his dress.

Abs. Can you tell whether he has been informed of sir Anthony's and Miss Melville's arrival?

Fag. I fancy not, sir; he has seen no one since he came in, but his gentleman, who was with him at Bristol. I think, sir, I hear Mr Faulkland coming down.

Abs. Go, tell him, I am here.

Fag. Yes, sir. [*Going.*] I beg pardon, sir; but should sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember, that we are recruiting, if you please?

Abs. Well, well.

Fag. And, in tenderness to my character, if your honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I should esteem it as an obligation; for, though I never scruple a lie to serve my master, yet it hurts one's conscience to be found out. [*Exit.*

Abs. Now for my whimsical friend—if he does not know that his mistress is here, I'll teaze him a little before I tell him.——

Enter FAULKLAND.

Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again! you are punctual in your return.

Faulk. Yes; I had nothing to detain me, when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you? How stand matters between you and Lydia?

Abs. Faith, much as they were; I have not seen her since our quarrel; however, I expect to be recalled every hour.

Faulk. Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once?

Abs. What, and lose two-thirds of her fortune? You forget that, my friend. No, no, I could have brought her to that long ago.

Faulk. Nay, then, you trifle too long—if you are sure of her, propose to the aunt in your own character, and write to sir Anthony for his consent.

Abs. Softly, softly; for though I am convinced my little Lydia would elope with me as ensign Beverley, yet am I by no means certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friends' consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune on my side: No, no; I must prepare her gradually for the discovery, and make myself necessary to her, before I risk it. Well, but Faulkland, you'll dine with us to-day at the hotel?

Faulk. Indeed, I cannot; I am not in spirits to be of such a party.

Abs. By heavens! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover! Do love like a man.

Faulk. I own I am unfit for company.

Abs. Am not I a lover, ay, and a romantic one too? Yet, do I carry every where with me such a confounded farrago of doubts, fears, hopes, wishes, and all the flimsy furniture of a country miss's brain?

Faulk. Ah, Jack! your heart and soul are not, like mine, fixed immutably on one only object. You throw for a large stake, but losing—you could stake, and throw again: but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed, were to be stript of all.

Abs. But, for Heaven's sake! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present?

Faulk. What grounds for apprehension did you say? Heavens! are there not a thousand? I fear for her spirits, her health, her life—My absence may fret her; her anxiety for my return, her fears for me, may oppress her gentle temper. And for her health—does not every hour bring me cause to be alarmed? If it rains, some shower may even then have chilled her delicate frame! If the wind be keen, some rude blast may have affected her! The heat of noon, the dews of the evening, may endanger the life of her, for whom only I value mine. O, Jack! when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension!

Abs. Ay, but we may chuse whether we will take the hint or not. So then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia were well and in spirits, you would be entirely content?

Faulk. I should be happy beyond measure—I am anxious only for that.

Abs. Then, to cure your anxiety at once—Miss Melville is in perfect health, and is at this moment in Bath.

Faulk. Nay, Jack—don't trifle with me.

Abs. She is arrived here, with my father, within this hour.

Faulk. Can you be serious?

Abs. I thought you knew sir Anthony better than to be surprised at a sudden whim of this kind. Seriously, then, it is as I tell you—upon my honour.

Faulk. My dear friend!—Hollo, Du Peigne! my hat—my dear Jack—now, nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, Mr Acres, just arrived, is below.

Abs. Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your mistress has been ever since you left her.—Fag, shew the gentleman up. [*Exit* FAG.

Faulk. What, is he much acquainted in the family?

Abs. O, very intimate: I insist on your not going: besides, his character will divert you.

Faulk. Well, I should like to ask him a few questions.

Abs. He is likewise a rival of mine—that is of my other self's, for he does not think his friend captain Absolute ever saw the lady in question; and it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of one Beverley, a concealed, sculking rival, who——

Faulk. Hush! he's here.

Enter ACRES.

Acres. Hah! my dear friend, noble captain, and honest Jack, how dost thou? just arrived, faith, as you see. Sir, your humble servant. Warm work on the roads, Jack—Odds whips and wheels! I've travelled like a comet, with a tail of dust all the way as long as the Mall.

Abs. Ah! Bob, you are indeed an eccentric planet; but we know your attraction hither—— Give me leave to introduce Mr Faulkland to you. Mr Faulkland, Mr Acres.

Acres. Sir, I am most heartily glad to see you: Sir, I solicit your connexions.—Hey, Jack, what, this is Mr Faulkland, who———

Abs. Ay, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr Faulkland.

Acres. Odso! she and your father can be but just arrived before me—I suppose you have seen them. Ah! Mr Faulkland, you are indeed a happy man.

Faulk. I have not seen Miss Melville yet, sir; I hope she enjoyed full health and spirits in Devonshire?

Acres. Never knew her better in my life, sir; never better. Odds blushes and blooms! she has been as healthy as the German Spa.

Faulk. Indeed! I did hear that she had been a little indisposed.

Acres. False, false, sir; only said to vex you: quite the reverse, I assure you.

Faulk. There, Jack, you see she has the advantage of me; I had almost fretted myself ill.

Abs. Now are you angry with your mistress for not having been sick!

Faulk. No, no; you misunderstand me: yet surely, a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love. Now, confess, isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling health?

Abs. O, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence, to be sure!

Acres. Good apartments, Jack.

Faulk. Well, sir, but you was saying, that Miss Melville has been so exceedingly well—what, then, she has been merry and gay, I suppose?—Always in spirits, hey?

Acres. Merry! odds crickets, she has been the bell and spirit of the company wherever she has been—so lively and entertaining! so full of wit and humour!

Faulk. There, Jack, there! O, by my soul, there is an innate levity in woman, that nothing can overcome! What! happy and I away?

Abs. Have done: How foolish this is! just now, you were only apprehensive for your mistress's spirits.

Faulk. Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the company?

Abs. No, indeed, you have not.

Faulk. Have I been lively and entertaining?

Abs. O, upon my word, I acquit you.

Faulk. Have I been full of wit and humour?

Abs. No, faith; to do you justice, you have been confoundedly stupid indeed.

Acres. What's the matter with the gentleman?

Abs. He is only expressing his great satisfaction at hearing that Julia has been so well and happy, that's all—hey, Faulkland?

Faulk. Oh! I am rejoiced to hear it—yes, yes, she has a happy disposition!

Acres. That she has indeed—then she is so accomplished, so sweet a voice, so expert at her harpsichord, such a mistress of that and sharp—squallante, rumblante, and quiverante!—there was this time month, odds minnums and crotchets! how she did chirup at Mrs Piano's concert!

Faulk. There again, what say you to this? you see she has been all mirth and song—not a thought of me!

Abs. Pho! man, is not music the food of love?

Faulk. Well, well, it may be so.—Pray, Mr —— what's his damned name?—Do you remember what songs Miss Melville sung?

Acres. Not I indeed.

Abs. Stay now, they were some pretty melancholy purling-stream airs, I warrant; perhaps you may recollect; did she sing—'When absent from 'my soul's delight?'

Acres. No, that wa'n't it.

Abs. Or—'Go, gentle gales!'—'Go, gentle 'gales!' [*Sings.*

Acres. O no! nothing like it. Odds! now I recollect one of them—'My heart's my own, my 'will is free.' [*Sings.*

Faulk. Fool! fool that I am! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler! 'Sdeath! to make herself the pipe and ballad-monger of a circle! to soothe her light heart with catches and glees! What can you say to this, sir?

Abs. Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, sir.

Faulk. Nay, nay, nay; I'm not sorry that she has been happy—no, no; I am glad of that—I would not have had her sad or sick—yet, surely, a sympathetic heart would have shewn itself even in the choice of a song—she might have been temperately healthy, and somehow, plaintively gay—but she has been dancing too, I doubt not!

Acres. What does the gentleman say about dancing?

Abs. He says the lady we speak of dances as well as she sings.

Acres. Aye, truly, does she—there was at our last race-ball———

Faulk. Hell and the devil! There! there—I told you so! I told you so! Oh! she thrives in my absence!—Dancing! but her whole feelings have been in opposition with mine. I have been anxious, silent, pensive, sedentary—my days have been hours of care, my nights of watchfulness. She has been all health! spirit! laugh! song! dance!—Oh! damned, damned levity!

Abs. For Heaven's sake, Faulkland, don't expose yourself so! Suppose she has danced, what then? does not the ceremony of society often oblige———

Faulk. Well, well, I'll contain myself—perhaps, as you say, for form sake. What, Mr Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a minuet, hey?

Acres. O, I dare ensure her for that—but what I was going to speak of was her country dancing: Odds swimmings! she has such an air with her!

Faulk. Now disappointment on her!—defend this, Absolute! why don't you defend this?—Country-dances! jigs and reels! am I to blame now? A minuet I could have forgiven—I should not have minded that—I say I should not have

regarded a minuet; but country-dances!—Zounds! had she made one in a cotillion, I believe I could have forgiven that; but to be monkey-led for a night! to run the gauntlet through a string of amorous palming puppies! to shew paces like a managed filly!—O Jack, there never can be but one man in the world, whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair with in a country-dance; and even then, the rest of the couples should be her great uncles and aunts!

Abs. Ay, to be sure! grandfathers and grandmothers!

Faulk. If there be but one vicious mind in the set, 'twill spread like a contagion; the action of their pulse beats to the lascivious movement of the jig; their quivering, warm-breathed sighs, impregnate the very air; the atmosphere becomes electrical to love; and each amorous spark darts through every link of the chain!—I must leave you—I own I am somewhat flurried; and that confounded looby has perceived it. [*Going.*

Abs. Nay, but stay, Faukland, and thank Mr Acres for his good news!

Faulk. Damn his news! [*Exit* FAULK.

Abs. Ha, ha, ha! poor Faulkland! Five minutes since, nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness!

Acres. The gentleman was not angry at my praising his mistress! was he?

Abs. A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

Acres. You don't say so? Ha, ha! jealous of me! that's a good joke!

Abs. There's nothing strange in that, Bob; let me tell you, that sprightly grace, and insinuating manner of yours, will do some mischief among the girls here!

Acres. Ah, you joke! ha, ha, mischief! ha, ha! but, you know, I am not my own property; my dear Lydia has forestalled me! She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly; but odds frogs and tambours, I shan't take matters so here—now, ancient madam has no voice in it—I'll make my old clothes know who's master—I shall straightway cashier the hunting-frock, and render my leather breeches incapable—My hair has been in training some time.

Abs. Indeed!

Acres. Aye; and tho'ff the side curls are a little restive, my hind-part takes it very kindly.

Abs. O, you'll polish, I doubt not.

Acres. Absolutely I propose so—then, if I can find out this ensign Beverley, odds triggers and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't.

Abs. Spoke like a man!—but pray, Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing——

Acres. Ha, ha! you've taken notice of it—'tis genteel, is not it?—I did not invent it myself though; but a commander in our militia, a great scholar, I assure you, says that there is no meaning in the common oaths; and that nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable; because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, but would say, by Jove! or by Bacchus! or by Mars! or by Venus! or by Pallas! according to the sentiment; so that, to swear with propriety, says my little major, the oath should be an echo to the sense; and this we call the oath referential, or sentimental swearing, ha, ha, ha! 'tis genteel, is not it?

Abs. Very genteel, and very new, indeed; and, I dare say, will supplant all other figures of imprecation.

Acres. Ay, ay, the best terms will grow obsolete—Damns have had their day.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, there is a gentlemen below desires to see you—Shall I shew him into the parlour?

Abs. Ay; you may.

Acres. Well, I must be gone——

Abs. Stay; who is it, Fag?

Fag. Your father, sir.

Abs. You puppy, why did not you shew him up directly? [*Exit* FAG.

Acres. You have business with sir Anthony. I expect a message from Mrs Malaprop at my lodgings. I have sent also to my dear friend sir Lucius O'Trigger. Adieu, Jack; we must meet at night, when you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

Abs. That I will with all my heart. [*Exit* ACRES.] Now for a parental lecture. I hope he has heard nothing of the business that has brought me here. I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul!

Enter SIR ANTHONY.

Sir, I am delighted to see you here; and looking so well! your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack. What! you are recruiting here, hey?

Abs. Yes, sir; I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it; for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business. Jack, I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

Abs. Pardon me, sir! I never saw you look more strong and hearty; and I pray fervently that you may continue so.

Sir Anth. I hope your prayers may be heard, with all my heart. Well, then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty, I may continue to plague you a long time. Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit.

Abs. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world.

I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

Abs. Sir, your kindness overpowers me—such generosity makes the gratitude of reason more lively than the sensations even of filial affection.

Sir Anth. I am glad you are so sensible of my attention; and you shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

Abs. Let my future life, sir, speak my gratitude; I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence. Yet, sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

Sir Anth. O, that shall be as your wife chooses.

Abs. My wife, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay, ay; settle that between you; settle that between you.

Abs. A wife, sir! did you say?

Sir Anth. Ay, a wife; why, did not I mention her before?

Abs. Not a word of her, sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so!—I must not forget her though. Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of, is by a marriage; the fortune is saddled with a wife; but, I suppose, that makes no difference?

Abs. Sir, sir!—you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now, you were all gratitude and duty.

Abs. I was, sir—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife!

Sir Anth. Why, what difference does that make? Odds life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

Abs. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase.——Pray, sir, who is the lady?

Sir Anth. What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

Abs. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir Anth. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to object to a lady you know nothing of.

Abs. Then, sir, I must tell you plainly, that my inclinations are fixed on another—my heart is engaged to an angel!

Sir Anth. Then, pray, let it send an excuse. It is very sorry—but business prevents its waiting on her.

Abs. But my vows are pledged to her.

Sir Anth. Let her foreclose, Jack; let her foreclose; they are not worth redeeming; besides, you have the angel's vows in exchange, I suppose, so there can be no loss there.

Abs. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Hark'e, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool—quite cool; but take care—you know I am complaisance itself—when I am not thwarted;—no one more easily led, when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a phrenzy.

Abs. Sir, I must repeat it—in this, I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now, damn me if ever I call you Jack again while I live!

Abs. Nay, sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word—not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't, by———

Abs. What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness? to———

Sir Anth. Zounds, sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose: she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's museum; she shall have a skin like a mummy; and the beard of a Jew:—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet, I will make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty.

Abs. This is reason and moderation, indeed!

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jackanapes!

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, sir; I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

Abs. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

Sir Anth. None of your passion, sir; none of your violence, if you please—It won't do with me, I promise you.

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do.

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word!

Sir Anth. So you will fly out? can't you be cool, like me? What the devil good can passion do?—Passion is of no service; you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate! There, you sneer again!—don't provoke me!—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog! you play upon the mildness of my disposition! Yet, take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do every thing on earth that I choose, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you—If not, zounds, don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-three-pence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll dis-

own you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and damn me, if ever I call you Jack again!

[*Exit* SIR ANTH.

Abs. Mild, gentle, considerate father, I kiss your hands. What a tender method of giving his opinion in these matters sir Anthony has! I dare not trust him with the truth. I wonder what old, wealthy hag it is that he wants to bestow on me!—yet, he married, himself, for love! and was, in his youth, a bold intriguer, and a gay companion!

Enter FAG.

Fag. Assuredly, sir, your father is wrath to a degree: he comes down stairs eight or ten steps at a time, muttering, growling, and thumping the banisters all the way: I, and the cook's dog, stand bowing at the door—rap! he gives me a stroke on the head with his cane, bids me carry that to my master; then, kicking the poor turnspit into the area, damns us all, for a puppy triumvirate!—Upon my credit, sir, were I in your place, and found my father such very bad company, I should certainly drop his acquaintance.

Abs. Cease your impertinence, sir, at present.—Did you come in for nothing more?—Stand out of the way. [*Pushes him aside, and exit.*

Fag. So! Sir Anthony trims my master: He is afraid to reply to his father, then vents his spleen on poor Fag!—When one is vexed by one person, to revenge one's self on another, who happens to come in the way—is the vilest injustice! Ah! it shews the worst temper—the basest——

Enter Errand Boy.

Boy. Mr Fag! Mr Fag! your master calls you.

Fag. Well, you little dirty puppy, you need not bawl so!—The meanest disposition! the—

Boy. Quick, quick, Mr Fag.

Fag. Quick, quick, you impudent jackanapes! am I to be commanded by you, too! you little impertinent, insolent, kitchen-bred——

[*Exit, kicking and beating him.*

SCENE II.—*The North Parade.*

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. So—I shall have another rival to add to my mistress's list—captain Absolute.——However, I shall not enter his name till my purse has received notice in form. Poor Acres is dismissed!—Well, I have done him a last friendly office, in letting him know that Beverley was here before him. Sir Lucius is generally more punctual, when he expects to hear from his *dear Dalia*, as he calls her: I wonder he's not here!—I have a little scruple of conscience from this deceit; though I should not be paid so well, if my hero knew that Delia was near fifty, and her own mistress.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir Luc. Hah! my little embassadress—Upon my conscience, I have been looking for you; I have been on the south parade this half hour.

Lucy. [*Speaking simply.*] O gemini! and I have been waiting for your worship here on the north!

Sir Luc. Faith!—may be, that was the reason we did not meet; and it is very comical too, how you could go out, and I not see you—for I was only taking a nap at the parade coffee-house, and I chose the window on purpose that I might not miss you.

Lucy. My stars! Now, I would wager a sixpence I went by while you were asleep!

Sir Luc. Sure enough it must have been so—and I never dreamt it was so late till I waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me?

Lucy. Yes, but I have——I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

Sir Luc. O, faith, I guessed you were not come empty-handed! Well; let me see what the dear creature says.

Lucy. There, sir Lucius.

[*Gives him a letter.*

Sir Luc. [*Reads.*] 'Sir—There is often a sud-'den incentive impulse in love, that has a great-'er induction than years of domestic combina-'tion: such was the commotion I felt at the first 'superfluous view of sir Lucius O'Trigger.' Very pretty, upon my word. 'Female punctuation 'forbids me to say more; yet, let me add, that 'it will give me joy infallible to find sir Lucius 'worthy the last criterion of my affections.

'DELIA.'

Upon my conscience, Lucy, your lady is a great mistress of language! Faith, she's quite the queen of the dictionary! for the devil a word dare refuse coming at her call——though one would think it was quite out of hearing.

Lucy. Ay, sir, a lady of her experience.

Sir Luc. Experience! what, at seventeen!

Lucy. O, true, sir—but then she reads so—my stars! how she will read off hand!

Sir Luc. Faith, she must be very deep read to write this way, though she is rather an arbitrary writer, too; for here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get their habeas corpus from any court in Christendom.

Lucy. Ah, sir Lucius! If you were to hear how she talks of you!

Sir Luc. O, tell her, I'll make her the best husband in the world, and lady O'Trigger into the bargain! But we must get the old gentlewoman's consent, and do every thing fairly.

Lucy. Nay, sir Lucius; I thought you was not rich enough to be so nice!

Sir Luc. Upon my word, young woman, you

have hit it: I am so poor, that I can't afford to do a dirty action. If I did not want money, I would steal your mistress and her fortune with a great deal of pleasure. However, my pretty girl, [*Gives her money.*] here's a little something to buy you a ribband; and meet me in the evening, and I'll give you an answer to this. So, hussy, take a kiss beforehand, to put you in mind.

[*Kisses her.*

Lucy. O, lud, sir Lucius! I never seed such a gemman! My lady won't like you if you are so impudent.

Sir Luc. Faith she will, Lucy; that same—pho! what's the name of it?—modesty—is a quality in a lover more praised by the women than liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her fifty, my dear.

Lucy. What, would you have me tell her a lie?

Sir Luc. Ah, then, you baggage? I'll make it a truth presently.

Lucy. For shame, now! here is some one coming.

Sir Luc. O, faith, I'll quiet your consience!

[*Sees* FAG. *Exit, humming a tune.*

Enter FAG.

Fag. So, so, madam! I humbly beg pardon.

Lucy. O, lud! now, Mr Fag—you flurry one so.

Fag. Come, come, Lucy; here's no one by—so a little less simplicity, with a grain or two more sincerity, if you please. You play false with us, madam. I saw you give the baronet a letter. My master shall know this; and if he don't call him out, I will.

Lucy. Ha, ha, ha! you gentlemen's gentlemen are so hasty. That letter was from Mrs Malaprop, simpleton. She is taken with sir Lucius's address.

Fag. How! what tastes some people have! Why, I suppose I have walked by her window an hundred times. But what says your young lady? Any message to my master?

Lucy. Sad news, Mr Fag! A worse rival than Acres! Sir Anthony Absolute has proposed his son.

Fag. What! captain Absolute?

Lucy. Even so—I overheard it all.

Fag. Ha, ha, ha! very good, faith! Goodbye, Lucy; I must away with this news.

Lucy. Well; you may laugh; but it is true, I assure you. [*Going.*] But, Mr Fag, tell your master not to be cast down by this.

Fag. O, he'll be so disconsolate!

Lucy. And charge him not to think of quarrelling with young Absolute.

Fag. Never fear! never fear!——

Lucy. Be sure; bid him keep up his spirits.

Fag. We will———we will.

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The North Parade.*

Enter ABSOLUTE.

Abs. 'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed. Whimsical enough, faith! My father wants to force me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with. He must not know of my connection with her yet a-while. He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters. However, I'll read my recantation instantly. My conversion is something sudden, indeed; but I can assure him it is very sincere. So, so, here he comes. He looks plaguy gruff.

[*Steps aside.*

Enter SIR ANTHONY.

Sir Anth. No: I'll die sooner than forgive him! Die, did I say? I'll live these fifty years to plague him. At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper. An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy! Who can he take after? This is my return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters! for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty pounds a-year, besides his pay, ever since! But I have done with him; he's any body's son for me. I never will see him more; never, never, never, never!

Abs. Now for a penitential face.

Sir Anth. Fellow, get out of my way!

Abs. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

Sir Anth. I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

Abs. A sincere penitent. I come, sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

Sir Anth. What's that?

Abs. I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

Sir Anth. Well, sir?

Abs. I have been likewise weighing and balancing what you were pleased to mention concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

Sir Anth. Well, puppy?

Abs. Why, then, sir, the result of my reflections is, a resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

Sir Anth. Why now, you talk sense—absolute sense. I never heard any thing more sensible in my life. Confound you! you shall be Jack again!

Abs. I am happy in the appellation.

Sir Anth. Why, then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you who the lady really is.—— Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, prevented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for wonder and rapture—prepare! What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

Abs. Languish! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire?

Sir Anth. Worcestershire! No. Did you never meet Mrs Malaprop and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

Abs. Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay; I think I do recollect something. Languish! Languish! She squints, don't she? A little red-haired girl?

Sir Anth. Squints! A red-haired girl!——— Zounds! no.

Abs. Then, I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

Sir Anth. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen?

Abs. As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent. If I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

Sir Anth. Nay, but, Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack, her lips! O, Jack, lips smiling at their own discretion; and, if not smiling, more sweetly pouting; more lovely in sullenness!

Abs. That's she, indeed. Well done, old gentleman! [*Aside.*

Sir Anth. Then, Jack, her neck! O, Jack, Jack!

Abs. And which is to be mine, sir; the niece or the aunt?

Sir Anth. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you! When I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The aunt, indeed! Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched any thing old or ugly to gain an empire.

Abs. Not to please your father, sir?

Sir Anth. To please my father! Zounds! not to please———Oh, my father———Odso! yes, yes; if my father, indeed, had desired—that's quite another matter. Though he was not the indulgent father that I am, Jack.

Abs. I dare say not, sir.

Sir Anth. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful?

Abs. Sir, I repeat it, if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome; but, sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind. Now, without being very nice, I own I should rather choose a wife of mine to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back: and though one eye may be very agreeable, yet, as the prejudice has always run in favour of two, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

Sir Anth. What a phlegmatic sot it is! Why, sirrah, you're an anchorite! a vile, insensible stock! You a soldier! you're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on! Odds life! I've a great mind to marry the girl myself!

Abs. I am entirely at your disposal, sir; if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the aunt: or, if you should change your mind, and take the old lady, 'tis the same to me, I'll marry the niece.

Sir Anth. Upon my word, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or——but, come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie—I'm sure it must—come, now—damn your demure face! Come, confess, Jack; you have been lying, ha'n't you? You have been playing the hypocrite, hey? I'll never forgive you, if you ha'n't been lying and playing the hypocrite.

Abs. I'm sorry, sir, that the respect and duty which I bear to you should be so mistaken.

Sir Anth. Hang your respect and duty! But, come along with me; I'll write a note to Mrs Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethian torch to you—— Come along! I'll never forgive you, if you don't come back stark mad with rapture and impatience—if you don't, egad, I'll marry the girl myself!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—JULIA'S *dressing-room.*

Enter FAULKLAND.

Faulk. They told me Julia would return directly; I wonder she is not yet come! How mean does this captious, unsatisfied temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment! Yet I know not that I indulge it in any other point: but on this one subject, and to this one subject, whom I think I love beyond my life, I am ever ungenerously fretful and madly capricious! I am conscious of it; yet I cannot correct myself! What tender, honest joy sparkled in her eyes when we met! How delicate was the warmth of her expressions! I was ashamed to appear less happy, though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence prevented my proposed expostulations: yet I must be satisfied that she has not been so very happy in my absence. She is coming! Yes! I know the nimbleness of her tread, when she thinks her impatient Faulkland counts the moments of her stay.

Enter JULIA.

Julia. I had not hoped to see you again so soon.

Faulk. Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome, restrained as we were by the presence of a third person?

Julia. O Faulkland, when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered something of coldness in your first salutation!

Faulk. 'Twas but your fancy, Julia. I was rejoiced to see you—to see you in such health. Sure I had no cause for coldness?

Julia. Nay, then, I see you have taken something ill. You must not conceal from me what it is.

Faulk. Well, then—shall I own to you, that my joy at hearing of your health and arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was somewhat damped by his dwelling much on the high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire—on your mirth, your singing, dancing, and I know not what!—For such is my temper, Julia, that I should regard every mirthful moment in your absence as a treason to constancy: The mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

Julia. Must I never cease to tax my Faulkland with this teasing, minute caprice? Can the idle reports of a silly boor weigh in your breast against my tried affection?

Faulk. They have no weight with me, Julia: No, no; I am happy if you have been so. Yet only say, that you did not sing with mirth; say that you thought of Faulkland in the dance!

Julia. I never can be happy in your absence! If I wear a countenance of content, it is to shew that my mind holds no doubt of my Faulkland's truth. If I seemed sad, it were to make malice triumph; and say, that I had fixed my heart on one, who left me to lament his roving, and my own credulity. Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you, when I say, that I have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears.

Faulk. You were ever all goodness to me! O, I am a brute, when I but admit a doubt of your true constancy!

Julia. If ever, without such cause from you, as I will not suppose possible, you find my affection veering but a point, may I become a proverbial scoff for levity and base ingratitude!

Faulk. Ah, Julia, that last word is grating to me! I would I had no title to your gratitude! Search your heart, Julia; perhaps, what you have mistaken for love, is but the warm effusion of a too thankful heart!

Julia. For what quality must I love you?

Faulk. For no quality! To regard me for any quality of mind or understanding, were only to esteem me. And for person—I have often wished myself deformed, to be convinced that I owed no obligation there for any part of your affection.

Julia. Where nature has bestowed a show of nice attention in the features of a man, he should laugh at it as misplaced. I have seen men, who, in this vain article, perhaps, might rank above you; but my heart has never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

Faulk. Now, this is not well from you, Julia; I despise person in a man—yet, if you loved me as I wish, though I were an Æthiop, you'd think none so fair.

Julia. I see you are determined to be unkind. The contract, which my poor father bound us in, gives you more than a lover's privilege.

Faulk. Again, Julia, you raise ideas that feed and justify my doubts. I would not have been more free—no! I am proud of my restraint. Yet, yet—perhaps your high respect alone for this solemn compact has fettered your inclinations, which, else, had made a worthier choice. How shall I be sure, had you remained unbound in thought and promise, that I should still have been the object of your persevering love?

Julia. Then try me now. Let us be free as strangers as to what is past: my heart will not feel more liberty.

Faulk. There now! So hasty, Julia! So anxious to be free! If your love for me were fixed and ardent, you would not lose your hold, even though I wished it!

Julia. Oh, you torture me to the heart! I cannot bear it.

Faulk. I do not mean to distress you. If I loved you less, I should never give you an uneasy moment. But hear me. All my fretful doubts arise from this. Women are not used to weigh and separate the motives of their affections: the cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty, may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart. I would not boast; yet let me say, that I have neither age, person, or character, to found dislike on; my fortune such as few ladies could be charged with indiscretion in the match. O Julia! when love receives such countenance from prudence, nice minds will be suspicious of its birth.

Julia. I know not whither your insinuations would tend: but as they seem pressing to insult me, I will spare you the regret of having done so. I have given you no cause for this!

[*Exit, in tears.*

Faulk. In tears! Stay, Julia: stay but for a moment. The door is fastened! Julia; my soul—but for one moment: I hear her sobbing! 'Sdeath! What a brute am I to use her thus! Yet stay. Ay; she is coming now: How little resolution there is in woman! How a few soft words can turn them! No, faith! She is not coming, either. Why, Julia! my love! say but that

you forgive me; come but to tell me that; now this is being too resentful: stay! she is coming too; I thought she would: no steadiness in any thing! Her going away must have been a mere trick, then; she shan't see that I was hurt by it. I'll affect indifference—[*Hums a tune: then listens.*]—No; zounds! She is not coming! Nor don't intend it, I suppose. This is not steadiness, but obstinacy. Yet I deserve it. What, after so long an absence to quarrel with her tenderness! 'Twas barbarous and unmanly! I should be ashamed to see her now. I'll wait till her just resentment is abated; and when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever! And be linked, instead, to some antique virago, whose gnawing passions, and long hoarded spleen, shall make me curse my folly half the day, and all the night. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—MRS MALAPROP'S *lodgings.*

Enter MRS MALAPROP, *with a letter in her hand, and* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Mrs Mal. Your being sir Anthony's son, captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; but, from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

Abs. Permit me to say, madam, that, as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement, in this affair, at present, is the honour of being allied to Mrs Malaprop; of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

Mrs Mal. Sir, you do me infinite honour! I beg, captain, you'll be seated.—[*Sit.*]—Ah! few gentlemen, now-a-days, know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman! Few think how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewoman! Men have no sense, now, but for the worthless flower of beauty!

Abs. It is but too true, indeed, madam; yet I fear our ladies should share the blame; they think our admiration of beauty so great, that knowledge in them would be superfluous. Thus, like garden trees, they seldom shew fruit, till time has robbed them of the more specious blossom. Few, like Mrs Malaprop and the orange-tree, are rich in both at once!

Mrs Mal. Sir, you overpower me with good-breeding; he is the very pine-apple of politeness. You are not ignorant, captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eve's-dropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows any thing of.

Abs. O, I have heard the silly affair before.—I am not at all prejudiced against her on that account.

Mrs Mal. You are very good, and very considerate, captain. I am sure I have done every thing in my power, since I exploded the affair; long ago I laid my positive conjunctions on her, never to think on the fellow again. I have since laid sir Anthony's preposition before her; but, I am sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every particle that I enjoin her.

Abs. It must be very distressing, indeed, madam.

Mrs Mal. Oh! it gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree! I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but, behold, this very day, I have interceded another letter from the fellow; I believe I have it in my pocket.

Abs. O the devil! my last note. [*Aside.*

Mrs Mal. Ay; here it is.

Abs. Ay; my note indeed! O the little traitress Lucy! [*Aside.*

Mrs Mal. There; perhaps you may know the writing.

[*Gives him the letter.*

Abs. I think I have seen the hand before; yes, I certainly must have seen this hand before—

Mrs Mal. Nay; but read it, captain.

Abs. [*Reads.*]—'My soul's idol; my adored Lydia!' Very tender, indeed!

Mrs Mal. Tender! ay, and prophane, too, o' my conscience!

Abs. 'I am excessively alarmed at the intelli-'gence you send me; the more so, as my new ri-'val'———

Mrs Mal. That's you, sir.

Abs. 'Has universally the character of being 'an accomplished gentleman, and a man of ho-'nour.' Well, that's handsome enough.

Mrs Mal. O, the fellow has some design in writing so.

Abs. That he had; I'll answer for him, madam.

Mrs Mal. But go on, sir; you'll see presently.

Abs. 'As for the old weather-beaten she-dra-'gon, who guards you,'—Who can he mean by that?

Mrs Mal. Me, sir: me: he means me there; what do you think, now? But go on a little further.

Abs. Impudent scoundrel!—'It shall go hard 'but I will elude her vigilance, as I am told that 'the same ridiculous vanity, which makes her 'dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't under-'stand'———

Mrs Mal. There, sir! an attack upon my language! What do you think of that? An aspersion upon my parts of speech! Was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!

Abs. He deserves to be hanged and quartered! Let me see—'same ridiculous vanity'——

Mrs Mal. You need not read it again, sir.

Abs. I beg pardon, madam—'does also lay

'her open to the grossest deceptions from flat-'tery and pretended admiration;'—an impudent coxcomb!—'so that I have a scheme to see you 'shortly with the old harridan's consent, and 'even to make her a go-between in our inter-'view.' Was ever such assurance!

Mrs Mal. Did you ever hear any thing like it? He'll elude my vigilance, will he—yes, yes! Ha, ha! he's very likely to enter these doors! We'll try who can plot best!

Abs. So we will, madam; so we will. Ha, ha, ha! a conceited puppy, ha, ha, ha! Well, but, Mrs Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while I, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead!

Mrs Mal. I am delighted with the scheme! never was any thing better perpetrated!

Abs. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes, now? I should like to try her temper a little.

Mrs Mal. Why, I don't know; I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind. There is a decorum in these matters.

Abs. O Lord! she won't mind me; only tell her Beverley——

Mrs Mal. Sir!

Abs. Gently, good tongue! [*Aside.*

Mrs Mal. What did you say of Beverley?

Abs. O, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverley who was below; she'd come down fast enough then—ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Mal. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves; besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to her; ha, ha! Let him if he can, I say again. Lydia, come down here!—[*Calling.*]—He'll make me a go-between in their interviews! Ha, ha, ha! Come down, I say, Lydia! I don't wonder at your laughing; ha, ha, ha! His impudence is truly ridiculous.

Abs. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, madam! ha, ha, ha!

Mrs Mal. The little hussy won't hear. Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is: she shall know that captain Absolute is come to wait on her. And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

Abs. As you please, madam.

Mrs Mal. For the present, captain, your servant. Ah! you've not done laughing yet, I see; elude my vigilance! yes, yes; ha, ha, ha!

[*Exit* MRS MAL.

Abs. Ha, ha, ha! One would think, now, that I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security; but such is Lydia's caprice, that to undeceive were probably to lose her. I'll see whether she knows me.

[*Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at the pictures.*

Enter LYDIA.

Lydia. What a scene am I now to go through! Surely nothing can be more dreadful, than to be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's heart. I have heard of girls, persecuted as I am, who have appealed in behalf of their favoured lover, to the generosity of his rival: suppose I were to try it—there stands the hated rival—an officer, too! But O how unlike my Beverley! I wonder he don't begin; truly, he seems a very negligent wooer! Quite at his ease, upon my word! I'll speak first; Mr Absolute!

Abs. Madam. [*Turns round.*

Lydia. O Heavens! Beverley!

Abs. Hush! hush, my life! softly! be not surprised!

Lydia. I am so astonished! and so terrified! and so overjoyed!——for Heaven's sake! how came you here?

Abs. Briefly——I have deceived your aunt—I was informed, that my new rival was to visit here this evening; and, contriving to have him kept away, have passed myself on her for captain Absolute.

Lydia. O charming!——And she really takes you for young Absolute?

Abs. O, she's convinced of it!

Lydia. Ha, ha, ha! I can't forbear laughing, to think how her sagacity is over-reached!

Abs. But we trifle with our precious moments——such another opportunity may not occur—then let me now conjure my kind, my condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and, with a licensed warmth, plead for my reward.

Lydia. Will you, then, Beverley, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth? that burden on the wings of love?

Abs. O, come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness!——Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia—for well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay.

Lydia. How persuasive are his words!—how charming will poverty be with him!

Abs. Ah! my soul, what a life will we then live! Love shall be our idol and support! we will worship him with a monastic strictness; abjuring all worldly toys, to centre every thought and action there! Proud of calamity, we will enjoy the wreck of wealth; while the surrounding gloom of adversity shall make the flame of our pure love show doubly bright. By Heavens! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with a prodigal hand, to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia to my bosom, and say, the world affords no store to me—but here——[*Embracing her.*] If she holds out now, the devil is in it! [*Aside.*

Lydia. Now could I fly with him to the Anti-

podes! but my persecution is not yet come to a crisis.

Enter MRS MALAPROP, *listening.*

Mrs Mal. I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. [*Aside.*

Abs. So pensive, Lydia!—Is, then, your warmth abated?

Mrs Mal. Warmth abated!—so, she has been in a passion, I suppose?

Lydia. No—nor ever can while I have life.

Mrs Mal. An ill-tempered little devil! She'll be in a passion all her life—will she?

Lydia. Think not the idle threats of my ridiculous aunt can ever have any weight with me.

Mrs Mal. Very dutiful, upon my word!

Lydia. Let her choice be captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

Mrs Mal. I am astonished at her assurance! To his face!—this is to his face!

Abs. Thus, then, let me enforce my suit. [*Kneeling.*

Mrs Mar. Aye, poor young man!—down on his knees intreating for pity!——I can contain no longer.—Why, thou vixen! I have overheard you!

Abs. O, confound her vigilance! [*Aside.*

Mrs Mal. Captain Absolute, I know not how to apologize for her shocking rudeness.

Abs. So—all's safe, I find. [*Aside.*]——I have hopes, madam, that time will bring the young lady———

Mrs Mal. O, there's nothing to be hoped for from her—she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile!

Lydia. Nay, madam; what do you charge me with, now?

Mrs Mal. Why, thou unblushing rebel! did not you tell this gentleman, to his face, that you loved another better? did not you say you never would be his?

Lydia. No, madam, I did not.

Mrs Mal. Good Heavens! what assurance! Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know, that lying don't become a young woman! Did not you boast, that Beverley—that stroller Beverley, possessed your heart? Tell me that, I say!

Lydia. 'Tis true, madam, and none but Beverley———

Mrs Mal. Hold! hold, assurance! you shall not be so rude.

Abs. Nay; pray, Mrs Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech: she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt me in the least, I assure you.

Mrs Mal. You are too good, captain—too amiably patient—but come with me, miss.——Let us see you again soon, captain—remember what we have fixed.

Abs. I shall, madam.

Mrs Mal. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

Lydia. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev———

Mrs Mal. Hussy! I'll choak the word in your throat!—Come along, come along!

[*Exeunt severally*—ABSOLUTE *kissing his hand to* LYDIA—MRS MALAPROP *stopping her from speaking.*

SCENE IV.—ACRES's *lodgings.*

ACRES *and* DAVID.—ACRES *as just dressed.*

Acres. Indeed, David! do you think I become it so?

David. You are quite another creature, believe me, master, by the mass! an' we've any luck, we shall see the Devon monkerony in all the print-shops in Bath!

Acres. Dress does make a difference, David.

David. 'Tis all in all, I think—difference! why, an' you were to go now to Clod-Hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you: master Butler wouldn't believe his own eyes; and Mrs Pickle would cry, 'Lard preserve me!' our dairy-maid would come giggling to the door; and I warrant Dolly Tester, your honour's favourite, would blush like my waistcoat!——Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there an't a dog in the house but would bark, and I question whether Phillis would wag a hair of her tail!

Acres. Aye, David, there's nothing like polishing.

David. So I says of your honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!

Acres. But, David, has Mr De-la-grace been here? I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.

David. I'll call again, sir.

Acres. Do—and see if there are any letters for me at the post-office.

David. I will. By the mass, I can't help looking at your head! If I hadn't been by at the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself! [*Exit.*

ACRES *comes forward, practising a dancing step.*

Acres. Sink, slide—coupee—Confound the first inventors of cotillons, say I!—they are as bad as algebra to us country gentlemen—I can walk a minuet easy enough, when I am forced—and I have been accounted a good stick in a country-dance.——Odds jiggs and tabors!—I never valued your cross-over to couple—figure in—right and left—and I'd foot it with e'er a captain in the county!—but these outlandish heathen allemandes and cotillons are quite beyond me!—I shall never prosper at them, that's sure—mine are true-born English legs—they don't understand their curst French lingo!—their *pas* this, and *pas* that, and *pas* t'other!—Damn me! my feet don't like to be called paws! no, 'tis certain I have most antigallican toes!

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Here is sir Lucius O'Trigger to wait on you, sir.

Acres. Shew him in.

Enter SIR LUCIUS.

Sir Luc. Mr Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

Acres. My dear sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

Sir Luc. Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath?

Acres. Faith! I have followed Cupid's jack-a-lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last! In short, I have been very ill-used, sir Lucius. I don't choose to mention names; but look on me as on a very ill-used gentleman.

Sir Luc. Pray, what is the case? I ask no names.

Acres. Mark me, sir Lucius: I fall as deep as need be in love with a young lady—her friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—send word of my arrival—and receive answer, that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of! This, sir Lucius, I call being ill-used.

Sir Luc. Very ill, upon my conscience! Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

Acres. Why, there's the matter; she has another lover, one Beverley, who, I am told, is now in Bath.—Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it!

Sir Luc. A rival in the case, is there? And you think he has supplanted you unfairly?

Acres. Unfairly! to be sure he has. He never could have done it fairly.

Sir Luc. Then, sure you know what is to be done?

Acres. Not I, upon my soul!

Sir Luc. We wear no swords here; but you understand me?

Acres. What! fight him?

Sir Luc. Aye, to be sure; what can I mean else?

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir Luc. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world. Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another, than to fall in love with the same woman? O, by my soul! it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

Acres. Breach of friendship! Aye, aye; but I have no acquaintance with this man. I never saw him in my life.

Sir Luc. That's no argument at all; he has the less right, then, to take such a liberty.

Acres. Gad! that's true—I grow full of anger, sir Lucius! I fire apace! Odds hilts and blades! I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right of my side?

Sir Luc. What the devil signifies right, when your honour is concerned? Do you think Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great, ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul! they drew their broad swords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

Acres. Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching! I certainly do feel a kind of valour rising as it were—a kind of courage, as I may say——Odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

Sir Luc. Ah, my little friend! if I had Blunderbuss-hall here—I could show you a range of ancestry, in the O'Trigger line, that would furnish the new room! every one of whom had killed his man! For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipt through my fingers, I thank Heaven, our honour, and the family-pictures, are as fresh as ever!

Acres. O, sir Lucius, I have had ancestors, too!—every man of them colonel or captain in the militia!——Odds balls and barrels! say no more—I'm braced for it!—The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast!——Zounds! as the man in the play says, 'I could do such deeds——'

Sir Luc. Come, come; there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly.

Acres. I must be in a passion, sir Lucius——I must be in a rage.—Dear sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if you love me.—Come, here's pen and paper. [*Sits down to write.*] I would the ink were red!—Indite, I say indite!—How shall I begin! Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however.

Sir Luc. Pray, compose yourself.

Acres. Come—now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme!

Sir Luc. Pho, pho! do the thing decently, and like a Christian. Begin now—'Sir——

Acres. That's too civil by half.

Sir Luc. 'To prevent the confusion that might 'arise——'

Acres. Well——

Sir Luc. 'From our both addressing the same 'lady——'

Acres. Aye; there's the reason—'same lady—' Well——

Sir Luc. 'I shall expect the honour of your 'company——

Acres. Zounds! I'm not asking him to dinner!

Sir Luc. Pray, be easy.

Acres. Well, then—'honour of your company——'

Sir Luc. 'To settle our pretensions——'

Acres. Well.

Sir Luc. Let me see; aye, King's Mead-field will do——'in King's Mead-fields.'

Acres. So that's done.——Well, I'll fold it up presently; my own crest——a hand and dagger shall be the seal.

Sir Luc. You see, now, this little explanation

will put a stop, at once, to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

Acres. Aye, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

Sir Luc. Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time. Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening, if you can; then let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

Acres. Very true.

Sir Luc. So I shall see nothing more of you, unless it be by letter, till the evening. I would do myself the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my own hands. There is a gay captain here, who put a jest on me lately, at the expence of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman, to call him out.

Acres. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life! I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson.

Sir Luc. I shall be very proud of instructing you.——Well, for the present—but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do every thing in a mild and agreeable manner. Let your courage be as keen, but, at the same time, as polished as your sword. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—ACRES' *lodgings.*

Enter ACRES *and* DAVID.

David. THEN, by the mass, sir, I would do no such thing!—ne'er a sir Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say, when she hears o't?

Acres. Ah! David, if you had heard sir Lucius! Odds sparks and flames! he would have roused your valour.

David. Not he, indeed. I hates such bloodthirsty cormorants. Look'ee, master, if you'd wanted a bout at boxing, quarter-staff, or short-staff, I should never be the man to bid you cry, off: But for your curst sharps and snaps, I never knew any good come of them.

Acres. But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very careful of my honour.

David. Aye, by the mass! and I would be very careful of it; and I think, in return, my honour couldn't do less than to be very careful of me.

Acres. Odds blades, David! no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

David. I say, then, it would be but civil in honour never to risk the loss of a gentleman—— Look'ee, master, this honour seems to me to be a marvellous false friend! aye, truly, a very courtier-like servant!—Put the case: I was a gentleman (which, thank God! no one can say of me); well, my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance.——So, we fight. (Pleasant enough that!) Boh! I kill him! (the more's my luck). Now, pray, who gets the profit of it? Why, my honour!—But, put the case, that he kills me!——By the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy!

Acres. No, David—in that case! Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave.

David. Now, that's just the place where I could make a shift to do without it.

Acres. Zounds! David, you are a coward! It doesn't become my valour to listen to you. What, shall I disgrace my ancestors? Think o' that, David; think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors!

David. Under favour, the surest way of not disgracing them, is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Look'e now, master, to go to them in such haste, with an ounce of lead in your brains! I should think might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should choose to have a visiting acquaintance with.

Acres. But, David, now, you don't think there is such very, very, very, very great danger! hey? Odds life! people often fight without any mischief done!

David. By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you!—Oons! here to meet some lion-headed fellow, I warrant, with his damned double-barrelled swords, and cut-and-thrust pistols! lord bless us! it makes me tremble to think o't!—Those be such desperate bloody-minded weapons! Well, I never could abide them! from a child I never could fancy them!—I suppose there a'n't been so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

Acres. Zounds! I won't be afraid—Odds fire and fury! you shan't make me afraid.——Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend Jack Absolute to carry it for me.

David. Aye, in the name of mischief, let him be the messenger.—For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the mass! it don't look like another letter! It is, as I may say, a designing and malicious-looking letter; and I warrant smells of gunpowder like a soldier's pouch!—Oons! I wouldn't swear it may'nt go off!

Acres. Out, you poltroon!—you ha'n't the valour of a grass-hopper.

David. Well, I say no more; 'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod Hall! but I have done. How Phillis will howl when she hears of it!—Aye, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after! And I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and

road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born. [*Whimpering.*

Acres. It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Captain Absolute, sir.

Acres. O! shew him up. [*Exit Servant.*

David. Well, Heaven send we be all alive this time to-morrow!

Acres. What's that?—Don't provoke me, David!

David. Good bye, master. [*Whimpering.*

Acres. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven. [*Exit* DAVID.

Enter ABSOLUTE.

Abs. What's the matter, Bob?

Acres. A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead!—If I hadn't the valour of St George and the dragon to boot—

Abs. But what did you want with me, Bob?

Acres. O!—There---[*Gives him the challenge.*]

Abs. 'To ensign Beverley.' So, what's going on now? [*Aside.*] Well, what's this?

Acres. A challenge!

Abs. Indeed!—Why, you won't fight him, will you, Bob?

Acres. 'Egad, but I will, Jack.—Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage, and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

Abs. But what have I to do with this?

Acres. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

Abs. Well, give it to me, and trust me he gets it.

Acres. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

Abs. Not in the least; I beg you won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

Acres. You are very kind.—What it is to have a friend!—You couldn't be my second—could you, Jack?

Abs. Why no, Bob, not in this affair; it would not be quite so proper.

Acres. Well, then, I must get my friend sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack.

Abs. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir Anthony Absolute is below, inquiring for the captain.

Abs. I'll come instantly.—Well, my little hero, success attend you. [*Going.*

Acres. Stay, stay, Jack! If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow! will you Jack?

Abs. To be sure I shall.—I'll say you are a determined dog! hey, Bob?

Acres. Aye, do, do, do; and if that frightens him, 'egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a-week; will you, Jack?

Abs. I will, I will; I'll say you are called in the country, Fighting Bob.

Acres. Right, right; 'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life, if I clear my honour.

Abs. No! that's very kind of you.

Acres. Why, you don't wish me to kill him? do you, Jack?

Abs. No, upon my soul, I do not.——But a devil of a fellow, hey? [*Going.*

Acres. True, true; but stay—stay, Jack—— you may add, that you never saw me in such a rage before; a most devouring rage!

Abs. I will, I will.

Acres. Remember, Jack—a determined dog!

Abs. Aye, aye; Fighting Bob!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—MRS MALAPROP'S *lodgings.*

MRS MALAPROP *and* LYDIA.

Mrs Mal. Why, thou perverse one! tell me what you can object to him? Isn't he a handsome man? tell me that.—A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

Lydia. She little thinks whom she is praising! [*Aside.*]—So is Beverley, madam.

Mrs Mal. No caparisons, miss, if you please. —Caparisons don't become a young woman.—No! captain Absolute is, indeed, a fine gentleman!

Lydia. Ay; the captain Absolute you have seen. [*Aside.*

Mrs Mal. Then, he's so well bred; so full of alacrity, and adulation!—and has so much to say for himself:—in such good language, too!—His physiognomy so grammatical:—Then, his presence is so noble: I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play:—'Hesperian 'curls—the front of Job himself!—an eye, like 'March, to threaten at command!—a station, 'like Harry Mercury, new—' Something about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude struck me directly.

Lydia. How enraged she'll be presently when she discovers her mistake! [*Aside.*

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir Anthony and captain Absolute are below, madam.

Mrs Mal. Shew them up here. [*Exit Servant.*] Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving as becomes a young woman.—Shew your good breeding, at least, though you have forgot your duty.

Lydia. Madam, I have told you my resolution!—I shall not only give him no encouragement, but I won't even speak to, or look at him.

[*Flings herself into a chair, with her face from the door.*]

Enter SIR ANTHONY, *and* ABSOLUTE.

Sir Anth. Here we are, Mrs Malaprop, come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty; and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow.—I don't know what's the matter; but, if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip.

Mrs Mal. You have infinite trouble, sir Anthony, in the affair.—I am ashamed for the cause! Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you!—pay your respects! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. I hope, madam, that miss Languish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and my alliance.—Now, Jack, speak to her. [*Aside to him.*

Abs. What the devil shall I do? [*Aside.*] You see, sir, she won't even look at me, whilst you are here. I knew she would not!—I told you so—Let me entreat you, sir, to leave us together!

[ABSOLUTE *seems to expostulate with his father.*]

Lydia. [*Aside.*] I wonder I have not heard my aunt exclaim yet! sure she can't have looked at him!———perhaps their regimentals are alike, and she is something blind.

Sir Anth. I say, sir, I won't stir a foot, yet.

Mrs Mal. I am sorry to say, sir Anthony, that my influence over my niece is very small.—Turn round, Lydia; I blush for you! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. May I not flatter myself, that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son!—Why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy—speak! [*Aside to him.*

Mrs Mal. It is impossible, sir Anthony, she can have any.—She will not say she has.——Answer, hussy! why don't you answer? [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Then, madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness.———Zounds, sirrah, why don't you speak? [*Aside to him.*

Lydia. [*Aside.*] I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself.——How strangely blind my aunt must be!

Abs. Hem, hem! Madam, hem! [ABSOLUTE *attempts to speak, then returns to* SIR ANTHONY.] Faith, sir, I am so confounded! and so, so confused! I told you I should be so, sir; I knew it. The—the—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

Sir Anth. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it? Go up, and speak to her directly!

[ABSOLUTE *makes signs to* MRS MALAPROP *to leave them together.*]

Mrs Mal. Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together? Ah, you stubborn little vixen! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Not yet, madam, not yet! what the devil are you at? unlock your jaws, sirrah, or— [*Aside to him.*

[ABSOLUTE *draws near* LYDIA.]

Abs. Now Heaven send she may be too sullen to look round! I must disguise my voice. [*Aside. Speaks in a low hoarse tone.*] Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love? Will not——

Sir Anth. What the devil ails the fellow Why don't you speak out? not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsey!

Abs. The—the—excess of my awe, and my—my—my modesty, quite choak me!

Sir Anth. Ah, your modesty again! I'll tell you what, Jack, if you don't speak out directly, and glibly, too, I shall be in such a rage! Mrs Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side front.

[MRS MALAPROP *seems to chide* LYDIA.

Abs. So all will out, I see! [*Goes up to* LYDIA—*speaks softly.*] Be not surprised, my Lydia; suppress all surprise at present.

Lydia. [*Aside.*] Heavens! 'tis Beverley's voice! Sure he can't have imposed on sir Anthony, too! [*Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*] Is this possible! my Beverley! how can this be, my Beverley?

Abs. Ah, 'tis all over! [*Aside.*

Sir Anth. Beverley! the devil! Beverley! What can the girl mean? This is my son, Jack Absolute.

Mrs Mal. For shame, hussy; for shame! your head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes; beg captain Absolute's pardon directly.

Lydia. I see no captain Absolute, but my loved Beverley!

Sir Anth. Zounds, the girl's mad! her brain's turned by reading!

Mrs Mal. O' my conscience, I believe so! What do you mean by Beverley, hussy? You saw captain Absolute before to-day; there he is; your husband that shall be.

Lydia. With all my soul, madam! when I refuse my Beverley——

Sir Anth. O, she's as mad as Bedlam! or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick? Come here, sirrah; who the devil are you?

Abs. Faith, sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavour to recollect.

Sir Anth. Are you my son, or not? Answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

Mrs Mal. Ay, sir, who are you? O mercy, I begin to suspect!

Abs. Ye powers of impudence, befriend me! [*Aside.*] Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself

to be yours also. I hope my duty has always shewn. Mrs Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer, and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew. I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name, and a station, which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

Lydia. So, there will be no elopement after all? [*Sullenly.*

Sir Anth. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! to do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Abs. O, you flatter me, sir! you compliment —'tis my modesty, you know, sir; my modesty that has stood in my way.

Sir Anth. Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however; I am glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog, I am: So this was your penitence, your duty, and obedience! I thought it was damned sudden! You never heard their names before, not you! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire, hey? If you could please me in the affair, 'twas all you desired! Ah, you dissembling villain! What! [*Pointing to* LYDIA.] she squints, don't she? a little red-haired girl! hey? Why, you hypocrital young rascal! I wonder you are not ashamed to hold up your head!

Abs. 'Tis with difficulty, sir; I am confused —very much confused, as you must perceive.

Mrs Mal. O, lud, sir Anthony! a new light breaks in upon me! hey! how! what! Captain, did you write the letters, then? What, am I to thank you for the elegant compilation of 'an old, 'weather-beaten she-dragon,' hey? O mercy! was it you that reflected on my parts of speech?

Abs. Dear sir, my modesty will be overpowered, at last, if you don't assist me. I shall certainly not be able to stand it!

Sir Anth. Come, come, Mrs Malaprop, we we must forget and forgive; odd's life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart, to be so good-humoured! and so gallant—hey! Mrs Malaprop?

Mrs Mal. Well, sir Anthony, since you desire it, we will not anticipate the past; so mind, young people——our retrospection will be all to the future.

Sir Anth. Come, we must leave them together. Mrs Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant. Jack, is not the cheek as I said, hey? and the eye, you rogue! and the lip: hey? Come, Mrs Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—their's is the time of life for happiness [*Sings.*].

Youth's the season made for joy.

Hey! Odd's life! I'm in such spirits; I don't know what I could not do! Permit me, madam. [*Gives his hand to* MRS MALAPROP.——[*Sings.*] *Tol-de-rol!* Egad, I should like to have a little fooling myself. *Tol-de-rol! derol*—

[*Exit, singing and handing* MRS MALAPROP.

[LYDIA *sits sullenly in her chair.*

Abs. So much thought bodes me no good. [*Aside.*

So grave, Lydia!

Lydia. Sir!

Abs. So! Egad, I thought as much! that damned monosyllable has froze me! [*Aside.*]—What, Lydia, now that we are as happy in our friends' consent, as in our mutual vows——

Lydia. Friends' consent, indeed! [*Peevishly.*

Abs. Come, come; we must lay aside some of our romance—a little wealth and comfort may be endured after all. And, for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as———

Lydia. Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

Abs. Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the licence, and——

Lydia. The licence! I hate licence!

Abs. O, my love! be not so unkind! thus, let me intreat—— [*Kneeling.*

Lydia. Pshaw! what signifies kneeling, when you must I must have you?

Abs. [*Rising.*] Nay, madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you. If I have lost your heart, I resign the rest. 'Gad, I must try what a little spirit will do. [*Aside.*

Lydia. [*Rising.*] Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud. What, you have been treating me like a child! humouring my romance and laughing, I suppose, at your success?

Abs. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me; only hear——

Lydia. So, while I fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flattered myself that I should outwit and incense them all——behold, my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation; and I am, myself, the only dupe, at last! [*Walking about in a heat.*] But, here, sir; here is the picture; Beverley's picture! [*Taking a miniature from her bosom.*] which I have worn, night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties. There, sir, [*Flings it to him.*] and be assured I throw the original from my heart as easily.

Abs. Nay, nay, madam; we will not differ as to that—Here, [*Taking out a picture.*] here is Miss Lydia Languish. What a difference! aye, there is the heavenly assenting smile, that first gave soul and spirit to my hopes! those are the lips, which sealed a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar; and there, the half resentful

blush, that would have checked the ardour of my thanks—Well, all that's past—all over, indeed. There, madam! in beauty, that copy is not equal to you; but, in my mind, it's merit over the original, in being still the same, is such—that —I cannot find in my heart to part with it.

[*Puts it up again.*

Lydia. [*Softening.*] 'Tis your own doing, sir. I, I, I suppose you are perfectly satisfied?

Abs. O, most certainly! sure, now, this is much better than being in love—ha, ha, ha! there's some spirit in this! What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises: all that is of no consequence, you know. To be sure people will say, that Miss did not know her own mind—but never mind that; or, perhaps, they may be ill-natured enough to hint, that the gentleman grew tired of the lady and forsook her—but don't let that fret you.

Lydia. There's no bearing this insolence.

[*Bursts into tears.*

Enter MRS MALAPROP *and* SIR ANTHONY.

Mrs Mal. [*Entering.*] Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing a while.

Lydia. This is worse than your treachery and deceit, you base ingrate! [*Sobbing.*

Sir Anth. What the devil's the matter now? Zounds, Mrs Malaprop, this is the oddest billing and cooing I ever heard! but what the deuce is the meaning of it? I am quite astonished!

Abs. Ask the lady, sir.

Mrs Mal. O, mercy, I am quite analysed for my part! Why, Lydia, what is the reason of this?

Lydia. Ask the gentleman, madam.

Sir Anth. Zounds! I shall be in a phrenzy! why, Jack, you are not come out to be any one else, are you?

Mrs Mal. Aye, sir, there's no more trick, is there? you are not like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, are you?

Abs. You'll not let me speak—I say the lady can account for this much better than I can.

Lydia. Madam, you once commanded me never to think of Beverley again; there is the man; I now obey you: for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever. [*Exit* LYDIA.

Mrs Mal. O mercy and miracles! what a turn here is! why, sure captain, you haven't behaved disrespectfully to my niece?

Sir Anth. Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! now I see it! Ha, ha, ha! now I see it! You have been too lively, Jack.

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word!——

Sir Anth. Come, no lying, Jack. I'm sure 'twas so.

Mrs Mal. O Lud! Sir Anthony! O fie, Captain!

Abs. Upon my soul, madam——

Sir Anth. Come, no excuses, Jack! why, your father, you rogue, was so before you: the blood of the Absolutes was always impatient! Ha, ha, ha! poor little Lydia! Why, you've frightened her, you dog, you have.

Abs. By all that's good, sir——

Sir Anth. Zounds! say no more, I tell you. Mrs Malaprop shall make your peace. You must make his peace, Mrs Malaprop: you must tell her 'tis Jack's way; tell her 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of our family! Come away, Jack—Ha, ha, ha! Mrs Malaprop—a young villain! [*Pushes him out.*

Mrs Mal. O, sir Anthony! O fie, captain!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE IV.—*The North Parade.*

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir Luc. I wonder where this captain Absolute hides himself! Upon my conscience! these officers are always in one's way in love affairs: I remember I might have married lady Dorothy Carmine, if it had not been for a little rogue of a major, who ran away with her before she could get a sight of me! And I wonder, too, what it is the ladies can see in them to be so fond of them! Unless it be a touch of the old serpent in them, that makes the little creatures be caught, like vipers, with a bit of red cloth. Hah! isn't this the captain coming? faith it is! There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow, that is mighty provoking! Who the devil is he talking to? [*Steps aside.*

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Abs. To what fine purpose I have been plotting! a noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul! a little gypsey! I did not think her romance could have made her so damned absurd either. 'Sdeath, I never was in a worse humour in my life! I cou'd cut my own throat, or any other person's, with the greatest pleasure in the world!

Sir Luc. O, faith, I'm in the luck of it! I never could have found him in a sweeter temper for my purpose; to be sure, I'm just come in the nick! now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteely.

[SIR LUCIUS *goes up to* ABSOLUTE.

With regard to that matter, captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Abs. Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle disputant; because, sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir Luc. That's no reason. For, give me leave to tell you, a man may think an untruth as well as speak one.

Abs. Very true, sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

Sir Luc. Then, sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

Abs. Hark'e, sir Lucius; if I had not before

known you to be a gentleman, upon my soul, I should not have discovered it at this interview: for what you can drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive!

Sir Luc. I humbly thank you, sir, for the quickness of your apprehension! [*Bowing.*] You have named the very thing I would be at.

Abs. Very well, sir; I shall certainly not baulk your inclinations: but I should be glad you would please to explain your motives?

Sir Luc. Pray, sir, be easy—the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it stands—we should only spoil it, by trying to explain it. However, your memory is very short, or you could not have forgot an affront you passed on me within this week. So, no more, but name your time and place.

Abs. Well, sir, since you are so bent on it, the sooner the better—let it be this evening—here by the Spring Gardens. We shall scarcely be interrupted.

Sir Luc. Faith! that same interruption in affairs of this nature shews very great ill-breeding. I don't know what's the reason; but in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother, that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness. However, if its the same to you, captain, I should take it as a particular kindness, if you'd let us meet in King's-Mead Fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may dispatch both matters at once.

Abs. 'Tis the same to me exactly. A little after six, then, we'll discuss this matter more seriously.

Sir Luc. If you please, sir; there will be very pretty small-sword light, though it won't do for a long shot. So that matter's settled, and my mind's at ease. [*Exit* SIR LUCIUS.

Enter FAULKLAND, *meeting* ABSOLUTE.

Abs. Well met! I was going to look for you. O, Faulkland! all the demons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vexed, that if I had not the prospect of a resource in being knocked o' the head by and by, I should scarce have spirits to tell you the cause.

Faulk. What can you mean? Has Lydia changed her mind? I should have thought her duty and inclination would now have pointed to the same object.

Abs. Aye, just as the eyes do of a person who squints: when her love-eye was fixed on me, t'other, her eye of duty, was finely obliqued: but when duty bid her point that the same way, off t'other turned on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

Faulk. But what's the resource you——

Abs. O, to wind up the whole, a good-natured Irishman here has [*mimicking* SIR LUCIUS.] begged leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat, and I mean to indulge him, that's all.

Faulk. Prithee, be serious.

Abs. 'Tis fact, upon my soul! Sir Lucius O'-Trigger—you know him by sight—for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet him this evening at six o'clock; 'tis on that account I wished to see you; you must go with me.

Faulk. Nay, there must be some mistake, sure. Sir Lucius shall explain himself; and, I dare say, matters may be accommodated: but this evening, did you say? I wish it had been any other time.

Abs. Why? there will be light enough: there will, as sir Lucius says, be very pretty small-sword light, though it will not do for a long shot. Confound his long shots!

Faulk. But I am myself a good deal ruffled, by a difference I have had with Julia—my vile tormenting temper has made me treat her so cruelly, that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled.

Abs. By Heavens, Faulkland, you don't deserve her!

Enter Servant—gives FAULKLAND *a letter.*

Faulk. O Jack! this is from Julia—I dread to open it—I fear it may be to take a last leave—perhaps to bid me return her letters—and restore———O! how I suffer for my folly!

Abs. Here—let me see.

[*Takes the letter and opens it.*

Ay, a final sentence indeed! 'tis all over with you, faith.

Faulk. Nay, Jack, don't keep me in suspense.

Abs. Hear then—'As I am convinced that my 'dear Faulkland's own reflections have already 'upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I 'will not add a word on the subject. I wish to 'speak with you as soon as possible. Your's ever 'and truly, Julia.'—There's stubbornness and resentment for you! [*Gives him the letter.*

Why, man, you don't seem one whit the happier at this!

Faulk. O, yes, I am—but—but———

Abs. Confound your buts! You never hear any thing that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately damn it with a but!

Faulk. Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own honestly, don't you think there is something forward, something indelicate, in this haste to forgive? Women should never sue for reconciliation; that should always come from us. They should retain their coldness till wooed to kindness; and their pardon, like their love, should 'not unsought be won.'

Abs. I have not patience to listen to you: thou'rt incorrigible! so, say no more on the subject. I must go to settle a few matters—let me see you before six—remember—at my lodgings. A poor, industrious devil like me, who have toiled, and drudged, and plotted to gain my ends, and am at last disappointed by other people's folly, may, in

pity, be allowed to swear and grumble a little; but a captious sceptic in love, a slave to fretfulness and whim, who has no difficulties but of his own creating, is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion! [*Exit.*

Faulk. I feel his reproaches: yet I would not change this too exquisite nicety, for the gross content with which he tramples on the thorns of love. His engaging me in this duel has started an idea in my head, which I will instantly pursue. I'll use it as the touchstone of Julia's sincerity and disinterestedness—if her love prove pure and sterling ore, my name will rest on it with honour! and once I have stamped it there, I lay aside my doubts for ever: but if the dross of selfishness, the allay of pride, predominate, 'twill be best to leave her as a toy for some less cautious fool to sigh for. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—JULIA'S *dressing-room.*

JULIA *alone.*

Julia. How this message has alarmed me! what dreadful accident can he mean? why such charges to be alone?—O Faulkland! how many unhappy moments, how many tears, have you cost me!

Enter FAULKLAND.

What means this? why this caution, Faulkland?

Faulk. Alas! Julia, I come to take a long farewel.

Julia. Heavens! what do you mean?

Faulk. You see before you a wretch, whose life is forfeited. Nay, start not! the infirmity of my temper has drawn all this misery on me. I left you fretful and passionate—an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel; the event is, that I must fly this kingdom instantly. O Julia! had I been so fortunate as to have called you mine entirely, before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment!

Julia. My soul is oppressed with sorrow at the nature of your misfortune: had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought that I could now chase from your bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love. My heart has long known no other guardian—I now intrust my person to your honour—we will fly together. When safe from pursuit, my father's will may be fulfilled, and I receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then, on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a cherub's hand, shall smooth the brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

Faulk. O Julia! I am bankrupt in gratitude! but the time is so pressing, it calls on you for so hasty a resolution! Would you not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forego, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you, beside his solitary love?

Julia. I ask not a moment. No, Faulkland, I have loved you for yourself: and if I now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to an act of love. But let us not linger. Perhaps this delay———

Faulk. 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark. Yet am I grieved to think what numberless distresses will press heavy on your gentle disposition!

Julia. Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by this unhappy act? I know not whether 'tis so, but sure that alone can never make us unhappy. The little I have will be sufficient to support us; and exile never should be splendid.

Faulk. Ay, but in such an abject state of life, my wounded pride, perhaps, may increase the natural fretfulness of my temper, till I become a rude, morose companion, beyond your patience to endure. Perhaps the recollection of a deed, my conscience cannot justify, may haunt me in such gloomy and unsocial fits, that I shall hate the tenderness that would relieve me, break from your arms, and quarrel with your fondness!

Julia. If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit to watch over and console you: one who, by bearing your infirmities with gentleness and resignation, may teach you so to bear the evils of your fortune.

Faulk. Julia, I have proved you to the quick! and with this useless device I throw away all my doubts. How shall I plead to be forgiven this last unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

Julia. Has no such disaster happened, as you related?

Faulk. I am ashamed to own, that it was pretended; yet, in pity, Julia, do not kill me with resenting a fault which never can be repeated: but sealing, this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of Heaven, receive my future guide and monitress, and expiate my past folly, by years of tender adoration.

Julia. Hold, Faulkland!—that you are free from a crime, which I before feared to name, Heaven knows how sincerely I rejoice! These are tears of thankfulness for that! But that your cruel doubts should have urged you to an impo-

sition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang more keen than I can express!

Faulk. By Heavens! Julia———

Julia. Yet hear me.——My father loved you, Faulkland, and you preserved the life that tender parent gave me; in his presence I pledged my hand, joyfully pledged it, where before I had given my heart. When, soon after, I lost that parent, it seemed to me that Providence had, in Faulkland, shewn me whither to transfer, without a pause, my grateful duty, as well as my affection: hence, I have been content to bear from you, what pride and delicacy would have forbid me from another. I will not upbraid you, by repeating how you have trifled with my sincerity.———

Faulk. I confess it all! yet hear——

Julia. After such a year of trial, I might have flattered myself that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel as unnecessary! I now see it is not in your nature to be content, or confident in love. With this conviction, I never will be yours. While I had hopes, that my persevering attention, and unreproaching kindness, might, in time, reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gained a dearer influence over you; but I will not furnish you with a licensed power to keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expence of one who never would contend with you.

Faulk. Nay, but, Julia, by my soul and honour, if, after this———

Julia. But one word more. As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another. I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity; and the dearest blessing I can ask of Heaven to send you, will be, to charm you from that unhappy temper, which alone has prevented the performance of our solemn engagement. All I request of you is, that you will yourself reflect upon this infirmity; and when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of, let it not be your least regret, that it lost you the love of one—who would have followed you in beggary through the world.

[*Exit.*

Faulk. She's gone for ever! There was an awful resolution in her manner, that rivetted me to my place. O fool! dolt! barbarian! Curst as I am, with more imperfections than my fellow-wretches, kind fortune sent a heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side! I must now haste to my appointment. Well! my mind is tuned for such a scene. I shall wish only to become a principal in it, and reverse the tale my cursed folly put me upon forging here. O Love! tormentor! fiend! Whose influence, like the moon's, acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them; but, meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges sensibility to madness!

[*Exit* FAULK.

Enter Maid and LYDIA.

Maid. My mistress, madam, I know, was here just now; perhaps she is only in the next room.

[*Exit maid.*

Lydia. Heigh ho! Though he has used me so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe one lecture from my grave cousin will make me recal him.

Enter JULIA.

O, Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation! Lud! Child, what's the matter with you? You have been crying! I'll be hanged, if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you!

Julia. You mistake the cause of my uneasiness! Something has flurried me a little. Nothing that you can guess at. I would not accuse Faulkland to a sister! [*Aside.*

Lydia. Ah! Whatever vexations you may have, I can assure you mine surpass them. You know who Beverley proves to be?

Julia. I will now own to you, Lydia, that Mr Faulkland had before informed me of the whole affair. Had young Absolute been the person you took him for, I should not have accepted your confidence on the subject, without a serious endeavour to counteract your caprice.

Lydia. So, then, I see I have been deceived by every one! But I don't care; I'll never have him.

Julia. Nay, Lydia———

Lydia. Why, is it not provoking? When I thought we were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself made a mere Smithfield bargain of at last! There, had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements! So becoming a disguise! So amiable a ladder of ropes! Conscious moon—four horses—Scotch parson—with such surprise to Mrs Malaprop—and such paragraphs in the newspapers! O, I shall die with disappointment!

Julia. I don't wonder at it!

Lydia. Now—sad reverse! What have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy preparation with a bishop's licence, and my aunt's blessing, to go simpering up to the altar; or, perhaps, be cried three times in a country church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask the consent of every butcher in the parish to join John Absolute and Lydia Languish, spinster! O, that I should live to hear myself called spinster!

Julia. Melancholy, indeed!

Lydia. How mortifying, to remember the dear delicious shifts I used to be put to, to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow! How often have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden, stuck like a dripping statue! There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough so pathetically! He shivering with cold, and I with apprehension!

And, while the freezing blast numbed our joints, how warmly would he press me to pity his flame, and glow with mutual ardour! Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love!

Julia. If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you only by laughing heartily at you; but it suits more the situation of my mind, at present, earnestly to entreat you, not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer that unhappiness from your caprice, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

Lydia. O lud! What has brought my aunt here?

Enter MRS MALAPROP, FAG, *and* DAVID.

Mrs Mal. So, so! here's fine work! Here's fine suicide, parricide, and simulation going on in the fields! And sir Anthony not to be found to prevent the antistrophe!

Julia. For Heaven's sake, madam, what's the meaning of this?

Mrs Mal. That gentleman can tell you: 'twas he enveloped the affair.

Lydia. Do, sir; will you inform us?

[*To* FAG.

Fag. Madam, I should hold myself very deficient in every requisite that forms the man of breeding, if I delayed a moment to give all the information in my power to a lady so deeply interested in the affair as you are.

Lydia. But quick! Quick, sir!

Fag. True, madam, as you say, one should be quick in divulging matters of this nature; for should we be tedious, perhaps, while we are flourishing on the subject, two or three lives may be lost!

Lydia. O patience! Do, madam, for Heaven's sake, tell us what's the matter?

Mrs Mal. Why, murder's the matter! Slaughter's the matter! Killing's the matter! But he can tell you the perpendiculars.

Lydia. Then, prithee, sir, be brief.

Fag. Why, then, madam, as to murder, I cannot take upon me to say; and as to slaughter, or manslaughter, that will be as the jury finds it.

Lydia. But who, sir——who are engaged in this?

Fag. Faith, madam, one is a young gentleman whom I should be very sorry any thing was to happen to—a very pretty-behaved gentleman! We have lived much together, and always on terms.

Lydia. But who is this? Who, who, who!

Fag. My master, madam—my master—I speak of my master.

Lydia. Heavens! What, captain Absolute?

Mrs Mal. O, to be sure, you are frightened now!

Julia. But who are with him, sir?

Fag. As to the rest, madam, this gentleman can inform you better than I.

Julia. Do speak, friend. [*To* DAVID.

David. Look'ee, my lady——by the mass, there's mischief going on! Folks don't use to meet for amusement with fire-arms, fire-locks, fire-engines, fire-screens, fire-office, and the devil knows what other crackers beside! This, my lady, I say, has an angry favour.

Julia. But who is there beside captain Absolute, friend?

David. My poor master—under favour for mentioning him first. You know me, my lady—I am David—and my master of course is, or was, 'squire Acres. Then comes 'squire Faulkland.

Julia. Do, madam; let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief!

Mrs Mal. O fie! it would be very inelegant in us: we should only participate things.

David. Ah! Do, Mrs Aunt, save a few lives; they are desperately given, believe me. Above all, there is that blood-thirsty Philistine, sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Mrs Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger! O mercy! Have they drawn poor little dear sir Lucius into the scrape? Why, how you stand, girl! You have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire putrifactions!

Lydia. What are we to do, madam?

Mrs Mal. Why, fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief! Here, friend—you can shew us the place?

Fag. If you please, madam, I will conduct you. David, do you look for sir Anthony.

[*Exit* DAVID.

Mrs Mal. Come, girls; this gentleman will exhort us. Come, sir, you're our envoy; lead the way, and we'll precede.

Fag. Not a step before the ladies, for the world!

Mrs Mal. You're sure you know the spot?

Fag. I think I can find it, madam; and one good thing is, we shall hear the report of the pistols, as we draw near, so we can't well miss them; never fear, madam, never fear.

[*Exit, he talking.*

SCENE II.—*South Parade.*

Enter ABSOLUTE, *putting his sword under his great coat.*

Abs. A sword seen in the streets of Bath would raise as great an alarm as a mad dog. How provoking this is in Faulkland! Never punctual! I shall be obliged to go without him at last. O, the devil! Here's sir Anthony! How shall I escape him!

[*Muffles up his face, and takes a circle to go off.*

Enter SIR ANTHONY.

Sir Anth. How one may be deceived at a little distance! Only that I see he don't know me, I could have sworn that was Jack! Hey! Gad's life! It is. Why, Jack, what are you afraid of?

Hey! Sure I'm right. Why, Jack—Jack Absolute! [*Goes up to him.*

Abs. Really, sir, you have the advantage of me. I don't remember ever to have had the honour—my name is Saunderson, at your service.

Sir Anth. Sir, I beg your pardon—I took you—Hey? Why, zounds! It is—Stay—— [*Looks up to his face.* So, so! your humble servant, Mr Saunderson! Why, you scoundrel, what tricks are you after now?

Abs. O! A joke, sir, a joke! I came here on purpose to look for you, sir.

Sir Anth. You did! Well, I am glad you were so lucky; but what are you muffled up so for? What's this for? Hey?

Abs. 'Tis cool, sir; isn't it? Rather chilly, somehow: but I shall be late—I have a particular engagement.

Sir Anth. Stay. Why, I thought you were looking for me? Pray, Jack, where is't you are going?

Abs. Going, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay; where are you going?

Abs. Where am I going?

Sir Anth. You unmannerly puppy!

Abs. I was going, sir, to—to—to—to Lydia—sir, to Lydia——to make matters up, if I could; and I was looking for you, sir, to—to——

Sir Anth. To go with you, I suppose? Well, come along.

Abs. O, zounds! no, sir, not for the world! I wished to meet with you, sir, to—to—to——You find it cool, I'm sure, sir—you'd better not stay out.

Sir Anth. Cool! not at all. Well, Jack, and what will you say to Lydia?

Abs. O, sir, beg her pardon, humour her; promise and vow——But I detain you, sir—consider the cold air on your gout!

Sir Anth. O, not at all, not at all—I'm in no hurry. Ah! Jack, you youngsters, when once you are wounded here! [*Putting his hand to* ABSOLUTE'S *breast.*] Hey! what the deuce have you got here?

Abs. Nothing, sir, nothing!

Sir Anth. What's this?——here's something damned hard!

Abs. O, trinkets, sir, trinkets! a bauble for Lydia!

Sir Anth. Nay; let me see your taste. [*Pulls his coat open, the sword falls.*] Trinkets! a bauble for Lydia!—Zounds, sirrah, you are not going to cut her throat, are you?

Abs. Ha, ha, ha! I thought it would divert you, sir, though I did not mean to tell you till afterwards.

Sir Anth. You did not?—Yes, this is a very diverting trinket, truly!

Abs. Sir, I'll explain to you. You know, sir, Lydia is romantic—devilish romantic, and very absurd, of course:——now, sir, I intend, if she refuses to forgive me, to sheath this sword—and swear, I'll fall upon its point, and expire at her feet!

Sir Anth. Fall upon a fiddle-stick's end! Why, I suppose it is the very thing that would please her—Get along, you fool!

Abs. Well, sir, you shall hear of my success—you shall hear.—— O, Lydia! forgive me, or this pointed steel, says I!

Sir Anth. O, booby! stab away, and welcome, says she—Get along! and damn your trinkets! [*Exit* ABSOLUTE.

Enter DAVID, *running.*

David. Stop him! Stop him! Murder! Thief! Fire! Stop fire! stop fire!—O, sir Anthony!—call, call! Bid him stop! Murder! Fire!

Sir Anth. Fire! Murder! where?

David. Oons! he's out of sight! and I'm out of breath, for my part! O, sir Anthony, why didn't you stop him? why didn't you stop him?

Sir Anth. Zounds! the fellow's mad! Stop whom? stop Jack?

David. Ay, the captain, sir!—there's murder and slaughter!

Sir Anth. Murder!

David. Ay, please you, sir Anthony, there's all kinds of murder, all sorts of slaughter, to be seen in the fields! There's fighting going on, sir—bloody sword and gun fighting!

Sir Anth. Who are going to fight, dunce?

David. Every body that I know of, sir Anthony! every body is going to fight my poor master; sir Lucius O'Trigger, your son, the captain!

Sir Anth. O, the dog! I see his tricks——Do you know the place?

David. King's Mead-fields.

Sir Anth. You know the way?

David. Not an inch; but I'll call the mayor, aldermen, constables, church-wardens, and beadles—we can't be too many to part them!

Sir Anth. Come along; give me your shoulder—we'll get assistance as we go—The lying villain! Well, I shall be in such a frenzy!—So, this was the history of his trinkets! I'll bauble him! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*King's Mead-fields.*

SIR LUCIUS *and* ACRES, *with pistols.*

Acres. By my valour, then, sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance!—Odds levels and aims! I say it is a good distance.

Sir Luc. Is it for muskets or small field-pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr Acres, you must leave those things to me. Stay now, I'll show you: [*Measures paces along the stage.*] There, now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Zounds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! I tell you, sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir Luc. Faith! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all, if he was out of sight!

Acres. No, sir Lucius: but I should think forty, or eight-and-thirty yards———

Sir Luc. Pho, pho! nonsense! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile!

Acres. Odds bullets, no! By my valour, there is no merit in killing him so near! do, my dear sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot—a long shot, sir Lucius, if you love me!

Sir Luc. Well; the gentleman's friend and I must settle that. But tell me, now, Mr Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, sir Lucius; but I don't understand———

Sir Luc. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk; and, if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say, it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A quietus!

Sir Luc. For instance, now—if that should be the case, would you choose to be pickled and sent home? or would it be the same to you to lie here in the abbey?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the abbey.

Acres. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! sir Lucius, don't talk so!

Sir Luc. I suppose, Mr Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, sir Lucius, never before.

Sir Luc. Ah, that's a pity! there's nothing like being used to a thing.——Pray, now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files! I've practised that—There, sir Lucius, there [*Puts himself in an attitude.*]—a side front, hey?——Odd! I'll make myself small enough—I'll stand edge-ways.

Sir Luc. Now, you're quite out; for if you stand so when I take my aim—[*Levelling at him.*]

Acres. Zounds! sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cocked?

Sir Luc. Never fear.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir Luc. Pho! be easy—Well, now, if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side, 'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part!

Sir Luc. But, there—fix yourself so—[*Placing him.*] let him see the broad-side of your full front—there—now, a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do any harm at all!

Acres. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

Sir Luc. Ay may they—and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Look'e! sir Lucius——I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one—So, by my valour! I will stand edge-ways.

Sir Luc. [*Looking at his watch.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah!—no faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey!—what!—coming!

Sir Luc. Ay—Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

Acres. There are two of them, indeed!——well, let them come—hey, sir Lucius?—we—we—we—we—won't run.———

Sir Luc. Run!

Acres. No—I say—we won't run, by my valour!

Sir Luc. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear sir Lucius—but I-I-I don't feel quite so bold, somehow—as I did.

Sir Luc. O fie! consider your honour.

Acres. Ay—true—my honour!—Do, sir Lucius, edge in a word or two, every now and then, about my honour.

Sir Luc. Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*

Acres. Sir Lucius—if I was not with you, I should almost think I was afraid—if my valour should leave me!—Valour will come and go.

Sir Luc. Then, pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius, I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is certainly going!—it is sneaking off! I feel it oozing out, as it were, at the palms of my hands!

Sir Luc. Your honour—your honour!—Here they are!

Acres. O mercy!——now that I was safe at Clod-Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

Enter FAULKLAND *and* ABSOLUTE.

Sir Luc. Gentlemen, your most obedient.——Ha! what, captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend, then to proceed to business on your own account?

Acres. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

Abs. Heark'e, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir Luc. Well, Mr Acres, I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly.—So, Mr Beverley, [*To* FAULKLAND.] if you'll choose weapons, the captain and I will measure the ground.

Faulk. My weapons, sir!

Acres. Odds life! sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr Faulkland—These are my particular friends.

Sir Luc. What, sir, did not you come here to fight Mr Acres?

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, sir!

Sir Luc. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game, you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party by sitting out?

Abs. O pray, Faulkland, fight to oblige sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr Acres is so bent on the matter——

Acres. No, no, Mr Faulkland—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian. Look'e, sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and, if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

Sir Luc. Observe me, Mr Acres, I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody—and you came here to fight him—Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him, I can't see, for my soul, why it is not just the same thing.

Acres. Why, no—sir Lucius—I tell you 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face! If he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

Abs. Hold, Bob—let me set you right.—There is no such man as Beverley in the case. The person who assumed that name is before you; and, as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir Luc. Well, this is lucky.—Now you have an opportunity——

Acres. What! quarrel with my dear friend Jack Absolute—not if he were fifty Beverley's! Zounds! sir Lucius, you would not have me so unnatural.

Sir Luc. Upon my conscience, Mr Acres, your valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! Odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my heart—and, if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you snug lying in the abbey here; or pickle you, and send you over to Blunderbuss-hall, or any thing of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir Luc. Pho, pho! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward! Coward was the word, by my valour!

Sir Luc. Well, sir?

Acres. Look'e, sir Lucius, 'tis not that I mind the word coward—coward may be said in joke—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls——

Sir Luc. Well, sir?

Acres. I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir Luc. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

Abs. Nay, sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres—He is a most determined dog—called in the country, Fighting Bob,—he generally kills a man a week! Don't you, Bob?

Acres. Ay; at home!

Sir Luc. Well, then, captain, 'tis we must begin—so come on, my little counsellor [*Draws his sword.*], and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him?

Abs. Come on, then, sir [*Draws.*]; since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply!

Enter SIR ANTHONY, DAVID, *and the Women.*

David. Knock them all down, sweet sir Anthony—knock down my master in particular—and bind his hands over to their good behaviour!

Sir Anth. Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a phrenzy—How came you in a duel, sir?

Abs. Faith, sir, that gentleman can tell you better than I! 'twas he called on me; and, you know, sir, I serve his majesty.

Sir Anth. Here's a pretty fellow! I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me, he serves his majesty!—Zounds! sirrah, then how durst you draw the king's sword against one of his subjects?

Abs. Sir, I tell you! That gentleman called me out, without explaining his reasons.

Sir Anth. Gad, Sir! how came you to call my son out, without explaining your reasons?

Sir Luc. Your son, sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

Sir Anth. Zounds! Jack, how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook?

Mrs Mal. Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies; Captain Absolute, come here—How could you intimidate us so? Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for you.

Abs. For fear I should be killed, or escape, madam?

Mrs Mal. Nay, no delusions to the past—Lydia is convinced; speak, child.

Sir Luc. With your leave, madam, I must put in a word here; I believe I could interpret the young lady's silence—Now mark—

Lydia. What is it you mean, sir?

Sir Luc. Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now; this is no time for trifling.

Lydia. 'Tis true, sir; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections.

Abs. O! my little angel, say you so?—Sir Lucius, I perceive there must be some mistake here—with regard to the affront which you affirm I have given you. I can only say, that it could not have been intentional.—And as you must be convinced, that I should not fear to support a real injury—you shall now see that I am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency—I ask your pardon.—But for this lady, while honoured with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever.

Sir Anth. Well said, Jack, and I'll stand by you, my boy!

Acres. Mind, I give up all my claim—I make no pretensions to any thing in the world—and if I could get a wife, without fighting for her, by my valour, I'll live a bachelor.

Sir Luc. Captain, give me your hand—an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation—and as for the lady—if she chooses to deny her own hand-writing here——

[*Takes out letters.*

Mrs Mal. O, he will dissolve my mystery!—Sir Lucius, perhaps there's some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate———

Sir Luc. Pray, old gentlewoman, don't interfere where you have no business.—Miss Languish, are you my Delia, or not?

Lydia. Indeed, sir Lucius, I am not.

[LYDIA *and* ABSOLUTE *walk aside.*

Mrs Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeachment—pardon my blushes, I am Delia!

Sir Luc. You Delia—pho! pho! be easy!

Mrs Mal. Why, thou barbarous Vandyke—those letters are mine—When you are more sensible of my benignity—perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

Sir Luc. Mrs Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick upon me, I am equally beholden to you.—And, to shew you I am not ungrateful, captain Absolute, since you have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

Abs. I am much obliged to you, sir Lucius; but here's my friend, Fighting Bob, unprovided for.

Sir Luc. Hah! little Valour—here, will you make your fortune?

Acres. Odds wrinkles! No.—But give me your hand, sir Lucius; forget and forgive; but if ever I give you a chance of pickling me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce, that's all.

Sir Anth. Come, Mrs Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

Mrs Mal. O sir Anthony!—men are all barbarians———

[*All retire but* JULIA *and* FAULKLAND.

Julia. He seems dejected and unhappy—not sullen—there was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me—O woman! how true should be your judgment, when your resolution is so weak!

Faulk. Julia!—how can I sue for what I so little deserve? I dare not presume—yet Hope is the child of Penitence.

Julia. Oh! Faulkland, you have not been more faulty in your unkind treatment of me, than I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be ungenerous not to admit the same plea for your's.

Faulk. Now I shall be blest indeed!———

[SIR ANTHONY *comes forward.*

Sir Anth. What's going on here?—So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant.——Come, Julia, I never interfered before; but let me have a hand in the matter at last.—All the faults I have ever seen in my friend Faulkland, seemed to proceed from what he calls the delicacy and warmth of his affection for you——There, marry him directly, Julia; you'll find he'll mend surprisingly! [*The rest come forward.*

Sir Luc. Come now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person, but what is content; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better———

Acres. You are right, sir Lucius.—So, Jack, I wish you joy—Mr Faulkland, the same.—Ladies,—come now, to shew you I'm neither vexed nor angry, odds Tabors and Pipes! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour, to the New Rooms—— and I insist on your all meeting me there.

Sir Anth. Gad! Sir, I like your spirit; and at night we single lads will drink a health to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs Malaprop.

Faulk. Our partners are stolen from us, Jack—I hope to be congratulated by each other—yours for having checked in time, the errors of an ill-directed imagination, which might have betrayed an innocent heart; and mine, for having, by her gentleness and candour, reformed the unhappy temper of one, who, by it, made wretched whom he loved most, and tortured the heart he ought to have adored.

Abs. Well, Jack, we have both tasted the bitters, as well as the sweets, of love—with this difference only, that you always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while I———

Lydia. Was always obliged to me for it! hey, Mr Modesty?—But come, no more of that—our happiness is now as unallayed as general.

Julia. Then let us study to preserve it so: and while Hope pictures to us a flattering scene of future bliss, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting.—When hearts deserving happiness would unite their fortunes, Virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest hurtless flowers; but ill-judging Passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends them, when its leaves are dropt! [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

CHOLERIC MAN.

BY

CUMBERLAND.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

ANDREW NIGHTSHADE, *the choleric man.*
MANLOVE, *half brother to* NIGHTSHADE.
STAPLETON, *a merchant.*
CHARLES MANLOVE, NIGHTSHADE'S *eldest son.*
JACK NIGHTSHADE, *his brother.*
DIBBLE, *a coxcomb.*
GREGORY, *servant to* ANDREW NIGHTSHADE.
FRAMPTON, *clerk to* MANLOVE.
FREDERICK, *servant to* CHARLES MANLOVE.

WOMEN.

MRS STAPLETON, *wife to* STAPLETON.
LÆTITIA, *niece to* STAPLETON.
LUCY, *sister to* DIBBLE.

Scene—London.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—MANLOVE'S *Chambers.*

FRAMPTON *at his desk.*

Enter MANLOVE *as from his walk*—FRAMPTON *rises, and meets him with some papers.*

Framp. You have lengthened your walk this morning?

Man. Very likely: The gardens were pleasant, and I believe I have rather exceeded my usual stint.

Framp. By just one turn upon the Terrace.

Man. You measured me, I see. We men of business, Frampton, contract strange habits of regularity.

Framp. And bachelors too, sir.

Man. Very true, very true: A wife now and then does put a man a little out of method, I have heard. Is any body waiting?

Framp. No body.

Man. Any cases?

Framp. Several. [*Gives him papers.*

Man. Bless me! was the world of my mind, they would patch up their differences over a bottle, and let the grass grow in our inns of court. Let me see—what have we got here? [*Reads.*] 'A detects B plucking turnips out of his field,' &c. Here's a fellow for you! he'll go to law with the crows for picking worms out of his dunghill: Prosecute a fellow-creature for a turnip!—— A turnip be his damages!

Framp. And his food, too—at least till he's a better man.

Man. [*Reading.*] 'Nicholas Swanskin, taylor, in Threadneedle-street, would be glad to know how to proceed in a legal way against his wife, in a case of cohabitancy.'—Had you any fee with this case?

Framp. A light guinea, sir.

Man. 'Tis more than a light woman deserves: Give the taylor his guinea again; bid him proceed to his work, and leave a good-for-nothing wife to go on with hers—and hark'e, Frampton, you seem to want a new coat—suppose you let him take your measure—the fellow, you see, would fain be cutting out work for the lawyers. Send Mr Dibble hither. Oh, he is come.

[FRAMPTON *retires to his desk.*

Enter DIBBLE, *with papers.*

Mr Dibble, have you got Miss Fairfax's papers?

Dib. They are in my hand, sir.

Man. Have you copied my opinion upon the will?

Dib. It is ready for signing.

[DIB. *gives him a pen, and* MAN. *signs a paper.*]

Man. There, sir. You've compared it, no doubt—Put the papers under one inclosure, and carry them to Miss Fairfax's; make my respects, and say I will have the honour of waiting on her this forenoon, and stating some particulars in my opinion that may want explaining.

Dib. I shall, sir.

[*Goes to the table, and puts up the papers.*

Man. Are you ready, Frampton? You and I must step to the hall, How we appear to that spruce gentleman! His father wore a livery—his sister is waiting-woman to Miss Fairfax, the very lady he is going to in that monkey habit! Is there no persuading him to suit his dress to his condition? Believe me, Frampton, there is much good sense in old distinctions: When the law lays down its full-bottomed periwig, you will find less wisdom in bald pates than you are aware of.

[*Exeunt* MAN. *and* FRAM.

Dib. What a damned queer figure old Frampton makes of himself! I must never shew him at our Sunday's club—never. The counsellor's little better: It does well enough for chamber practice, but he couldn't walk the hall in that wig: Its nothing now unless a good club of hair peeps under the tye. I hope shortly to see the day when Westminster-hall shall be able to count cues with the parade. [*He sits down. A knocking at the door.*] Who's at the door? Come in—You expect now I should rise and open it? not I, in faith; do that office for yourself, or stay where you are. Ah, Gregory, is it you? what wind blew you hither? what witch brought you at her back?

Enter GREGORY.

Gre. No witch, but an old bone-setting mare, with a heavy cloak-bag at her crupper, that has played a bitter tune upon my ribs. Where's his honour, Master Dibble?

Dib. Out—Give me hold of thy hand, old boy. What's the best news in your parts? Hav'n't earthed old Surly-boots yet?

Gre. Earthed him! no such luck; he's a tough morsel. He's above ground, as my head can testify. [*Shews his skull.*

Dib. Why that's action and battery with a vengeance!

Gre. Battery! he knows the strength of my skull, as well as a sand-man knows the back of his ass, and cudgels it as often: but he's hard at hand—When will his honour, Manlove, be at home?

Dib. Presently, presently. What brings your old blade hither?

Greg. The old errand: a little bit of law; a small jig to the tune of John Doe and Richard Roe; that's all.

Dib. Plaintiff, I bet five to one. But how does my playmate, Jack? how fares it with young Hopeful?

Gre. Gad's-my-life, well remembered! here's a writing for you: 'tis a merciless scrawl, to be sure; he's not at all come on in his running-hand; not at all; no, though I talk to him, and talk to him, and tell him what a fine young man his brother Charles is here—Mr Manlove, I must call him now; for his honour, I am told, since his return from travel, has nominated him afresh after himself, has not he, Master Dibble?

Dib. Ay, ay; 'twas done last sessions; he's no longer Charles Nightshade, but Charles Manlove, Esq. and a brave estate he's got by the exchange.

Gre. All these things I ding into the ears of our young scape-grace, Jack; but, I might as well whistle the birds from the sky, as talk him out of his tricks; mobbing with the carter-fellows, and scampering after the maids: all the while, too, the arch knave contrives to blind the eyes of old Choleric, his father, sitting as demure as a cat, 'till he is fairly in for his evening's nap; then, away goes he, like hey-go-mad, all the parish over. Well, have you made out his letter?

Dib. I'll attempt to read it to you.

'Dear Pickle,

'Old Choleric is setting off for London, and 'thinks to leave me in the country, but it won't 'do: must have another brush with the lads at the 'Bear: intend to be at brother Charles's on Wed-'nesday at noon, where you'll meet me. Old 'Trusty carries this, and understands trap: mum's 'the word. Thine,

'JOHN NIGHTSHADE.'

So you are privy to this trip, Gregory?

Gre. To be sure, master Dibble; we are all of his side: there is not a servant would peach, if he was to commit murder amongst them.

Dib. Indeed! But hold, here is more over the leaf. 'Gregory says I was of age last Lammas; 'if you know of ever a clean tight wench, that 'will take me out of old Choleric's clutches, I 'don't care if I buckle to, for life. N. B. She 'must have the Spanish, or the bait won't take.'

So, so! he's for a wife, you see: has he ever talked to you in this strain?

Gre. Now and then; but I always tell him 'tis time to think of marrying when the old badger is in the earth.

Dib. Pooh! you're to blame: we'll make a man of him; we'll set him up with a wife. I have a girl in my eye! a friend of my own—provided you will bear a hand in the business.

Gre. Bear a hand, master Dibble! You are a lawyer and can take care of yourself; I'm a poor servant, and have a character to lose.

Dib. Well, well; but if I pay you for your character, and your service into the bargain—every thing has its price, you know.

Gre. To be sure, there's no denying that; but, hark! here comes his honour Manlove.

Dib. Enough—Where are you lodged?

Gre. At Mr Stapleton's, in New Broad-Street: I'm going thither after I've seen the counsellor.

Dib. Better and better still! I'm going thither, too, and will wait for you, below, in the square: we can discuss my scheme by the way.

[*Exit* DIB.

Gre. What a sharp bitten vermin it is! Ah! these lawyers have all their wits about them.

Enter MANLOVE.

Man. What, Gregory! and without thy master? Where's my brother Nightshade? Thou and he are seldom parted, I believe.

Gre. Troth, sir, I hope Heaven will take some consideration of that, and set off the sins of my youth against the suffering of my old age. The 'squire is at hand.

Man. Well, and what business calls him up to town?

Gre. Please your honour, he is fallen out with our parson.

Man. About tythes?

Gre. Lack-a-day! he has been non-suited upon that score over and over—'Tis about game.

Man. Game, quotha! if he comes to talk to me about hares and partridges, Gregory, I won't hear of it: such laws and such law-suits are the disgrace of the country—I wont hear a word upon the subject.

Gre. It's quite a breach; he has totally left off going to church himself, and forbade all his family; nay, what's more, he has broke his backgammon tables, only because the parson taught him the game. Mercy o' me, that ever your honour and my old master should be born of the same mother!

Man. Of the same mother, but very different fathers, Gregory: doomed, from early youth, to a life merely mercantile, his days have been passed between a compting-house at Rotterdam, and the cabin of a Dutch dogger; precious universities! One son, indeed, he allowed me to rescue from his hands, and to him I have given a public education; the other poor lad has been a bird of his own breeding.

Gre. And a precious bird he is! such another lapwing! skitting here, and skitting there; sometimes above, sometimes below: no wonder he's so wild, when his schooling has been under the hedges; but, I hear my old master on the stairs. Good morning to your honour—I must budge onwards to Mr Stapleton's. [*Exit* GRE.

Man. Gregory, good morning!

Enter ANDREW NIGHTSHADE.

A. Night. [*Speaks, as he enters.*] I tell you, fellow, there's your fare: I'll not give you a farthing over. A hard shilling, indeed!—a hard coach, if you please!—Brother Manlove, your servant! This town grows worse and worse; no conscience, no police—if I was not the most patient man alive, such things would turn my brain—Brother Manlove, I say your servant!

Man. Brother Andrew, you are welcome. You seemed a little ruffled, so that I waited for its subsiding, and now, give me your hand; I am glad to see you in town, provided the occasion be agreeable.

A. Night. I think the law has a proviso for every thing: your compliment sets off, like the preamble of a statute, and your conclusion limps after, like the clause at the tail of it. So you keep your old apartments, and as slovenly as ever—Lincoln's-Inn and the law—so runs your life. A turn upon the terrace after breakfast, a mutton chop for dinner at the Rolls, and the evening paper at the Mount, wind up your day.

Man. A narrow scale, I own; but whether it be, that I was made too small for happiness, I never could entertain both guests together; so I took the humblest of the two, and left the other for my betters.

A. Night. Ay, 'tis too late to alter; 'twould be a vain endeavour to correct your temper at these years—By the way, brother, your stair-case is the dirtiest I ever set my foot upon.

Man. So long as we have clean dealings, within, our clients will make no complaint. Your's, I warrant, was neater at Rotterdam?

A. Night. Neater! 'tis a matter of astonishment to me, how you, that have a plentiful estate, can make yourself a slave to business, and drudge away your life in such a hole as this!

Man. True, Andrew, 'twas unreasonable; but, as I have now made over the best part of my estate to your son, so I think I have answered the best part of your objection.

A. Night. You shall excuse me—all the world cries out upon your folly; you are apt to be a little hasty, else I should be free to tell you, you have made yourself ridiculous; and what is worse—brother Charles, I speak to you as a father, you have undone my son.

Man. How so? have I confined him in his education?

A. Night. No, faith; the scale on which you have finished him is wide enough to take in vice and folly at full size: his principles won't cramp their growth. At school he was grounded in impudence, the university confirmed him in ignorance, and the grand tour stocked him with infidelity and bad pictures---such has been his education.

Man. But you, in your wisdom, pursued a different course with your younger son.

A. Night. I bred him as a rational creature should be bred, under the rod of discipline, under the lash of my own arm; I gave him a sober, frugal, godly training; and mark the difference between them---Your fellow lives here in this great city, in a round of pleasures, in the front of the fashion, squandering and revelling:---Mine abides patiently in the country, toiling and travailling; early at his duty, sparing at his meals, patient of fatigue; he hears no music as Charles does, purchases no fine pictures, lolls in no fine chariot, befools himself with no fine women: no, thank my stars, I've rescued one of my boys; Jack, at least, walks in the steps of his father.

Man. I hope he will; better principles I cannot wish him: but, methinks, Andrew, a little more knowledge of the world——

A. Night. Knowledge of the world, brother Charles! who knows so much? Belike you never heard, then, I had made three trips to Shetland, in a herring-buss, before you was born! have been three time chartered to Statia for muscovadoes; twice to Zante for currants; and made one voyage to Bencoolen for pepper?

Man. Yes; and that pepper-voyage runs in your blood still.

A. Night. So much the better; it will preserve my wits; it will season my understanding from such fly-blown folly as your's. Zooks! you to talk of knowledge of the world! where should you come by it? upon Clapham-Common! upon Bansted-Downs? Did you ever see the Pike of Teneriffe, the rock of Gibraltar, or even the bishop and his clerks? I know them all, your charts, and your coasting-pilots; I have been two nights and a day upon a sandbank in the Grecian Islands; and do you talk to me of knowledge of the world?

Man. Let us change the subject, then---you have not told me what brings you out of the country?

A. Night. Because there's no abiding in it; what with refractory tenants, poaching parsons, enclosing 'squires, navigation schemes, and turnpike meetings, there's no keeping peace about me; no, though I've commenced fourteen suits at law, besides bye-battles at quarter-sessions, courts leet, and courts baron, innumerable.

Man. Indeed!

A. Night. No sooner do I put my head out of doors, but instantly some fellow meets me with a fowling-piece on his shoulder, or a fishing-rod in his hand, or a grey-hound at his horse's heels, and all to disturb and destroy my property.

Man. I say property! let your game look after themselves. Do you call a creature property, that lights upon my lands to-day, upon your's to-morrow, and the next, perhaps, in Norway? I reprobate all quarrels about guns, and dogs, and game; for my part, I am pleased to see an Englishman with arms, whether he bears them for his own amusement, or for my defence.

A. Night. 'Tis mighty well! I am a fool to waste my time with you; I shall look after my own game, in my own way; you may watch your's, the sparrows, here, in the garden, or the old duck in the fountain in the square; your science goes no farther, so your servant. If you want me, I shall be found at Mr Stapleton's in New Broad-street.

Man. Hold, hold! I'm going there; I've business at Mr Stapleton's; my chariot's at the door—I'll carry you. Who waits?

Enter Servant.

Here, take this note to Mr Manlove.

A. Night. Ay, that's your puppy; my name was not good enough, it seems; but positively, I'll not see him; if you bring him to me 'tis all in vain; I positively will not bear him in my presence. [*Exit* A. NIGHT.

Man. That ever such a monster should exist, as an unnatural father! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*An apartment in* CHARLES MANLOVE'S *house.*

Enter CHARLES MANLOVE, *and* FREDERICK.

Cha. Man. Mr Manlove dines with me to-day; lay two covers in the little parlour, and bid the cook be punctual to his hour.

Fre. To a minute, sir. If Mr Manlove dines here, dinner will be served precisely as the clock is striking.

Cha. Man. Set out the dumb waiter, and tell the men they need not attend.

Fre. [*Goes to the door and speaks.*] Sir, you cannot come in; my master is not to be spoken with: where are you pushing?

Cha. Man. What's the matter, Frederick?

Fre. A country-like fellow says he must be admitted to speak with you in private; he will not be kept out——

[*Pulls the door to, and enters.*

Cha. Man. And why should he?

Fre. I don't know; I cannot say I like his looks; I never saw a more suspicious person.

Cha. Man. Well, let him in, however.

[FRED. *opens the door.*

Enter JACK NIGHTSHADE.

Fre. He has the Tyburn marks about him.

[*Aside.*

Cha. Man. Brother!

Fre. Gad so, I'm wrong! I'll e'en make off.
[*Exit* FRE.

J. Night. Hush, hush! don't blow me! snug's the word; close, close, and under the wind.

Cha. Man. I protest I scarce knew you, Jack; what brings you to town?

J. Night. Six hours, and as bright a gelding as ever was lapt in leather.

Cha. Man. But what's your business? did your father send you up?

J. Night. He send me up! where have you lived to ask the question? No; he has brought himself hither, and I stole a march after him: a freak; a frolick, that's all. Didlikins! what a flaming house you live in! Oh, I give you joy, brother! Uncle Manlove has clapt a new name upon you. Old Surly knows nothing of this trip. I had much ado to get to the speech of you: you have a mortal parcel of fine fellows below in your hall. But you are not angry at my coming? you'll not peach, I hope?

Cha. Man. Honour forbid! Thy lot, my dear boy, has been severe enough.

J. Night. Severe! there's been no scarcity of that, I warrant you: there's not a crab-stock in the neighbourhood, but what my shoulders have had a taste of its fruit. Oh, you've a rare lot, Charles! a happy rogue! Look at me—Who would think you and I were whelps of the same breed? You are as my lady's lap-dog; I am rough as a water-spaniel; be-daggled and be-mired, as if I had come out of the fens with wild fowl: why, I have brought off as much soil upon my boots only, as would set up a Norfolk farmer.

Cha. Man. Well, well, Jack; we'll soon get thee into better trim.

J. Night. Then you must thrust me into a case of your own, for I've no more coats than skins: father, to be sure, keeps it well dusted; but, methinks, I should be strangely glad to see myself a gentleman for one hour or two.

Cha. Man. What can I do for you? your father, you say, is in town; a discovery would be fatal: do you know where he is lodged?

J. Night. Not I, truly; but my amusements lead to places, where I should be sure not to meet him: only one night, dear Charles, and I'll be back again in the country; think what a life mine is; compare it with your own, and I am sure you won't grudge me one day's frolic and away!

Cha. Man. I grudge you! no—I wish you could enjoy a brother's share in all my happiness, in all my fortune: submit, however, to the necessity of your affairs with a good grace; humour the peculiarities of your father, and command me upon all worthy occasions.

J. Night. Why that's hearty, that's friendly now. Give me hold of your hand. Boddikins! I was afraid you would have turned your back on me, now you have jumped into such a fortune; but I see you are as honest a lad as ever: By the way, father was in a damned hue at your changing your name—fierce as a panther; no man dare enter his den. But you say you'll rig me out for a day; give me a good launch, Charles, and I warrant I'll find a harbour.

Cha. Man. There's my purse, Jack; it contains enough to spend, and some to throw away: Frederick commands the wardrobe; if you find any thing to your mind, take it; if not, convene my tailor; he'll equip you in an instant. Follow your propensities, but take a little discretion to your aid; your nature has not had much pruning; and, till experience shall have cleared the path of life, pleasure may be apt to spread some snares in your way, that may cost you sorrow to escape from.

J. Night. Humph! in all twenty and five guineas! What was you saying last, brother?

Cha. Man. Only throwing away a little good advice upon you, Jack; that's all.

J. Night. I thank you; I have a pretty considerable stock of that upon my hands already; one good thing at a time. [*Looking at the money.*] How much of this money must you take back again?

Cha. Man. 'Tis all at your service, and more, if your occasions require it.

J. Night. Are you serious! Is it possible!—'Sbud, I don't know, I can't tell what I should do in your case, but I am afraid I could never have the heart to give you as much. Drown it! what pity 'tis that old Crusty had not some of your spirit! May I spend it all, and won't you require an account of it?

Cha. Man. Not unless you choose to give it me.

J. Night. Give me a kiss, give me a kiss, my dear, dear brother! enjoy your good fortune and welcome; I perceive a man has not half so much envy in his heart, when his pocket's full of money. Come, I'll go change my dress.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—STAPLETON'S *house.* MRS STAPLETON *and* LETITIA *at breakfast.*

Enter MR STAPLETON.

Mr Stap. A MERCHANT'S wife, and not breakfasted before this! fye upon you, Dolly! these are new fashions, these are courtly customs; let us stick to the city, and the old city hours. And this idle jade, Letitia, loves her pillow better than she does her prayers. Come, come, away with your crockery. Old Andrew Nightshade will be with you before you are aware.

Mrs Stap. There is another room ready for his reception. I am afraid my dear husband will find this old man's peevishness more than even his good nature can put up with.

Mr Stap. Why have not you kept my patience then in better exercise? but never fear. Letitia, you are to have a visit from Counsellor Manlove this morning: Have you perused the papers he sent you?

Let. I have.

Mr Stap. And what do they tell you?

Let. What I can truly testify, that Mr Stapleton has been the best of guardians.

Mr Stap. I say the best! half the trading world would call me a very bad one; when you come to sum up the accounts of your education, hussy, I expect you will file a bill against me for waste and embezzlement.

Let. For misapplication, perhaps; the only objectionable part of your accounts will be the subject of them.

Mr Stap. For shame, Letitia Fairfax! you well know you have been the pride and pleasure of our lives.

Mrs Stap. When she was my ward, she dared not make so free with herself; now she is her own mistress, she must do as she will: My authority is expired.

Let. Rather revived in so much fuller force, by how much more I'm bound to you by love than law.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Mr Nightshade is below, sir: Counsellor Manlove to wait upon Miss Fairfax.

Let. Where have you shown him?

Ser. He is in the drawing-room.

Let. I'll wait on him directly.

[*Exit Servant.*

Mr Stap. A word before we part. Mr Manlove will inform you of certain restrictions you are under, by your good father's will, in the article of marriage: If the subject should lead him, as possibly it may, to name his nephew Charles to you, in truth, my dear Letitia, I do not know, in all this town, a young man of whom report speaks so advantageously.

Let. Mr Manlove's business with me is of a very different sort.

Mr Stap. Perhaps not; therefore remember what I say.

Let. I never can forget the respect that is due to your opinion. [*Exit.*

Mrs Stap. Have you any reason to think Mr Manlove means to propose for his nephew?

Mr Stap. I'll tell you more of that hereafter; we must now welcome old Nightshade with as good a grace as we can. He is an honest man, though a humourous one, and was, for many years, a very steady correspondent of mine at Rotterdam. We merchants must not overlook our friends, whatever our betters may think fit to do. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—CHARLES MANLOVE'S *house.*

Enter JACK NIGHTSHADE, *finely apparelled, followed by* DIBBLE.

J. Night. Come along, Dibble, come along.—Dear, lovely, and delicious lady Fortune, who has put clothes upon my back, and cash into my pocket! thou knowest I never slandered thee, never called thee jilt or gipsey, when I've seen thee perched upon thy wheel, and feeding thy fools by handfuls; give me now the rest of thy blessing, love, pleasure, and good fellowship! May the lads I am to meet be frolicksome, and lasses free! and never let my poor little defenceless wherry come athwart that old Dutch dogger, my father, till 'tis safe in harbour, and all hands ashore.

Dib. Well said, squire! where, in the name of wonder, did you find this rhapsody?

J. Night. Why, did you never see the picture of Fortune, mounted on a wheel, with a bandage over her eyes, tossing money to the mob, like a parliament man? Gregory has the print in his pantry———you may buy the whole moral for a penny.

Dib. I protest, Jack, you are not only grown a beau in your brother's fine clothes, but a wit into the bargain.

J. Night. Pshaw! I am merry enough when my belly's full, and father asleep; but what signifies a poor fellow's being witty, when there is nobody to laugh at his jokes? 'Tis the money in my pocket, Dibble, not the clothes on my back, that makes me a wit; and when the wine mounts into my noddle, I shall be wittier still.

Dib. Time will shew. But, hark'e, 'squire Jack, before you pass yourself off for a man of fashion, should not you practise the carriage and conceits of one?

J. Night. I shall be glad to learn.

Dib. Be ruled by me; I will give you a few lessons shall set you up for a fine gentleman in a

minute. Look at me—that's well: Stare me full in the face—ay, that will do—you have impudence enough for the character—that's a main point gained: Now walk across the room.

J. Night. Walk! why that's easy enough, I hope.

Dib. Hold—not so fast; there you are out: walk, trippingly, thus, d'ye see, with a lazy loitering air, not a league at a stride, with your head playing like the pole of a coach, so. [*Mimicking.*] When you enter a room, take no notice of any body in it; make your way strait to the chimney; turn your back to the fire; pull away the flaps of your clothes, and display your person to the ladies, who are sitting round. When their teeth begin to chatter with the cold, throw yourself carelessly into a chair, tuck your hands into your muff, and never open your lips for the rest of the afternoon; 'twill gain respect in every house you enter.

J. Night. Well, well, Dibble; this is all easy enough: I shall be most at a loss for the lingo—what would your worship have me say when I'm amongst my betters?

Dib. Nothing, I tell you.

J. Night. Nothing! how the deuce, then, shall I shew my wit?

Dib. By holding your tongue: never speak yourself, nor smile at any thing spoken by another; reserve your wit for your creditors, they'll keep it in exercise: not but what there are other occasions for a man of fashion to shew his parts; as, for instance, with a woman of modesty you may be witty at the expence of her blushes; or, with a parson at the expence of his profession: These are cheap methods—be at no pains in the account; decency and religion will pay all costs, and you'll be clear of the courts.

J. Night. You need not tell me that; why, I played a thousand tricks upon our vicar, and, as for modest women, as you call them, I don't know much of them; but I know my tongue runs fast enough when I am amongst the maids; I can set the whole kitchen in a roar—But come, let us sally: Now do you mind. Dibble, don't you be calling squire, and squire Jack, and Jack Nightshade; but let it be sir, and your honour, and all that.

Dib. Trust to me for setting you off in those fine clothes—let me see——what shall we say you are?

J. Night. Say I'm a young West Indian just come from my canes.

Dib. Ay, or a young nobleman just succeeded to your honours; 'twill account for your want of education.

J. Night. No, hang it, a better thought strikes me; call me Mr Manlove.

Dib. Mr Manlove! Why do you take your brother's name?

J. Night. For the same reason that I take his clothes—because it fits me: If I leave him the estate that came with it, why mayn't I change names as well as he?

Dib. Because he changed by act of parliament, and you by act of your own.

J. Night. Act of parliament! Egad, they'll change people's sexes, by-and-by; why, they'll turn a wife into a maid by act of parliament, as readily as a common into an inclosure.

Dib. Yes; but it generally remains common for the life of the proprietor.

J. Night. Nan! How must I carry my hat, Dibble? Thus; under my arm? This damned barber has thrust his black skewers through my ears. Look out, and tell me if the man has called a coach.

Dib. 'Tis waiting, sir.

J. Night. A plague upon this spit! 'Tis as heavy as a fowling-pouch, and jingles like a pair of dog-couples; an oak-stick is worth two of it. Have you cautioned the servants about my name?

Dib. 'Tis done, your honour.

J. Night. 'Tis done, your honour; your honour is obeyed: come along, Dibble; let your honour go before, and law follow after.

Dib. Ay; but when law is at your heels, have a care it does not overtake you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*An apartment.*

Enter MANLOVE *and* CHARLES.

Man. Her mother was a Sedley, of a respectable family, and an accomplished lady; her father was a trader of fair character and principal, in the house now conducted with such credit by her guardian, Stapleton; her fortune is considerable. I mention that to you, as I think any great disproportion on either side, in that particular, is to be avoided.

Cha. Man. Equal alliances, to be sure, are best.

Man. And this would be of all most equal, for I verily think you have not a virtue, of which Miss Fairfax does not possess the counterpart: By the way, Charles, you will not like her the worse for being no inconsiderable proficient in your favourite art, painting.

Cha. Man. I have heard her performance very highly commended: your report makes me ambitious of being known to her; and so, my dear sir, I promise you, in the words of your favourite poet,

'I'll look to like, if looking liking move.

I'll take my heart to counsel, for I know you ask no sacrifice.

Man. No, Charles; 'twas to make you free, not to rob you of your freedom, that I gave you a fortune. If I throw your inclination into fetters, 'twill be poor satisfaction that I gilt them over afterwards.

Cha. Man. In that assurance, I will proceed

in this affair after my own humour; for as I wish to have an opportunity of seeing this fair paintress in her natural colours, I must devise some method of conversing with her at my ease.

Man. At your ease? What prevents you?

Cha. Man. The declaration you made to her this morning. I dread the artificial graces which young women are too apt to put on, when they act under observation; so quiet, so chastised, so infinitely obliging: we think them meek as lambs; marry them, and they change to mountain cats. Such women remind me of decayed ships newly painted; the outside is inviting; embark, and they conduct you to the grave.

Man. Well, Charles, if you embark your hopes upon this venture, I think I may insure you happiness, though the voyage is for life.

Cha. Man. Where can I find a better policy? However, if I could meet her without her knowing me—in the way of her art, now—can you tell me, is she visited by our best masters?

Man. By all foreigners, as well as natives; there is no fame without her approbation; not a grace is stampt without her fiat.

Cha. Man. Under favour, are not these extraordinary accomplishments to acquire in the family of a trader?

Man. Not at all; beware how you apply French ideas to English merchants: Where nature bestows genius, education will give accomplishments; but where the disposition is wanting, the blood of a duchess cannot make a gentlewoman.

Cha. Man. Was she ever out of England?

Man. I have been told she was near two years in Italy with a family of distinction.

Cha. Man. It is enough; I have my cue: I think I shall fall upon a method of introducing myself to her acquaintance without a discovery. I can pass examination in the art of painting very tolerably.

Man. Take your own course; I have no right to advise; I am poor authority in affairs of love. Good afternoon to you! Nay, Charles, no ceremony; I thought we had agreed upon that. Your servant. [*Exit* MAN.

Cha. Man. Your most obedient——Here, who waits?

Enter FREDERICK.

Frederick, look out my travelling frock——you know which I mean?

Fred. The suit you had made at Lyons?

Cha. Man. No; 'twas at Milan: the green camblet: bring it to me in the dressing-room.—Make haste. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*An apartment.*

Enter MR ANDREW NIGHTSHADE, *followed by* FRAMPTON.

A. Night. Come along, Mr What's-your-name: Enter without more ceremony, I beseech you—An old formal blockhead!

Framp. I attend you, sir, by order of Mr Manlove, touching a case wherein you have consulted him.

A. Night. That's true, that's true; it is the pigeon-house case—I gave it him this morning. Is it usual for you lawyers to be so nimble with your answers?

Framp. It is not unusual with Mr Manlove.

A. Night. Well, and what thinks he of the case?

Framp. The case is a clear case.

A. Night. I am glad to hear it heartily.

Framp. In other words, it is a case clear to be apprehended: it hath reference to a pigeon-house, built and erected in a certain field, commonly known by the name of the Vicar's Homeshade. '*Quære*: Standeth not the said pigeon-'house within the manorial rights of Calves Town, 'and in that case may not you, Andrew Night-'shade, esq. lord of said manor, remove, or cause 'to be removed, said vicar's pigeon-house?'

A. Night. Pull down, erase, destroy, and level with the ground! these are my words. Now, give me the opinion.

Framp. He has given no opinion.

A. Night. No opinion! What the plague, is this your errand? Am I to be made a fool of?

Framp. To his clients, Mr Manlove gives opinions; to his friends, advice. He wishes you to let the pigeon-house stand where it does.

A. Night. A fig for what he wishes.

Framp. However, if you're so determined, he does not deny but you may pull it down.

A. Night. Why, that's enough. Then down it goes: I'll sow the land with salt.

Framp. Nevertheless, he wills me to tell you, that this must be done *tuo periculo*, as the saying is; for, if your conscience does not prevent you from pulling it down, the law will make you build it up again.

A. Night. The law has made a fool of you, methinks. Why, what the deuce, do you blow hot and cold in the same breath? Is this the way you treat your clients! Am I to be fobbed off thus by an old methodical piece of clock-work, by a stiff starcht limb of the law, a cutter of goose quills, and a scraper of parchments? No: evacuate my chamber. Tell your principal, I'll none of his advice: I value his opinion not a rush: Shall I be taught and tutored at these years? I'm sure I'm an older man, and, I believe, a wiser than himself—so tell him, master Frampton.

Framp. Have you no other commands for me than these?

A. Night. Pooh!

Framp. I am your obedient—Good evening to your honour. [*Exit* FRAMP.

A. Night. Now, why the devil won't that fel-

low be in a passion? He'll no more be put out of temper, than a German postillion will out of his pace—So, Gregory! What news? Have you found out the attorney?

Enter GREGORY.

Greg. Your honour shall hear the whole proceeding: At Thaves Inn I first got sight of him, threw off, and took the drag as far as Shoe-lane; there he hung cover. I had a warm burst to the fleet; hunted him through Turn-again-lane, to the Old Bailey: got an entapis, and run into him in Labour-in-vain-Court, Old Fish-street-Hill—

A. Night. Well; and what says he to the prosecution?

Greg. For some time he said nothing: for, when I first arrived, he was on a visit to a friend under sentence of death in Newgate: however, after a while he came home, and then———

A. Night. What said he then? To the point, dunce.

Greg. Why, he said, an please your honour, he would have nothing to do with the business: There's no credit to be got by such prosecutions; if it had been on a criminal indictment, indeed—but he won't be concerned in any vexatious suit about the game; humanity won't suffer him.

A. Night. Humanity indeed! Was ever the like heard? But, sirrah, this is all a lie of your own inventing, and your bones shall answer for it. [*Threatening to cane him.*

Enter STAPLETON.

Stap. Keep the peace, in the king's name! What's the matter now, friend Andrew?

A. Night. Why, this sot would fain have me believe that a Newgate solicitor will refuse a suit upon motives of humanity: a likely tale indeed! He comes home from the society of a condemned malefactor, and scruples levying the penalty against a poaching parson. What would the noblemen and gentlemen, associated for the preservation of our game, say to that?

Stap. Who cares what they would say? What have men of business to do with such disputes?

A. Night. Men of business! I have no business: I left off trade, thank Heaven, in time: You'll stay till it has left you.

Stap. Why so? Our warehouses are as full, our commissions as many, our credit as good as ever: what do you see about us makes you prophecy so ill?

A. Night. I tell you, sir, your trade is ebbing fast away in every quarter of the globe. Look out and satisfy yourself; but I have done, 'tis no concern of mine—What are your treaties with the Portugueze? Waste paper; linings for old trunks to carry home refuse goods, that they return upon your hands. Another man would flatter you; but I'm your friend; I let you know these things in time.

Stap. A most considerate precaution, truly!

A. Night. I have now no leisure for conversations of this nature; but I would ask a thinking man, what must be the fate of our Turkey trade? Undone. You've burnt their ships, it seems; now you may burn your own; you'll have no further call for them, unless you send them to your colonies, to air your goods and exercise your sailors; but I've something else to think of. Your servant, Mr Stapleton—remember I've told you now, I've let you know your danger.

Stap. And in the tenderest manner; you are the kindest friend! If we are ruined, you'll have nothing to regret. Your servant; we shall meet again at supper.

A. Night. I just stept back to tell you that your weavers are all rising: I fell in with a large party of them in the streets: your people migrating by thousands: What! Men must not starve. I hint this to you gently, and in pure good will; I have no interest to serve—and so your servant for an hour or two—I'll tell you more when I return. Oh, if I was a man to turn the gloomy side of things upon you, I could draw a melancholy picture, truly!

[*Exit* A. NIGHT.

Stap. The man who tells me a distasteful lie, in some sort may be said to recommend the truth; but he who, like old Nightshade, makes the truth offensive, recommends a lie. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*An apartment.*

Enter LETITIA *and* LUCY.

Let. Lucy, come hither; you have a brother, I think, who is one of counsellor Manlove's clerks?

Lucy. I have, madam; and, though I say it, as promising, genteel, well-spoken a young man as you would wish to set your eyes on; he's my only brother, madam.

Let. Let that be an excuse for your forwardness. I am not inquiring into his character.

Lucy. If you did, madam, I assure you it will stand the strictest inquiry; my papa gave us both an education———

Let. Your papa! Let it be father in your mouth, if I might advise you.

Lucy. Humph! There's a person wants to speak with you.

Let. What person?

Lucy. A person from abroad—a painting man, I believe; he says he has a recommendation to you—there are many such call here.

Let. If he has any letter of recommendation, desire he will be pleased to send it in.—[*Exit* LUCY.]—I cannot reconcile myself to this methodical course of proceeding; in the name of all that's happy, let our inclinations get the start of our proposals. If I could meet this Mr Manlove naturally, and without form; if we were then to single out each other by the guidance of no other monitor than the heart, and if a thou-

sand ifs besides were all to prove realities, a happy alliance might succeed; but to be turned into a room to undergo the profest survey of a man, who comes upon a visit of liking, is insupportably humiliating. It may well be said of some fathers, that they drive a Smithfield bargain for their daughters, when, with butcher-like insensibility they shew them out for sale like cattle in a market.

LUCY *returns.*

Lucy. The gentleman presents his respects to you, and desires you to peruse this letter; I think he is altogether as personable a young man as I could wish to see. [*Gives the letter.*

Let. Sure you forget yourself! Let me see—from Counsellor Manlove! What is this?

'Madam,

'The bearer of this letter is a young man in 'whose prosperity I am warmly interested. He 'is lately returned from Italy, where he has 'made some proficiency in the art of which you 'are a mistress; and as I flatter myself you will 'find him not unworthy, I beg leave to recom-'mend him to your protection and esteem.—'When my nephew has the honour of being 'known to you, he can give you fuller satisfac-'tion in this young man's particular than I can; 'in the mean time I venture to add, that Mr 'Manlove will consider every favour you bestow 'in this instance, as conferred upon himself. I 'have the honour to be, madam,

'Your most obedient,

'And most humble servant,

'CHARLES MANLOVE.'

Where is the gentleman? Introduce him directly. [*Exit* LUCY.

Re-enter LUCY *with* CHARLES.

Let. Your humble servant, sir: you are the gentleman referred to in this letter?——

Cha. Man. I am the person, madam. What a lovely young woman! [*Aside.*

Let. You are lately from Italy: where did you principally pursue your studies?

Cha. Man. At Rome: I visited Florence, Bologna, Venice, and other places; but I regard Rome as the grand repository of the antique, and for that reason I made my principal residence there.

Let. To what branch of the art did you chiefly direct your attention?

Cha. Man. To the study of beauty, madam; and that in its simplest forms: a Laocoon, a Hercules, or a Caracalla may astonish; but it is a Faustina, a Venus, an Apollo that delights, that ravishes—But I am speaking to you on a subject of which you are both by art a mistress, and an example by nature.

Let. Upon my word!—[*Aside.*]—Come, sir: we are here in the way of the family: allow me to shew you into another apartment.—[*She stops.*]—Was young Mr Manlove at Rome when you was?

Cha. Man. He was.

Let. I understand he has a very great regard for you.

Cha. Man. I hope I shall not forfeit his good opinion.

Let. It does you much honour: all the world speaks highly of Mr Manlove. I'll shew you the way. [*Exit.*

Cha. Man. Charming girl! I am in love with her at first sight. [*Exit.*

Lucy. So, so! a very promising beginning. As sure as can be, there's something in the wind about this Manlove: I suspect the letter to be a fetch; and, as for this painter, I am mistaken if he is not some how or other in the secret—'tis a mighty pretty fellow.—Ah, brother Dibble, I am glad to see you. How goes the world with you?

Enter DIBBLE.

Dib. Busily, my girl, busily. I have borrowed a moment's time from company to run to you: I have luckily found you alone: utter not a word; be all attention: Jack Nightshade, the country boy I made acquaintance with last year, is now in town; but not a word of that—he is at a tavern hard by, with some lads of mettle, who push about the glass. What say you, hussy, to a bold stroke for a husband?

Lucy. For a husband! You are joking.

Dib. Serious, upon my honour! Oh, when the blood begins to boil, and the brain begins to turn, every thing may be attempted. He has signified to me that he is in want of a wife; you, I suppose, have no objection to a husband? so far you are both of a mind. He says the lady must be rich; the condition is a reasonable one, and you must provide a fortune for the purpose. What say you to your mistress's? He visits you in the name of Mr Manlove; why may not you receive him in that of Miss Fairfax?

Lucy. Impossible! Don't you know his father lodges in this very house?

Dib. Scare boys with bug-bears: I have provided against danger; and with a promise of a good round sum, upon the wedding night, have made old Gregory my own: He will aid our project, and keep watch upon old Surly-boots, I warrant you.

Lucy. But what is gained, if we should compass our ends? the young man is a minor, and his father would disinherit him.

Dib. Fear nothing—he's of age—Gregory confirms it: And as for his father's disinheriting him, I'll tell you a secret; it is not in his power: When the counsellor settled an estate on Charles, old Nightshade cut him off with a shilling, and gave his fortune to Jack: I drew

the deed myself: it is as tight as the law can tye it.

Lucy. I don't know what to say; a settlement to be sure is something; Mrs Nightshade and an equipage, is better than plain Lucy and a pair of pattens: But then my heart misgives me—and the boy, they say, is such a cub———

Dib. Fine airs in truth! Nay, if you are so exceptious, please yourself; 'tis no affair of mine; I've done with it.

Lucy. Hold, hold; you are so touchy if one speaks---My madam must be monstrous angry, but no matter. Yesterday was married John Nightshade, esq. to Miss———. O Gemini! 'twill make a flaming dash!'

Dib. Ay, ay, leave me to draw the marriage deeds; I'll jointure you, I warrant. Come, decide; time's precious, and the moment serves; Old Nightshade's out; the ladies too, I understand are on the wing—When shall we come?

Lucy. When? I don't know—I vow I'm half afraid—Is there no law against me, if I'm caught, and the scheme fails?

Dib. Pshaw! you are so irresolute; even be a servant-maid all the days of your life; I care not.

Lucy. No, brother; I've as much ambition as my betters, so here's my hand—I'm with you—give me half an hour's time to con my lesson, and I'll be ready for you.

Dib. That's my brave girl! Courage! the day's our own. If every thing's in train, and the coast clear, let Gregory meet us at the corner of the street, exactly in half an hour's time. But, hark'e, Lucy, Jack is incog, and takes his brother Manlove's name, remember that: By the way, I suspect something's in the wind between your madam and Mr Charles.

Lucy. Why so?

Dib. Because I saw him turn into her room just now, in an undress; he passed me on the stairs, and whispered me in the ear, not to open my lips concerning his being here to a single soul, for my life; therefore make no mischief ---Farewell, I must be gone. [*Exit.*

Lucy. Your humble servant, virtuous Miss Letitia Fairfax; your painter then, as I suspected, turns out a lover in disguise; and you, it seems, have your intrigues as well as other folks. Who would be nice about character in these times, when all the world conspires to put virtue out of countenance, and keep vice in? [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.— *A Room in* STAPLETON'S *house.*

Enter MR ANDREW NIGHTSHADE *and* STAPLETON.

A. Night. AND so you'll positively ship those bales of Norwich crape for Holland?

Stap. I purpose so to do.

A. Night. You purpose so to do! and the kersies and callimancoes, and perpetuanos too, I warrant?

Stap. I do.

A. Night. The devil you do! I tell you what then, Master Stapleton, they will not have their name for nothing; you will find them perpetuanos on your hands: I'd send tea to America as soon. Why sure I understand the Dutch market; sure I think I do; you've found I understand them.

Stap. But times are altered, friend Andrew.

A. Night. With the devil to them! Times are altered truly, and trade is altered, and merchants are altered, and grown obstinate blockheads, deaf to good counsel, ignorant of their business; a frivolous, gossiping, pleasure-hunting crew: forsaking their counters for their country-houses, Change for Change Alley.——What sort of a season at Newfoundland? have you shipped your fish yet for the Mediterranean markets? But what is it all to me? I have wound up my bottom: 'Twas a noble hit, Master Stapleton, that speculation of mine in saltpetre.

Stap. I believe it turned to tolerable account.

A. Night. I believe it did; I may venture to assure you it did, to tolerable account, as you say, though you predicted otherwise; it made my pillow for me; yes, yes, thank Heaven, I'm easy: I've laid down my cares.

Stap. And taken up content. What a happy fellow are you, friend Andrew!

A. Night. But I tell you, you're mistaken, I am not a happy fellow; I would not be thought happy; the world's too wicked for an honest man to be happy or contented in it.

Stap. But you are out of the world; you are settled in a peaceful retreat, in rural tranquillity, cultivating your own acres, enjoying your own produce.

A. Night. Blood and fire, I tell you other people are enjoying my produce! my servants are embezzling my property, my neighbours are destroying my game, the vermin are laying waste my granaries, and the rot is making havock with my sheep; and how the vengeance, then, can I be happy?

Stap. By bearing every thing with a patient mind.

A. Night. Patient! I am patient to a fault.

Stap. By reflecting when your servants or neighbours molest you, what an exemplary young man you are blest with for a son.

A. Night. Yes, yes; the boy's as good as his neighbours.

Stap. I never heard so universal a good character.

A. Night. 'Tis a sober, frugal lad, that's the truth on't.

Stap. So accomplished a genius—so distinguished a taste for the fine arts!

A. Night. For the fine arts! that's rather too much: I know no art Jack has, but setting trimmers, worming puppies, and making fowling nets. [*Aside.*

Stap. Your son, friend Andrew, is not like the present frippery race of young men; he is a man of sound principle, and good morals; no libertine, no free-thinker, no gamester.

A. Night. Gamester indeed! I'd game him, with the devil to him!

Stap. He has more elegant resources: The woman must be happy who can engage his affections.

A. Night. I wish your ward, Miss Fairfax, was of your opinion.

Stap. Are you sincere?

A. Night. Why, to be sure I am. Don't I know she'll have a very considerable fortune?

Stap. A fig for her fortune!—here's my hand—so the young folks can like each other, and Mr Manlove is consenting————

A. Night. Who? who is consenting? Mr Manlove?

Stap. Ay, surely; I'm afraid we do not rightly understand each other: Which of your sons are you speaking of?

A. Night. Which of my sons am I speaking of? the only one I ever do speak of; the only one which I acknowledge—Jack. You couldn't think me such a fool to recommend that puppily, pig-tailed ape, with his essences and pulvilios—that monkey, whom my silly brother sent to see the world, with his grand tour, and his pictures, and his impertinences? No; I tell you once for all, I've done with him; he has dropt my name, and I my nature; let him that christened him anew, keep him—I have done with him!

Stap. You shock me to hear you say so!

A. Night. What! shan't I speak of my own son as I think fit?

Stap. Yes, if you speak as a father should.

A. Night. And who's the judge of that? Have you a son? Are you a father? No, you are a guardian: Heaven help the poor young woman that is your ward! Marry her to Charles Manlove! Marry her to her garters sooner, and tie her up upon the curtain rod! 'twere a better deed. And what know you of the fine arts? Are you a painter as well as your ward here? I see no tokens of it: the London 'prentice and the March to Finchly, seem to be the sum-total of your collection. His taste, it seems, has captivated you. His taste for what? for camblets, for caloys, for Manchester and Norwich commodities? There lies your learning; those are your universities.

Stap. Andrew Nightshade, Andrew Nightshade, recollect yourself! We'll converse when you are cool; I talk to no man in a passion.

A. Night. I in a passion! 'Tis the first time I was ever told so, and shall be the last, from you, at least.—Here, Gregory, where are you?—I'll be gone this instant; I'll have my things packed up; I'll rid your house, at least, of one passionate man. I in a passion! I, that never lost my temper—But your servant, sir: your servant, Mr Stapleton: Perhaps you'll say I'm in a passion now. Here, Gregory! why, Gregory! [*Exit.*

Stap. Ha, ha, ha! of a certain, Andrew, thou art a ridiculous old fellow! If I had an acquaintance with the poets, I would get them to exhibit thy humours on the stage; 'twould be a diverting scene, and no bad moral.

Enter MRS STAPLETON *and* LETITIA.

Mrs Stap. Here's a fine storm! he's calling for his servant to pack up his things; he vows he'll quit the house immediately.

Let. A happy resolution! What a snapdragon it is! No Yorkshire housewife, in her washing week, can be more peevish.

Mrs Stap. I wish he was out of the house; I cannot bear to have your peace annoyed.

Stap. My peace! You have had a visitor, Letitia?

Let. A brother artist, and a friend of Mr Manlove's.—I declare I've lost my heart to him.

Stap. Then, I deny that he's a friend of Mr Manlove's.

Let. Oh, sir, he is the prettiest man! so candid, so intelligent! full of his art, and glowing warm with all that taste for the antique, which true genius is sure to gain by travel!

Stap. Ay, ay; I understand you; he's been praising your performances.

Let. I own it; but, what flatters me above all, he commends your portrait exceedingly: I shall proceed in it with twice the spirit I began.

Mrs Stap. He has turned her head with flattery; the grace of Raphael, the design of Michael Angelo, Titian's warmth, and Corregio's beauty, centre all in her unrivalled compositions!

Stap. Hey-day! where learnt you all this gabble? here's a pack of names for a citizen's wife to get by heart!

Mrs Stap. Do you think I've cleaned her pallet, then, for nothing? The doctor's Merry-Andrew knows the names of his drugs, or he's not fit for his place. We are going this instant upon a visit of virtû to Mr Manlove's: This young painter speaks in raptures of his collection: He has some pictures which are said to be inimitable.

Let. Dear sir, I hope you've no objection. He

has talked to me so much of a Lucretia by Guido, that I am dying to visit her.

Stap. I should doubt, if Lucretia would do as much for you. I hardly think, that this visit is in rule.

Let. It is done every day; half the town has been there: I go there as a student—Besides, Mrs Stapleton goes with me.

Stap. Well, well; I am no critic in these matters: entertain yourselves, and you have my free leave. Much pleasure to you both—your servant. [*Exit.*

Let. Come, my dear madam, the light still serves us; let us lose no time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The painting-room.*

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Now, the deuce fetch this madcap brother of mine; what a twitter has he thrown me into! I can settle to nothing: Madam, and her sham painter have made a fine disorder in this room. I don't know any use these geniuses are of, but to put every thing out of its place. Ah! is it you?

Enter DIBBLE.

Dib. Hush, hush! compose yourself; you had like to have ruined all: Why didn't you send Gregory to the street's end, as you agreed?

Lucy. Lud, I'm in such a flutter!—I don't know, I'm frighted. Is he here?

Dib. Ready: Primed high with brisk Champaigne: The train is laid; you have the fire; touch it, and off it goes.

Lucy. Fire! I've no fire about me. Did the servant see you?

Dib. No; Gregory let us in, and has the young 'squire now in keeping. There never was so fortunate a moment. Hark! he's at the door.

Jack. [*From without.*] Hist! Lawyer—Pickle—Bully Jack!——shall I come in?

Dib. He must come in. Slip out a moment till I prepare him; and then—remember Lucy, he is Mr Manlove here, and yourself Letitia. Go your ways. [*Exit* LUCY.] Now, my lad of glory, I shall show you a phenomenon, a star of the first water.

Enter JACK NIGHTSHADE.

J. Night. Water! I scorn it: Give me wine: There's honesty in that, and wit, and love—I'm monstrously in love—But where's the lady?

Dib. Oh! she's at hand, and half your own already. I've been preaching to her——Miss, says I——

J. Night. Rot your says I! who cares for what you say. Show me the girl: I want no lawyer in this case; Champaigne's my counsellor. You are a blockhead, Dibble, and a flincher! I'm for all the game: fee'd on both sides, boy; a bottle in my right hand, and a bottle in my left; double charged at heart and head—one for courage, and t'other for invention.——Pooh! my brother's a fool to me: his coat was never in such company before. Where is the lady, I say? I must see the lady.

Dib. Well, well, be patient; you shall see the lady. [*Exit.*

J. Night. Ay, this puts every thing in motion. Now the world goes round: It has found its legs at last, and dances like Plough-Monday. Drown it, 'twas asleep before. What's all this lumber for? [*Stumbling over the easel.*] The devil! who are you? [*Speaking to the layman.*] what's your profession? An easy, slender, dangling figure, and as much of a gentleman as most you shall meet.—Toe piggins! now I smoke the jest: She paints. O damn it! she's an artist—That won't do; there's no standing that; I must overturn all this trumpery: I shall soon tumble you out of the room, my dear—your reign's a short one, take my word.—Ay, here she comes.

Enter DIBBLE *with* LUCY.

Dib. Mr Manlove, this is Miss Fairfax. Miss, this is Mr Manlove.

J. Night. Madam, behold the fondest of your slaves. My friend here, Lawyer Dibble, has informed you, that my name is Manlove, and he tells me you are called Miss Fairfax. Be it so; if he tells a lie, he is not the first of his profession who has so done. If you should think that I am rather elevated and in the air, I won't deny it; Champaigne, you know, is a searching liquor, and my skull is none of the deepest: but if you suppose, that I am so blind as to overlook your beauties, or my own perfections, you are not the person I take you for. Dibble, come hither; make the lady acquainted with some of my good qualities. Discuss.

Lucy. Oh, sir, what need? the good qualities of Mr Manlove are in every body's mouth.

J. Night. Deuce take me now, if that is any flattery to me!

Dib. I told you, madam, what a modest young gentleman he is.

J. Night. Oh, you're a precious devil! Be pleased to tell the lady, likewise, what a brave estate I have got; such things come naturally enough from a lawyer's mouth; tell her what it is, and where it lies: Drown me, if I know where to find an acre of it!

Lucy. Oh, never name estate, when Mr Manlove is in the case! Your person, air, address—

J. Night. Madam, you do me honour. Egad, I shall have no occasion for courtship! [*Aside.*

Lucy. Your genius, taste, accomplishments—I myself have some small turn for painting——

J. Night. Yes, and I should like you as well without it. [*Aside.*

Lucy. But you, I dare say, are a master hand; and poetry, no doubt, is full as much your own.

J. Night. Faith! there's not much to choose between them.

Lucy. But, then, your education—one may see that you have travelled.

Dib. Oh, yes; that's very visible.

J. Night. Well said, lawyer—She has a damnable clack!

Lucy. I should be delighted to hear an account of your travels: I dare say you have met many singular adventures.

J. Night. A thousand: but I have taken an oath never to speak of them.

Lucy. Oh, you must conquer such scruples! What advantages has your uncle's bounty given you, Mr Manlove, over that poor lad in the country!

J. Night. And yet I'd rather hear one kind word said of that poor lad in the country, than a whole volume of Mr Manlove's praises. I'm hipped whenever I hear the subject mentioned.

Dib. Make up to him, Lucy, or he's lost! Jack Nightshade, what are you about? One bold attack, and she's your own.

J. Night. It may be so; but you must know I have a kind of partiality for that same country lubber, Jack Nightshade; and, till I can find a lady, who will prefer him to his brother, I will remain as I am: so there's an end of the matter, d'ye see, and no harm done.———Madam, your servant. [*Exit.*

Lucy. So finishes the chapter of husbands—I thank you for your scheme.

Dib. Thank yourself for your folly. What possest you with the thought of touching upon the lad in the country? how could you be so flippant?

Lucy. What does it signify? He is too cunning to be caught with chaff; e'en drop your project.

Dib. No, let despair go hang. I am not easily repulsed: Take courage, and commit yourself to me; I have resources yet you know not of. Come, Lucy, you shall see my genius rises on defeat. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—MANLOVE'S *house.*

Enter CHARLES MANLOVE.

Cha. Man. It is time to throw off the mask. I have seen and heard enough: she, who can captivate both eyes and ears at once, is irresistible! Miss Fairfax is so composed, that she has beauty enough to blind our understandings, if she wanted wit; and wit enough to blind our eyes, if she wanted beauty. I will go to her in this habit once again, and solicit an interview for Mr Manlove: If she readily grants it, I will avail myself of her compliance, and instantly disclose myself. If not—But what in the name of wonder have we got here! Ha, ha, ha! my Paris suit, by all that's brilliant! the very *chef d'œuvre* of the superlative Mons. Le Duc: That coat was made for grand occasions; it escorted me to the nuptials of the great count d'Artois; it has now the honour to attend the revels of the illustrious Jack Nightshade!

Enter JACK NIGHTSHADE.

J. Night. Ay, and had I been willing, it might have assisted at another wedding: 'Egad, it might have carried off a fine girl, and one of the first fortunes in the city.

Cha. Man. I should have thought your scenes had rather laid amongst the girls of freedom than of fortune!

J. Night. This lady, sir, had both. Swear to me you'll be secret, and I'll tell where I've been.

Cha. Man. Nay, Jack, you'll trust me, sure, without an oath? You know I am no tell-tale. Where have you been?

J. Night. You'll scarce believe it—where on all this earth but to the very house where old Surly-boots sets up his rest!

Cha. Man. To Mr Stapleton's?

J. Night. To the enemy's head-quarters. A high stroke!

Cha. Man. And what carried you thither?

J. Night. A girl: The wench I told you of.

Cha. Man. But what sort of a wench? I don't understand how any girl could carry you to Mr Stapleton's.

J. Night. No! she'd have carried me any where; all the world over: she is ready to set out on her travels.

Cha. Man. And her name is——

J. Night. Fairfax.

Cha. Man. How!

J. Night. Letitia Fairfax.

Cha. Man. What is it you have been doing? I am much interested in this lady's good opinion, and if you have done or said any thing to offend her——

J. Night. Offend her! Zooks, if you had heard how mere a country whelp she made of me, you would own I had most reason to be offended of the two.

Cha. Man. Still I don't understand you; you tell your story confusedly; I can make out nothing from it!

J. Night. Tell it yourself, then, brother.

Cha. Man. But this precaution I must give you, Jack, not to go upon that ground again—keep your sallies within proper bounds, and direct them to proper objects. Miss Fairfax is a lady for whom I have the tenderest esteem; have a care therefore, young man, how you affront her, as you value my resentment.

J. Night. Whuh!

Enter FREDERICK.

Fred. Sir, Mr Manlove requests your company at his chambers immediately.

Cha. Man. I attend him—Brother, I am serious—Hitherto, I hope no mischief has been

done; but I expect that you observe what I have told you, and be more prudent for the future.

[*Exit* CHA. MAN.

J. Night. And be a prig like you?—Oh, you shall smart for this; I'll curry your fine hide. Now would I give both ears from off this head, if I could make the girl but fairly jilt this puppy, and revenge myself upon him!

Enter DIBBLE.

Dib. Squire!

J. Night. Ah, Dibble, I have made myself a precious blockhead!

Dib. What, in the penitentials! Is the champaigne cloudy?

J. Night. Vexation sobers me like a wet napkin. Oh, if I could see the girl again!

Dib. Do you wish it?

J. Night. Wish it! I'd crawl to Scotland on my knees; nay, more, I'd live there all my days, so I could bilk this elder brother with Miss Fairfax.

Dib. Say you so, 'squire? This betters my best hopes. Follow me once more to Mr Stapleton's: take courage, and my life upon't the lady is your own.

J. Night. Have with you then; I'm ready; come along.

Dib. Hold! not so fast—the old lion may be in his den. Give me one quarter of an hour's law, and then, if we miscarry, crop these ears, and nail them up like vermin to your walls.

J. Night. Agreed! I take you at your word—[*Exit* DIB] Now, my fine brother, if I catch you on the hip I'll give your pride a fall! I'll shew you, that a clown may have a courtier's cunning. Heyday! who comes here?

Enter MRS STAPLETON, *and* LETITIA, *ushered in by* FREDERICK.

Fred. I beg pardon, sir; I thought you was gone out: these ladies are desirous of seeing the pictures, and I was conducting them to the room.

J. Night. I will take that honour on myself. Go before, and open the windows. [*Exit* FRED.] You are fond of paintings, ladies; I am glad it is in my power to entertain you.

Mrs Stap. You are the owner, sir, of this admirable collection. Your name is Manlove.

J. Night. At the service of the ladies always. I'll pass a few of lawyer Dibble's airs upon them—I'm in a rare cue. [*Aside.*

Let. What do you mean by talking up this young man! He has a miserable address: I see very little of the man of fashion about him.

Mrs Stap. I cannot say much for his person, to be sure.

J. Night. She has fix'd her eyes upon me; she is taken with my person and address.—Don't you find it rather cold, ladies?—I wish there was a fire in the room, that I might give her a taste of my breeding. [*Aside.*

Let. The public is much bound to you for giving them access to your collection.

J. Night. If the public found no more amusement in them than I do, they might hang in the dark till doomsday.

Let. You jest, I believe: is it possible, after such pains in procuring them, you can have no enjoyment in the possession of them?

J. Night. Even so, madam; they resemble matrimony in that respect; the pursuit is the pleasure. But come, ladies, the room is ready, and I'll shew you the way. What the devil does that old duenna come for? [*Goes out.*

Let. Is this the accomplished Mr Manlove? He seems in a strange humour! are you sure he is perfectly sober? I declare I scarce like to follow him.

J. Night. [*Returns.*] Ladies, this is the way: indulge me with the honour of your hand!

[*Leads out* LET. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*An apartment, magnificently furnished with pictures.*

Enter JACK, *introducing* MRS STAPLETON *and* LETITIA.

J. Night. There, ladies! there they hang! a jolly crew of them! Old ladies in furs and furbelows up to their throats, and young ones without a rag to cover them: these painters are but scurvy tailors; they'll send a goddess into the world without a cloud to cover her: there are some pretty conceits go with their histories, but they will speak for themselves; I am but little in their secrets.

Let. What a blaze of beauty! There's the Titian Venus; Heavens! what a form! what brilliant hues! But look, dear madam, here is grace and dignity; Guido's Lucretia, the dagger in her breast, and in the act of heroic self-destruction: what resolution! what a spirit has the great artist thrown into those eyes!

J. Night. Yes; she had a devil of a spirit! she stabbed herself in a pique upon being crossed in love.

Mrs Stap. You presume on our ignorance; history, I believe, assigns more elevated motives for Lucretia's death.

J. Night. Very likely; there were great pains taken to smother the story; but 'tis as I tell you—I had it from a near relation of the family.

Let. Ridiculous! Do you observe that picture, madam? 'tis a melancholy story, very finely told by Poussin: it is a view of Marseilles at the time of the plague, with a capital figure of the good bishop in the midst of the groupe.

J. Night. Bishops, madam! that person which you look upon is a physician, and the people

round about him are his patients; they are in a desperate way, it must be confest. Do you see that angry figure in the corner? he is a gamester: he is picking lead out of a loaded dice to run into bullets, to fire through his own head: 'tis no bad moral.

Let. You are infinitely kind to favour us with these anecdotes: if you are thus gracious to all strangers, the world will edify abundantly. But we won't put you to the trouble of explanation—we are not entirely ignorant—though your collection may be the best we have seen, it is not absolutely the first.

J. Night. Belike, then, you are a painter, as well as the lady I visited just now?

Let. In the presence of such masters as are here assembled, I cannot call myself a painter; in my own chamber I sometimes persuade myself I am.

J. Night. Yes; I am told it is an art which ladies mostly practise in their own chambers—What say you to that picture over the door? 'tis a merry conceit.

Let. It is the colouring of the Venetian school: I should guess it to be Tintoret.

J. Night. Oh, you are quite out of the story.

Mrs Stap. She is speaking of the master: the story is plainly that of Actæon, and no bad moral; he was turned into a stag, by the goddess of chastity, for his impertinent curiosity.

J. Night. Excuse me, madam; you mistake the moral—That gentleman, with the antlers on his head, is a city husband, the principal lady in the show is his wife; she wears a crescent on her forehead, to signify she is a dealer in horns; her companions are a group of city madams: the painter drew them bathing, to shew the warmth of their constitutions.

Let. Upon my word, you have a great deal of wit, and you have a fine collection of paintings! but one capital piece is wanting.

J. Night. And what is that, pray?

Let. Modesty: it will be an excellent companion to your Lucretia.

J. Night. But who shall I get to sit for the likeness?

Let. You will find it admirably painted by the same master. Come, madam, it is time for us to be gone.

J. Night. You are not for the city end of the town, I conclude?

Mrs Stap. Our home is in the city.

J. Night. Permit me to conduct you thither: I have a coach in waiting, and am bound to New Broad-Street, if you know such a place.

Mrs Stap. Intimately; but we have a carriage of our own.

Let. Can there be any attractions in the city to engage Mr Manlove's regard?

J. Night. Oh, yes; an assignation, madam: I am loth to disappoint a fond girl.

Let. 'Tis charitably considered!

J. Night. Nay, I don't know but I should be inclined to take her for better for worse, if it was not for one circumstance in her disfavour.

Let. May I ask what that may be?

J. Night. She has a devilish itch for painting: I should expect to have all my gods and goddesses taken down to make room for her vulgar friends and relations.

Mrs Stap. Ay; that would be a sorrowful exchange to my knowledge.

Let. Yes; have a care of that same painting girl; my life upon it she will slip through your hands.

J. Night. Why, I have my eye upon that honest gentleman in the picture, with the stag's horns, I must own—Who shall I tell her gave me the caution?

Let. No matter; when you see Miss Fairfax, you'll remember me.

J. Night. Fairfax! the vengeance! how came you to guess her name?

Let. Oh, sir, there is but one painter in the street, and she, I believe, will remain there: your collection is safe; she will trouble you with none of her performances, none of her daubings, take my word. Your most obedient---Let us make haste home, and be ready to receive him: vain, senseless coxcomb! how I shall enjoy his confusion! [*Exit with* MRS STAP.

J. Night. A good lively wench, but the devil of a tongue! I'll run and hand her to her coach. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An apartment.*

Enter DIBBLE *and* LUCY.

Lucy. STILL I protest against your project: we shall reap nothing from it, but shame and disappointment; however, to convince you that my fears are not for myself, I am prepared, and shall go through with it as you desire.

Dib. My life upon it, he takes the bait this time.

Lucy. I doubt it, but no matter: sure it is time that he was come. Hark! who is that? look out.

Dib. 'Sdeath! Mrs Stapleton and Miss Letitia!

Lucy. What's to be done now?

Dib. We've nothing for it, but a desperate sally; slip the back-way down with me, and let us both go out and stop young Nightshade: we can take him to our lodgings, and prevent an interview that must be fatal.

Lucy. It is too late to deliberate: come on. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MRS STAPLETON *and* LETITIA.

Mrs Stap. Come, my dear Letitia, you think of this affair too seriously: you cannot much regret a man you never saw before.

Let. 'Tis true; and yet, with shame I own it to you, I am mortified severely. Was there ever such a disappointment?

Mrs Stap. Either he treated us with inexcusable contempt, or is profoundly ignorant. Did you remark the ridiculous observations he made on some of the pictures?

Let. Yes; but I set that down for mistaken wit: in short, his manners are of the vulgarest cast. Are these the fruits of public education? Is this the finished gentleman? the scholar? traveller? —His boorish brother in the country cannot outgo this: and the world to be so blinded! Oftentimes it speaks worse of a man than he deserves; it is seldom guilty of telling so many untruths in his favour.

Enter Servant.

Ser. A gentleman desires to speak with Miss Fairfax.

Let. 'Tis he!—Conduct him into the drawing-room; I'll wait on him immediately. [*Exit Ser.*

Mrs Stap. Well, Letitia, I need not recommend to you to treat him as he deserves.

Let. I must be more or less than woman, if I spared him. [*Exeunt severally.*

Enter JACK NIGHTSHADE, *introduced by a Servant.*

Ser. Please to walk in here, sir; Miss Fairfax will wait on you immediately. [*Exit.*

J. Night. Ay, ay; I dare say she will: Egad, there's no time to be lost—Drown it, where's Dibble? I expected he would meet me at the gate: If I should stumble on old Crusty—I don't like the looks of the land so well as I did: Here's such a solitude, and such a ceremony—Why the plague do they make me kick my heels here? What, the vengeance! is she come again?

Enter LETITIA.

Let. Your humble servant, Mr Manlove: You scarce expected, I believe, to meet your visitor again so soon?

J. Night. No, indeed: it is vastly beyond my hopes.

Let. You are punctual to your assignation, I perceive?

J. Night. Oh yes, madam: to be sure, madam —How the plague shall I get rid of her?

Let. You did well to consider the poor, fond girl, that is dying for you.

J. Night. She has the devil of an assurance— What are these London ladies made of?

Let. He is thoroughly confounded! I'll give him a chance, however.—Have you any commands for me, sir?

J. Night. Commands! Oh, none in life, I thank you; no commands. What, won't that serve? No; She will have her talk out, at least. I hope you liked the pictures? Sure, Miss Fairfax will come presently.

Let. I admire your collection greatly; my expectations, in that particular, were not disappointed.

J. Night. I understand your insinuation, madam; but ladies' expectations, I am told, are not always to be satisfied.

Let. In Mr Manlove's instance, perhaps, not easily.

J. Night. Really, madam, I should wish to do justice to a lady's good opinion: but your visit, I must say, was rather unseasonable, and that elderly lady was so vexatiously in the way——

Let. I am sorry for it, sir: I am afraid our visit was rather out of rule.

J. Night. That's honest now; and since you own it, I must fairly say, the present is none of the most welcome.

Let. I readily believe it—and therefore, sir, though it is not altogether in character for me to promote a conversation of such a sort as you hinted at when we met at your own house; yet, I must observe to you, if you have any such proposal in design, it will be for both our ease that you should come to the point directly.

J. Night. To the point, madam! Upon my soul, I don't know what to say to that—To be sure, I did come here with a full and fixed design of offering myself to Miss Fairfax upon the marrying lay, and that, you know, at best, is but a hanging kind of job; so that, if I appear rather dull of apprehension, I hope you will recollect that a man cannot be very merry when he's on his road to his execution.

Let. Oh, sir, be under no concern on that account; assure yourself, I have, to the full, as little disposition towards that state as you can have.

J. Night. Well said again! but it won't take.— You are in the right; you are for enjoying your freedom.

Let. Since we are both agreed in that respect, what occasion is there for more words? I believe we may break up the conference.

J. Night. As soon as ever you please; I am by no means for delaying you.

Let. I wait your motions, Mr Manlove; I'm here at home.

J. Night. You cannot be more so than I am.

Let. Indeed! this conduct, Mr Manlove, is so opposite to all that I expected from you, that I'm cast into astonishment. Upon what reasons, or from what caprice, you've chose to take it up, I know not; natural it cannot be to any man. However, sir, I'll take you at your word, and, for a moment, will suppose you more welcome in this

house than you really are, and leave you in possession of it. [*Exit* LET.

J. Night. Come, come, well off; I've bolted her at last. 'Fore George, I begin to be tired of my plumes: Every man's best in his own coat and his own character: Plain Jack, and the country, would have suited me better: There are so many demands upon a fine gentleman, that nobody but a fine gentleman can tell how to avoid them.

Enter GREGORY.

Gre. Ah! Master Jacky, keep close. Yonder's your old dad at the street door in a notable primmuniry.

J. Night. Death and the devil! how shall I break pasture without his seeing me?

Gre. Never fear it; he has a job upon his hands will tether him for one while. Egad, I hope they'll treat him with a ducking.

J. Night. What is the matter?

Gre. Nay, nothing out of course; he has cracked the newsman's noddle for winding his horn in his ear; he pretends to have delicate nerves, you know; and so the fellow raised a mob upon him, that has drove him into cover, and they are now baying the old buck at the door. Ay, yonder he is; you must keep close till he's off his stand.

J. Night. Have an eye upon the door—I hope they will scare him soundly; it may save your skull, and mine, many a hard pelt. But, Gregory, who is this fine madam I've been talking to? Lawyer Dibble, sure, has not put me on a wrong scent: They introduced her to me as Miss Fairfax; are there two Miss Fairfaxes, as well as two Mr Manlove's?—a false one, and a true one?

Gre. What shall I say now?—Oh, yes, there are two ladies of that name; but, this is only a cousin of the other; a kind of hanger-on in the family.

J. Night. A hanger-on, do you say?—Keep your eye upon the door——Why, she's better dressed, and a finer woman than her I'm in pursuit of.

Gre. Ay, ay; but your's has the fortune; Dibble's Miss Fairfax is the girl for your purpose.

J. Night. But where is Dibble and his Miss Fairfax? I have danced attendance here a pretty while; what am I to think of all this?

Gre. What are you to think of it? why, I'll tell you; this young lady, d'ye see—Now, don't you go about, Master Jacky, and say that I told you, but this young lady here, that you have been to, is—Hark, sure your father's coming.

J. Night. I hear his foot upon the stairs; my bones ach at the sound of it.

Gre. Quick, quick! down the back stairs; and away for your life! so, so; that's well! [*Exit* J. NIGHT.

Enter MR ANDREW NIGHTSHADE.

A. Night. Why, Gregory, rascal, hangdog! what's become of you? run quickly down, and drive those bawling fellows from the gate.

Gre. A herd of wolves as soon; they'll eat me up alive. O lack-a-day, sir! you know little of a London mob.

A. Night. Go down, I tell you, sirrah, and disperse them.

Gre. Why, sir, 'tis more than my lord mayor can do: There's a man knocked o' the head they say; and, till there's another or two to keep him company, they'll never be at rest—Leave them to fight it out.

A. Night. Leave them! why, blockhead, it is me they follow: Nothing else should have driven me into this house again.

Gre. O, Gemini, have you been knocked o' the head?

A. Night. Why no, you fool; 'tis I have done the mischief; but the most patient man alive could not do less.

Gre. Nay, sir, if you have been playing the same tune upon their noddles, as you do upon mine, these London skulls won't bear it; they are as brittle as a Shrewsbury cake.

Enter STAPLETON.

Stap. Hey-day, friend Andrew! what is all this noise and outcry?

A. Night. I think the devil's in the people! You shall hear—As I was coming down the street, in meditation on the parson's pigeon-house, a rascally scaramouch, in a short jerkin, with a cap and feather on his noddle, winds me a damned blast on his horn, point blank into my ear, flourishing his newspapers full in my face at the same time: Now, as there are no two things on earth I hate like newspapers and noises; so, I could not well avoid giving him a gentle remembrance, with my cane, upon his crown: The casket gave a cursed crack, and down tumbled the politician: Instantly the raggamuffians collected, and I took refuge here in your court-yard.

Stap. Nay, if you have silenced the Morning Post, you had better have dragged the speaker out of his coach, and beat his brains out with the mace. Do you consider how many enemies you make by stopping the circulation of abuse? 'tis as necessary to the city as the circulation of cash.

A. Night. Go down, I tell you, fellow, and make up the matter with a dram; 'tis as much as any newspaper head is worth in the kingdom; bid him not talk of damages; if my cane has split his skull, 'tis no more than his plaguy post-horn did by mine. He was the aggressor.

Stap. Hark'e, you'll find the matter settled,

but it will not be amiss to frighten him a little. You know how to manage it?

[*Aside to* GREGORY.

Gre. Most daintily, I warrant you.

[*Exit* GREG.

Enter MRS STAPLETON *and* LETITIA.

Let. O, Mr Nightshade, here's a piece of work! this comes of being in a passion.

Mrs Stap. A sober citizen, a pains-taking industrious soul ——

Let. A father of a family—eight helpless babes—I fear you have given him his last blow. Dear sir, assist us! [*Aside.*

A. Night. Last blow! what matters that, when he gave me the first!

Mrs Stap. Well, well, Heaven knows; but anger is a frightful thing; it turns a man into a fury. Defend me, I say, from a passionate man!

A. Night. And yet, madam, give me leave to tell you, you are enough to make one: Is it nothing to have our nerves lacerated, our whole fabrick shook to atoms, by these horrid noises! The law should provide against such nuisances.

Stap. The law regards breaking of heads as the greater nuisance of the two—But here comes Gregory——Well, what has become of the postman?

Enter GREGORY.

Gre. He has sounded his last horn! You may sleep in quiet for the future. I tendered him the dram your honour was so good to offer; but his teeth are closed, he cannot accept your favour.

Mrs Stap. O horrible, you've killed the man!

Stap. What say the standers by on the occasion?

Gre. They give him an extraordinary character; they say he delivered a hand-bill, and sounded a post horn, better than any man in all the bills of mortality.

Let. Thanks to Mr Nightshade, he is likely to make a figuré in the bills of mortality still—— did you see the wound?

Gre. A perilous gash! I would not have such a star in my forehead to be the richest alderman in the city of London.

A. Night. 'Tis a pity but he had been one, for, then, his horns might have warded off the blow.

Gre. If I was your honour, I would be looking out for the crowner; it will be well done to touch him pretty handsomely before he calls a quest upon the body.

Stap. Has the gentleman thought of any witnesses?

Gre. You must have a steady set to prevent accidents, unprejudiced, impartial men, that were not present at the affair; these people will never do. For my part, if you think of subpœning me, you are a lost man; if I was once to shew this head of mine in open court, you would be condemned on the face of it.

A. Night. Hold your tongue, rascal; I don't believe a word you say: I'll go down and be satisfied with my own eyes.

Stap. Hold, hold, friend Andrew; I'll not suffer it; they'll tear you piecemeal: stay where you are, and let me see if I can't quiet them; they know me, and will credit what I tell them. If it is as Gregory says, I'll send him to the hospital; we'll save him, if it's possible.

A. Night. Thank you, Master Stapleton; thank you heartily. That's friendly howsoever.

[*Exit* STAP.

Let. [*To* MRS STAP.] Dear madam, follow Mr Stappleton, and persuade him not to let him off; he must be made to feel.

Mrs Stap. I think he should, and will leave him in your hands. [*Exit.*

Let. Ah, Mr Nightshade, will you never be brought off from this unhappy temper? You see the dismal effects of it: you feel them; I perceive you do. Your compunction is severe; I pity you—your situation brings the tears into my eyes.

A. Night. It's more than it does into mine; I tell you it is all a collusion to extort money; and this rogue of mine falls in with the plot. Stapleton will tell another story.

Let. I am afraid not; prepare yourself for the worst, and consider what atonement you can make to a disconsolate widow.

A. Night. Spare your pity, young madam; you don't yet know how easy most widows are to be comforted.

Gre. To be sure, madam, his honour is in the right to bear up, as they say, but it will be a trepan at least. The china-riveter at the next door is a knowing man in fractures, and he says his skull will never ring well again so long as it is a skull. Oh, sir, what will poor, dear Master Jacky think of this? He's in the country, lord love him, and little dreams of this mishap; I fear 'twill break his heart.

A. Night. Hold your tongue, you blockhead! Well, Mr Stapleton, you've seen the man?

Re-enter STAPLETON.

Stap. I have seen the man, and pacified the mob.

A. Night. That's well; and it proves a false alarm?

Stap. I wish I could say so———but we must hope the best.

A. Night. How! what! sure he is not in danger? This fellow's report I did not regard; your's alarms me.

Stap. Compose yourself, however; the symptoms, indeed, are unpromising, but I have put him into good hands; he is conveyed to the London Hospital. Be a man; I am sorry to see you so uneasy.

Let. Dear sir, 'tis natural; the worst of men have moments of compunction; it is not to be supposed that Mr Nightshade, though fatally addicted to passion, is totally devoid of human feelings.

A. Night. I beg you'll be so kind as to leave me; I should wish to have a minute's recollection. Gregory, you may stay.

[*He retires to the back scene.*

Stap. Letitia, I begin to pity him.

Let. Have patience: let him chew the cud of reflection. Remorse, sometimes, like an advertising quack, will make great commotion in a man's constitution; but repentance is the regular physician, which by slow, but steady means, conducts the patient to his cure.

[*Exeunt* STAPLETON *and* LETITIA.

A. Night. Gregory!

Gre. Your honour—How sanctified he looks! as who should say, Gregory, give me a good word on my trial.

A. Night. I'm thinking, Gregory, of this accident.

Gre. Well, sir, and how do you like it?

A. Night. Why, I am in hopes it will blow over; I think they'll hardly prosecute, and if the worst should happen, they can make nothing of it, but chance-medley or manslaughter; nothing else, Gregory: so there's little to fear from the law. But as I am a man, who have always enforced the law against other people, d'ye observe me, and consequently made enemies amongst the wicked; I should think, honest Gregory, you might stand in my place, and I would be sure to bring you off, and reward you into the bargain.

Gre. Lord, sir, a trifle! I should be proud of being hanged in the service of so good a master; but I am afraid there were too many people present, and 'twould be gross presumption to suppose any body could mistake me for your honour.

A. Night. Why certainly that is a hard pill to swallow; but what is to be done?

Gre. Make over your estate to Master Jacky, and fly your country: what if I run to the French walk, and take you a passage in the Boulogne pacquet? I may be in time to secure the cabin before any other malefactor has taken a birth in it.

A. Night. Malefactor! prithee, let me hear no more of your advice; it is but wasting time; I must have better counsel; and though brother Manlove has not pleased me in the matter of the pigeon-house, yet he is a good man in the main, and understands his business; run to him, d'ye hear, and desire him to repair here directly, upon a pressing concern; I know he'll not refuse assistance when I really want him.

Gre. I'll go directly—This is lucky. [*Aside.*

A. Night. And d'ye mind, leave me to open the affair to him; say nothing of the accident.

Gre. No, to be sure; a likely matter, truly.

[*Exit.*

A. Night. I wish I had not smote him quite so hard; and yet I should have thought no mischief could have followed. I have struck that clodpate twice as hard, a hundred and a hundred times; 'tis that hath spoilt my hand: it is surprising what some heads will bear! I would I was with my poor boy in the country; what evil genius brought me up to this curst scene of mischief and mischance! Dear Fortune, rescue me from this one scrape, and let me scramble out of the next as I can. [*Exit.*

Enter LETITIA, *followed by* CHARLES MANLOVE.

Let. Now, sir, be pleased to favour me with your commands.

Cha. Man. I am to solicit you in the behalf of Mr Manlove, that he may be allowed the honour of making himself known to you.

Let. This is done already; I am no stranger to Mr Manlove, believe me.

Cha. Man. So, so: she has discovered me—[*Aside.*] Well, madam, if Mr Manlove is already known to you in his assumed character, may he not hope to improve that acquaintance in his real one?

Let. The character he has assumed, I must fairly own to you, gives me no favourable opinion of his real one: the shallow devices he made use of to impose on my understanding, when he thought himself secure from a discovery, betray a disingenuous mind; and, I must believe, that no man would descend from the character of a gentleman, who was not wanting in the requisites that go to the support of it.

Cha. Man. I've made myself a precious blockhead! This mummery of the painter has disgusted her. [*Aside.*

Let. As to his pretended taste for painting, I will not affect more skill than I possess; but I will venture to say, that either he is ignorant of the art, or presumes upon my being so.

Cha. Man. I am fairly trapped: I must be prating of what I did not understand. [*Aside.*]—I will not offer much in Mr Manlove's behalf, madam; but as to skill in painting, you will be pleased to consider him not as a professor, but a lover only of the art.

Let. A lover, sir! that is the last character I should wish to consider Mr Manlove in.

Cha. Man. I perfectly understand you, Miss Fairfax: you have said enough: Mr Manlove understands you: I believe I need not explain myself any farther.

Let. No, the case is perfectly clear; and, I flatter myself, you think I have been explicit on my part.

Cha. Man. There can be no complaint on that score. Nothing now remains for Mr Manlove, but to lay aside, as soon as he is able, every

thought, each hope that had Miss Fairfax for its object.

Let. 'Twill be much for my repose.

Cha. Man. Rely upon it, then, your repose shall never be disturbed by Mr Manlove; never —Adieu! [*Goes out.*

Let. Your servant—He's piqued, and it becomes him.

Cha. Man. [*Returns.*] If ever you see him here again, say I have deceived you——let me bear the blame: your most obedient.

Let. Good day——I'll depend upon you.

Cha. Man. Set your mind at rest; I'll die before I break my word: your servant.

[*Exit* CHA: *Man.*

Let. [*Alone.*] How would this man plead in his own cause! Ah, why would Fortune not concert with Nature, and either give the wealth of Manlove to his merits; or purchase out his merits to bestow on Manlove's wealth?

Enter LUCY, *hastily.*

Lucy. Where can this provoking cloak be laid? Every thing is in train, and there is not a moment to be lost——Ah! [*Screams.*

Let. Lucy! Whither away so fast?

Lucy. I declare I did not see you, madam; I thought you was in your own room.

Let. But where are you running to, child?

Lucy. Only stepping out a little way.

Let. Stepping out! Whither?

Lucy. To my brother Dibble's.

Let. For what?

Lucy. Upon a little family business, that's all. I could have sworn you had been with your gentleman in the painting-room.

Let. My gentleman! Who is it you call my gentleman!

Lucy. Humph—I'll shew her that I am in her secrets; it will keep her out of mine.—[*Aside.*] —I thought you was with Mr Manlove; I left you together.

Let. Mr Manlove! What is this you tell me?

Lucy. Nay, madam, don't be alarmed, I am no tell-tale; and, though I knew Mr Manlove in his painter's character, nobody shall be the wiser for me, I assure you.

Let. As sure as can be, it is so! What a discovery!—[*Aside.*]—Well, Lucy, I find you are in the secret; you know the real Mr Manlove; but pray, tell me, who is the pretended one? I have been received at Mr Manlove's house, and visited here, by a young man, who calls himself Manlove: Who is he?

Lucy. Oh, dear madam, don't you know him? I was I don't get into a scrape; but there is no going back.—[*Aside.*]—It is young Mr Nightshade out of the country, madam; he is come up incog, and is afraid his father shall discover him, that's all.

Let. Is that all? I shan't take your word for that. I suspect there is more in the plot than you have related. If this young man is afraid of being seen by his father, what brings him hither? Answer me that.

Lucy. Madam, I—I—I cannot tell what brings him hither.

Let. Lucy, don't equivocate; for I will know. I saw him leave the house, just now, with your brother; you are following in great haste, upon family business, you pretend; but I suspect upon no fair errand. Confess to me, for you shall not stir to your brother's, till you do.

Lucy. As you will for that, madam, but I cannot endure to be suspected, and I will confess to you when I have done crying.—[*Weeps.*]

Let. Do so; you had best.

Lucy. Why, then, you must know, that Mr Manlove—that is—I mean Mr Nightshade, that calls himself Mr Manlove, is fallen monstrously in love with———

Let. With whom!

Lucy. Me, madam. Vain creature! I know she thought it was herself. [*Aside.*

Let. And you believed him, did you?

Lucy. Yes, madam, I believed him.

Let. Well, and what did he do then?

Lucy. Nay, nothing, madam, that's all.

Let. Come, come, Lucy, but I know it is not all: You have given him your company, as you call it, have you not? And you are now going to meet him at your brother's, are you not?

Lucy. No—yes—but if I am, it's all in fair and honest way of courtship: Oh, if he was to go for to offer any thing unhandsome to me, I should tear his eyes out. Nobody can say I have the least speck or flaw, no, not so big as the point of a pin, on my reputation. It would be the death of me; I would sooner part from my life, than my virtue; he has promised——

Let. What has he promised?

Lucy. To marry me.

Let. Marry you! Ridiculous.

Lucy. Ay, I knew the jealous thing could not bear that; she will burst with envy. [*Aside.*

Let. Hark'e, Lucy; I commend you for the honesty of your confession; run into my chamber; Mr Stapleton is coming this way, and will interrupt us: compose yourself, and we will talk over the affair at leisure.—[*Exit* LUCY.]—Happy, happy revolution! What a ridiculous *mal entendu* had I fallen into! O how deliciously I will torture this fine gentleman-painter for his contrivances! [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter JACK NIGHTSHADE *and* DIBBLE.

Dib. COME along, 'squire, the lady is expecting you at my apartment. Every thing is in train, and 'twill be your own fault now, if you are not the happiest man in England.

J. Night. Hold a moment, Dibble, hold! My brother's coming, and I can't resist the pleasure of a little natural exultation.

Dib. Perverse! Vexatious! Are you mad? By Heavens, you'll lose the lady! and, what is worse, by Heaven's she'll lose the gentleman!

[*Aside.*

Enter CHARLES MANLOVE.

Cha. Man. So, Jack, I hope your frolic is at an end: you've been disorderly in your cups, I find.

J. Night. Where did you hear that?

Cha. Man. Where I least wished to hear it; at Mr Stapleton's; Miss Fairfax told me.

J. Night. Miss Fairfax told you, did she so? Miss Fairfax was not very angry when she told you, I should guess: You did not find me greatly out of favour, did you?

Cha. Man. In truth, I had so little occasion to boast of my own reception, Jack, that I did not give much attention to what she said of you.

J. Night. That is honestly confessed, however: So, your reception was but cold, and you have dropt all thoughts of a connexion, I suppose?

Cha. Man. Entirely: I've received my peremptory dismission.

J. Night. Poor Charles! You are dismissed? Your person, genius, equipage, estate, all stand you in no stead! Another is preferred before you; perhaps some country booby like myself; and don't you wish you knew the happy man?

Cha. Man. Not I.

Dib. What are you at? You'll ruin all.

J. Night. I shall burst if I don't tell him—— Brother, I believe I could direct you to the man that has done all the mischief.

Cha. Man. I give you credit, Jack, for that; I do believe you've done me all the mischief in your power.

J. Night. Who, I? Oh, dear, you flatter me! a country whelp supplant a travelled gentleman like you? Impossible—and yet———

Cha. Man. What yet?

J. Night. This witness on my finger, here, would stagger some folks; I am apt to think Miss Fairfax means to wear it in good time.

Cha. Man. A wedding ring! You must excuse me, Jack; I want credulity for that.

J. Night. Just as you please; I bought it for her wearing, and measured her finger for that purpose, and did intend, with the parson's help, to put it on with that design.

Dib. Will nothing stop your mouth? By Heavens, I'll throw the matter up!

[*Aside to* J. NIGHT.

Cha. Man. You! You marry Miss Letitia Fairfax!

Dib. Dear squire, be persuaded, and come away.

[*Aside to* J. NIGHT.

J. Night. Hold your tongue, I tell you; I, I, and not the ingenious, learned, travelled Mr Manlove; here's a witness that will vouch for what I say.—[DIB. *offers to go.*—Where are you running? Come back. Tell my brother what you know of Miss Fairfax's partiality for a certain insignificant, ignorant fellow, called Jack Nightshade.

Dib. For shame, sir! You should not talk of ladies' favours.

Cha. Man. Your friend is cautious, you perceive.

J. Night. Hang him, he's so by habit! he's a lawyer—but speak out: You are come to fetch me to Miss Fairfax, and Miss Fairfax is at your lodgings, and I am to be the lady's husband, and the bill is a true bill, is it not?

Dib. It is.

Cha. Man. Errors excepted; you forgot your caution. This can never be. Hark'e, sir; a little cross-examination, if you please.

J. Night. As much of that as you think proper. He's used to that sport; he'll dodge like a rabbit in a warren.

Cha. Man. You say the lady is at your lodgings: Answer me, what lady?

Dib. Sir, I believe—what lady? That's your question—what lady is at my lodgings?

Cha. Man. Ay, sir, without equivocation.

Dib. Well, sir, I am not upon oath in this business; nor am I obliged to ascertain the identity of people's persons; but the lady at my lodgings I take to be Miss Fairfax.

J. Night. Does that satisfy you? Brother, I thank you for your coat; it has made an impression, you perceive.

Cha. Man. Have a little patience—You take her to be Miss Fairfax? Describe her person.

Dib. I never meddled with her person, sir; that's not for me to do.

Cha. Man. Is she fair complexioned?

Dib. I think so.

J. Night. I can't say I do.

Cha. Man. Light hair, or dark?

Dib. My eyes are none of the best, but I think Miss Fairfax's hair is white.

J. Night. Black as a crow, by Jupiter!

Cha. Man. Tall, or short?

Dib. I never measured her; but I take her to be tall.

J. Night. Death and the devil! Why, you're drunk! Fair, tall, light-haired! Why, she is

little, dapper, dusky damsel, with a poll as black as——

Cha. Man. Hark'e, sir; a word in your ear.

[*To* DIB.

Dib. Blown, as I hope to be a judge!

[*Aside.*

Cha. Man. You have a sister answers this description; you're discovered, and a villain.

[*Aside to* DIB.

J. Night. Hold, hold! no closeting of witnesses.

Dib. Good sir, be not offended. Mr Nightshade first borrowed your name, and my sister, to keep up the jest, made free with that of Miss Fairfax—nothing but a frolic.

Cha. Man. What do you tell me? Did my brother take my name in any interview with Miss Fairfax?

Dib. Certainly, sir; she calls him Mr Manlove at this moment.

Cha. Man. Away; your news has saved your ears: away!

Dib. 'Egad, we are all blown up! I must go and tell Lucy to make her peace.

[*Exit* DIB.

J. Night. How now? what's this? Hallo! Where's Dibble running?

Cha. Man. Your humble servant, Mr Manlove—Take my name, my credit from me, Jack? It is too much. You must be saved, however.

J. Night. I must be satisfied. Is this fair dealing? Where is Dibble gone?

Cha. Man. Let him go where he will; he has made a fool of you.

J. Night. Yes; but I'm not a fool to take your word for that: so let me pass.

Cha. Man. Nay, Jack, but hear reason——

J. Night. Yes: and while you are reasoning, I shall lose the lady.

Cha. Man. I say the lady; have a care she does not prove the lady's maid.

J. Night. The maid! Ah, brother, I'm too cunning to take that upon trust. You have raised my curiosity, however, and I will know the truth——So let me go, for go I will, and that's enough.

[*Exit* J. NIGHT.

Cha. Man. A match: we'll start together.—My happiness is sure as much concerned in this discovery, as yours. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—STAPLETON'S *house.*

Enter MR ANDREW NIGHTSHADE *and* MR MANLOVE.

A. Night. I should think, brother, there's no danger but a jury will see the action in this light.

Man. 'Tis hard to say; juries are ticklish things; the law will look to the motives. If it shall appear that it was done, not from the wickedness of the heart, but from the sudden heat of the passions, a jury will bring it in manslaughter.

A. Night. Well, and don't all the world know there's not a more passionate man living than myself?

Man. You have sometimes told me I was passionate; I never heard you say as much for yourself.

A. Night. But if there was no malice in the deed, how can it ever be deemed murder?

Man. Malice is threefold: first, malice express; secondly, malice implied; thirdly, malice prepense: of each in their order——

A. Night. Psha! prithee, what avails describing any, when I've none of all the three?

Man. Had you no quarrel, then, before the act?

A. Night. Quarrel! why no—or if I had, twas only a few words.

Man. Is that the cane you struck him with;

A. Night. This is the twig; I call it nothing more.

Man. I doubt the law will construe it a weapon of offence.

A. Night. And pray now was his not a weapon of offence? I believe the whole town thinks it such, of great offence: sick or well, there is no repose for those horns. What I did was in self-defence.

Man. I fear 'twill not be thought so. If indeed you had any wound to show, whereby the violence of the battery might be proved——

A. Night. Wound! why I have a wound and as bad a one as his; only mine lies within side of my head, and his without: he has broke the drum of my ears.

Man. What do you talk of ears? if you had been happy enough now to have lost a finger, an eye, or a fore-tooth, it would have been the loss of a defensive member, and a mayhem at common law.

A. Night. Well, brother, be so kind to tell me what I am to do.

Man. Repent.

A. Night. Why, so I will, provided you say nothing about the matter, and my country acquits me upon the trial; but if I am to be punished for my faults, what signifies repenting of them into the bargain?

Man. Well, Andrew, I must tell you there is yet a way of getting honourably out of this affair, provided you will bind yourself to me, never to lift your hand in wrath against a fellow-creature.

A. Night. Why, no, to be sure I shan't; I thought all skulls were as hard as Gregory's.

Man. Come, you must have done with Gregory's; nay, I would not alone exempt man from your fury, but beast likewise: Cruelty must not be practised in any shape: Nature must not be wounded in any of her works. Promise me this, upon the faith of an honest man, and I'll redeem you from this scrape.

A. Night. Look'e, brother, I am sensible of the folly of it; but as it's impossible to say where temptation may lead, there lies the fatal weapon; use it who will: I'll never take another stick in hand, till I'm obliged to go upon crutches. [*Throws down his cane.*

Man. Say you so? then I'll cure your broken head in an instant. Come with me, and you shall see what dispatch I can make upon occasion. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Painting room.*

LETITIA *is discovered painting*; LUCY *attending; a Layman placed at some distance.*

Let. These touches come off well; this last sitting was a good one: methinks I never was in better luck. Lucy, what say you; is it like?

Lucy. Like, madam! 'tis alive; 'tis Mr Stapleton himself.

Let. Is the servant gone for his clothes to dress the layman? I'll positively rub in the drapery now I'm about it. Well, child, I've turned this matter in my head, and I believe I must forgive you; there's no holding out against contrition: I believe your brother was to blame—So this painter then is Mr Manlove?

Lucy. Yes, madam, and a lovely man he is; if you please to remember, I told you so the first moment I saw him; so genteel, so well-bred, so perfectly the gentleman. Oh, here comes Thomas with the clothes—shall I help to put them on?

Enter Servant.

Let. So, so! that's right—let the arm fall naturally—it's very well as it is—Now turn the layman with its side to me—no, t'other way—a little more. Stay, let me do it myself. Now stand away——that's it.

Ser. Have you any further commands, madam?

Let. No—yes. If the young gentleman who was with me this morning should call again, shew him up hither.

Ser. The painter?

Let. Yes, the painter, as you call him.

Ser. Madam, he is this moment come into the court-yard.

Let. Indeed! then do as I bid you. [*Exit Ser.*] So, so, he has found out the mistake as well as myself.

Lucy. Pray, madam, give me leave to go and show Mr Manlove hither.

Let. Do so, Lucy, do so---What a flutter am I in?—but, hark'e, don't give him any intimation that I know him. [*Exit* LUCY.] This is happy! I am such a gainer by this revolution, that I cannot find in my heart to be angry with the girl—That ever I should be the bubble of so gross an imposition! Hark! he's coming. I'll pretend to be at work! though I am so confused, I don't know one colour from another. O Heavens, how charmingly he looks!

Enter CHARLES MANLOVE.

Cha. Man. I ask a thousand pardons: I intreat I mayn't disturb you.

Let. Oh, sir, don't mention it. You see I use no ceremony.

Cha. Man. You're infinitely obliging. I have ventured once again, Miss Fairfax, to intrude upon your patience.

Let. As often as you please; you're always welcome here. Come hither—I must have your judgment. How do you like what I have done?

Cha. Man. All that you do is well; but you'll forgive me—I am full of other thoughts, and wish to lose no moment of this happy opportunity.

Let. Pish! I must have you flatter me: Sit down—This drapery puzzles me—Sit down, I say: Your modern habits are so stiff! How shall I manage it? Come, take the chalk—nay, no excuse. Though you are so smartly dressed, you absolutely must assist me.

Cha. Man. I beg to be excused: my happiness is staked upon this crisis: my heart is full, and must have vent.

Let. How can you be so tiresome? Now you are going upon the old topic, Mr Manlove.

Cha. Man. I must confess it is of him that I would speak.

Let. Fye, fye upon you! call to mind your promise. Hold—suppose I throw aside this ugly brown and gold, and put him in a fancy dress: What say you?

Cha. Man. Nothing: for I am nothing: I have no art, no faculty of painting; I am an impostor. On my knees I do beseech you, forgive and hear me.

Let. Pray be composed, nor let your zeal for Mr Manlove agitate you thus. I'll save you all this trouble, by confessing freely to you, I have changed my mind since last we parted.

Cha. Man. Changed! as how?

Let. As you'll be pleased to hear. I think of Mr Manlove now as favourably as you yourself could wish.

Cha. Man. Madam——

Let. I think the woman must be blest, whom such a man shall honour with his choice.

Cha. Man. Indeed! I may presume, then, you would condescend to countenance his addresses?

Let. That's a home question; but I think it is not easy to deny him any thing.

Cha. Man. I'm thunderstruck! The boy has told me the truth; she likes him, and I am undone!

Let. What is the matter now? You seem quite disconcerted. Is not this the very point you aimed at? Hav'n't I confest all that you wished?

Cha. Man. Oh, no! You torture me.

Let. Man, restless man! whom nothing I can

do will satisfy: offended, when I refuse your friend; when I accept him, tortured!

Cha. Man. And tortured I must be: for know, most wretched as I am, it is not for a friend I plead, but for myself.

Let. Well, sir, I'm free to say, I still abide by my confession. What you tell me shakes not my esteem for Mr Manlove.

Cha. Man. Then I have lost you; for that Manlove is my younger brother, and has won you under a fictitious name: I, that really own it, am discarded.

Let. How purblind you long-sighted wits sometimes can be! You tell me you are Mr Manlove; have I revoked my opinion? You say your brother took your name; have I expressed myself in favour of Mr Nightshade?

Cha. Man. O, Heavens! I do begin to hope—

Let. You should not puzzle me with such cross purposes. Will you be Mr Manlove, and believe what I now say of him, or give that name to your brother, and hear me repeat what I lately said of h m?

Cha. Man. Oh, let me be what you approve! I ask no higher blessing.

Let. We are interrupted. See, your formidable rival! Oh, you have made a fine confusion—Come away. [*Exeunt.*

Enter JACK NIGHTSHADE.

J. Night. Hist! hark'e, brother Charles!—He won't turn back, and I dare not follow him, for fear I run into old Crusty's jaws. I am fain to go as warily in this house as if I was riding over a warren. Didlikins! here comes the girl at last—Oh, fye upon you, miss! oh fye——

Enter LUCY *hastily.*

Lucy. Hush! hush! A truce to your reproaches—Hide yourself; your father's at my heels.

J. Night. My father! Drown it! what shall I do now?

Lucy. Here, get behind this layman; stoop: stand close. I'll put the shutters to; I owe you that good turn, at least, to bring you off. Stand close!

Enter ANDREW NIGHTSHADE.

A. Night. So, so! What's doing here? Darkness at mid-day! Your servant, Mr Stapleton—I see you notwithstanding; there you are: fine goings-on at your age! Smuggling your chambermaids in corners——Call you this fair trading? Oh, if your wife saw this!

J. Night. [*From behind.*] For pity's sake, keep him off! He's coming!

Lucy. Where are you coming, sir? Pray leave the room; your company disturbs him; don't you see how ill he is?

A. Night. Poor gentleman! and so you shut out the light to make him better? Ay, let him lean upon you, comfort him; I dare be sworn he has need of it——Shame upon you, Mr Stapleton! What, you'll not speak, not you! Here comes one will make you speak, and stir too, to some tune. Here, madam, here's your virtuous husband! here's a picture of modern conjugal fidelity!

Enter MRS STAPLETON.

Mrs Stap. A picture, truly! for I think you're talking to nothing else. Why don't the girl open the shutters? What do you stand there for? O, ho! [*Sees* JACK.

Enter MR STAPLETON *and* MANLOVE.

Mr Stap. What! my old friend conferring with the layman? Break his head, Andrew, if you please; no manslaughter can lie there.

[*The window is opened.*

A. Night. How's this! why, I protest I took it for yourself; and I was scandalized to see a sober citizen in such close conference with a damsel of so great temptations.

Man. Come, brother, you have had one warning against anger; let this be a memento to guard against suspicion.

A. Night. Brother, you know I can't endure advice; I see my error; that's enough.

Mrs Stap. Yes, but you don't see all: there's more behind the scenes; your greatest error, Mr Nightshade, is not yet found out.

A. Night. Why, what the vengeance have we here? Come out—let's see your face. Son Jack! Furies and flames! My boy, as I'm alive!

Man. This is judgment upon judgment!

A. Night. Which of you all have conjured up this plot? Oh, thou unutterably vile and sorry puppy! Hound, that I have bred to tear my heart out—Jack, Jack! for you to use me thus! You whom I've made my boast, the staff of my old age!—I would I had a staff! I'd beat your brains out with it, blockhead, so I would!

Man. Hold, hold! no more of that—remember promises.

A. Night. And in that jacket too! the substance of a farm laid out upon your back: sirrah, whence came that conjuror's coat, that scoundrel's livery! Answer me.

J. Night. Father, 'tis none of mine; 'tis brother Charles's.

A. Night. There, Mr Manlove! there's your pretty gentleman! a fine account! the corrupter of his brother!

Stap. Be more patient, friend Andrew.

A. Night. I won't be patient! I've a father's privilege to justify my passion. Hark'e, sir, what brought you up to town? Who seduced you hither? I suppose the fashionable scoundrel, who lent you that fool's coat.

J. Night. Lord love you, father! 'twas a frolic of my own: Charles would have had me travelled home again.

Man. What, is that like a seducer?

J. Night. And so I should afore now, but that I fell into a kind of love-suit here, with the young lady of this house.

Mrs Stap. What do you say? a love-suit?

Stap. With my ward, Miss Fairfax? impossible!

Lucy. Ay, now comes my examination: I had best escape. [*Aside.*

J. Night. Hold, hold; my whole defence turns upon your testimony—Stay where you are.

[*To* LUCY.

A. Night. Ay, let us hear; there's something in this plea: Let us hear more of the love-suit.

J. Night. Nay, 'twas not much of a suit neither: it was very soon over; miss was coming, Dibble got a licence, and I bought a ring.

Stap. Why, you're beside yourself, young man!

A. Night. Go on! the boy speaks well, and shan't be brow-beat: hear him out.

J. Night. And so, as I was telling you, I should have married her outright, if brother Charles had not thrown a spoke in my wheel.

A. Night. See there, see there! What say you for your favourite now? Prove what you say, my lad, and I will do you justice to the extent of my estate.

J. Night. Say you so, father? then it shall out: why, brother Charles, you must know, had a month's mind for the lady himself; so he pretended to persuade me that I was made a fool of, and that the girl I was going to marry was not Miss Fairfax.

A. Night. There, there!—you hear it now from the tongue of truth and innocence: you're satisfied, I hope? I beg the lady may be sent for in.

J. Night. Sent for! a pretty joke! why, there she stands.

Mr and Mrs Stap. Ha, ha, ha!

A. Night. I'm thunderstruck!

J. Night. And so am I; for, if it had not been for brother Charles, as sure as you are here alive, we had both been happy before now.

A. Night. This, this the lady?

J. Night. Ay, father, that's she: I hope you like her?

Stap. Lucy! Lucy Dibble!

Man. The sister of my clerk!

A. Night. Death and the devil! a chambermaid!

Mrs Stap. Oh, you insidious hussy! what can you say for yourself?

Lucy. I am not here upon my trial, madam; that is past, and Miss Fairfax has signed my pardon. As for this gentleman, if I did put a little trick upon him under my mistress's name, he paid me in my own coin, by passing himself off under his brother's. The parties represented are not present; but, let me stand at Miss Fairfax's side, and place him by Mr Manlove, and I leave the world to decide which is the greatest impostor of the two.

J. Night. Oh, you abominable little vixen!

Man. Keep your peace, Jack! would you prove your valour on a woman?

A. Night. Then, by Jupiter, I'll break every bone in lawyer Dibble's skin, before this day's at an end!

Stap. Understand yourself, child; the daughter of a footman is no mate for the son of a gentleman.

A. Night. To be sure: well said, Master Stapleton!

Lucy. True, sir; but the footman bred his daughter as a gentleman should, and the gentleman gave his son the education of a footman.

[*Exit* LUCY.

Man. Brother Andrew——

A. Night. Pooh!

J. Night. Father, that last wipe was at you.

A. Night. Hold your tongue, blockhead! get you home into the country, till the soil, and be a beast of burden; 'tis what nature meant you for.

Man. Nay, brother, blame not nature, she has done her part: 'tis you that should have tilled the soil. O Charles, you come upon a wish; your father is impatient to embrace you.

Enter CHARLES MANLOVE.

Cha. Man. Let but my father add his approbation, and my happiness shall be complete.

Man. He can't withhold it. Come, throw prejudice aside; let wrath and jealousy be cast far from you: look upon this youth; he is your son; you are the principal, but do you substitute the justice to confess my system has succeeded; it is possible, you see, to gain a knowledge of this world, and not be tainted with its wickedness.

A. Night. 'Tis mighty well; but for this cub of mine, I'll disinherit him to the devil; I could find in my heart to die to-morrow, for the pleasure of cutting him off with a shilling.

J. Night. Lord, father, in that case, a little matter would content me.

Man. Come, come, the law has made provision against that: Jack must inherit your estate, die when you will.

A. Night. Then, I'll not die at all; I'll live for ever on purpose to plague him; I'll starve the whelp; he shall have nothing to live upon, but rain-water and pig-nuts.

Man. Then, Andrew, I will keep him; he shall live with me.

A. Night. Say you so, brother? then, I'll forgive him, and keep him to myself; and, since you talk of knowledge of the world, I'll show him what it is: come hither, Jack; I'll go with him as far as there is water to carry us; I'll travel him to the world's end: Zounds! I'll take him out of it, rather than be outgone.

J. Night. Take the last stage by yourself, dear father! Farewell, uncle! good-bye, Charles!

[*Exeunt* A. *and* J. NIGHT.

Man. Incorrigible humourist! Come, my son, and come, my worthy friends: where is your amiable ward? I still have hopes this day of rancour and confusion will conclude with joy.

Stap. And so it shall, if my persuasion can have weight.

Mrs Stap. Persuasion never fails, when inclination aids it. Look, she comes!

Cha. Man. And comes like Hope, like spring and sunshine to the longing year, with smiles of soft complacency and love.

Enter LETITIA.

Let. Ay, now your rival's gone, you think the field your own; but every hour will raise fresh rivals, for every hour will draw forth fresh perfections from a character like your's, and each demand the preference in our admiration and applause.

Stap. Well said, my girl! then there's a bargain made: What need of further words?

Mrs Stap. Fy upon you, Mr Stapleton! you distress her; you are too much in haste about these matters.

Mr Stap. Why, Dolly, you and I concluded our matter within the week.

Mrs Stap. Longer; 'twas longer: don't believe him, Letitia.

Let. Excuse me. I can readily believe, that hearts so fitted for each other, might unite at once by mutual attraction.

Man. Dost thou believe it, fair one? then, away with all delay! not even the law, its own parent, shall be privileged in this case; we'll work like shipwrights at an armament, and Dibble, as a punishment for his intrigues, shall labour double tides. If marriage ever shall regain its dignity in this degenerate age, it must be by the union of such hearts as these.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

The British drama

Room

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